THE PEDAGOGY OF CONCLUSIONS: FROM RHETORICAL ANCESTRY TO MODERN COMPOSITION WITH A RESEARCH STUDY ON PEDAGOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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Abstract

THE RHETORICAL ANCESTRY OF CONCLUSIONS, THE CURRENT PEDAGOGY IN COLLEGE RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION CLASSROOMS AND TEXTBOOKS, WAYS TO TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO WRITE ESSAY CONCLUSIONS, RESEARCH STUDY ON STUDENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

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The main focus of my thesis is to uncover what students know about conclusions (from current pedagogy, composition textbooks, questionnaires and classroom research). I analyze what instructors are taught about conclusions and how this advice is based in the teachings of ancient rhetoricians. Then I detail how conclusions are covered in American college textbooks. Seeing the need for instructor material to teach conclusions, the next chapter gives multiple lesson plans teaching students to compose stronger and livelier conclusions. In the next chapter, I summarize my research employing some of these lesson plans and analyze student texts created before and after they heard me lecture on how to write conclusions. I then analyze the endings of texts these students produce both before and after they learn about writing conclusions. My rousing conclusion calls for more research to be done on lesson plans for students on writing conclusions and revisits some of Quintilian's advice.

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Chapter 1

The Beginning of the End

> "Villains!" I shrieked, "dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Tell-Tale Heart" (78)

Thus Edgar Allan Poe concludes his hauntingly vivid story, "The Tell-Tale Heart," in a memorable and creative ending that conjures up the entire story from these two lines. College students in composition classes do not conclude their essays in powerful ways nor make the same rhetorical moves that experienced authors (such as Poe, Arthur Conan Doyle or Margaret Atwood) do in their endings. Often the conclusion is the forgotten ending that students hash out in the last few minutes before the essay is due. As composition instructor Dana C. Elder wrote in 1987 *for College Composition and Communication*, "We often read student drafts with conclusions which are either too short, too dull, too weak, or painful combinations of . . . these" (349). Twenty-six years later, students are still writing painful combinations to cobble together conclusions. Why is this?

One reason is that students do not feel like they can write conclusions. While researching how 10 of her composition students felt about the writing process, composition instructor Tamzin Faull observed, "Conversations with my class informed me that their perception was that introductions and conclusions were their weakest areas" (167). Students feel uncertain and weak about writing conclusions and often ask me what they should even do for the ending. Often students are bored and unengaged with writing essays in general and a strong ending is the final touch students do not feel empowered to craft.

Another reason is that composition instructors do not teach students how to write conclusions even though essay conclusions are taught as one of the three main parts of a college level essay (introduction, body and conclusion). However, conclusions are overlooked in composition pedagogy. Little time is spent in classes and little space is spent in textbooks on conclusions. On the other hand, introductions are well covered because they relate to the thesis, which instructors usually spend multiple lessons discussing with students. Since students are taught to begin with the introduction, they spend more time, including in-class writing, focusing only on the introduction. Body paragraphs are likewise well covered because arguments and claims are taught extensively. The conclusion is not well covered and ideas for endings are often based only on Aristotle's advice in *On Rhetoric* or Quintilian's revisions. Because we in English departments now teach written composition instead of oratory, Aristotle and Quintilian should not be the sole basis for what we teach our students on conclusions. Rhetoric and composition instructors have not moved past teaching students to restate their thesis in the conclusion even though oral rhetoric and written rhetoric should differ because of the dynamic of memory. How can instructors improve students' knowledge of how to write a rousing conclusion to an essay?

The current lack of instruction on how to conclude student essays is problematic; there seems to be no one else working on pedagogic solutions to this problem. Therefore my thesis will cover new territory. Other composition pedagogy scholars and instructors will benefit greatly from my research. I've discussed my thesis topic with colleagues and each one has said, "I don't know how to teach conclusions. My students don't know how to write conclusions. Will you share your research with me when you're done?" Other English instructors will benefit from knowing what rhetorical moves accomplished writers employ in conclusions and how to teach students about those rhetorical moves.

This seems an appropriate place to define what I mean by a "rhetorical move," using applied linguist John M. Swales' definition from *Research Genres*: "A 'move' in genre analysis is a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse" (228). I am using the term "rhetorical move" here to mean anything from a phrase to a part of a sentence to a part of a paragraph in which the writer intends to do a particular thing—convince the audience of something, make an appeal to emotion, etc. Identifying a rhetorical move, Swales and Nwogu argue, is "not [always] universally" recognized as one action of rhetoric (argument), and is often intuitive (229). A rhetorical move that I identify in a piece of student writing (listed in Lesson Plan A and Appendix A) may be reasonably identified by other readers as other types of moves or as lasting longer or shorter than I identify it as lasting.

The main focus of my thesis is to uncover what students know about conclusions (from current pedagogy, composition textbooks, questionnaires and classroom research). I analyze what instructors are taught about conclusions and how this advice is based in the teachings of ancient rhetoricians. Then I detail how conclusions are covered in American college textbooks. Seeing the need for instructor material to teach conclusions, the next chapter gives multiple lesson plans teaching students to compose stronger and livelier conclusions. In the next chapter, I summarize my research employing some of these lesson plans and analyze student texts created before and after they heard me lecture on how to write conclusions. I then analyze the endings of texts these students produce both before and after they learn about writing conclusions. My rousing conclusion calls for more research to be done on lesson plans for students on writing conclusions and revisits some of Quintilian's advice.

Chapter 2

The Rhetorical Ancestry of Conclusions

> Of my own thoughts it is folly to speak. Swooning, I staggered to the opposite wall. For one instant the party upon the stairs remained motionless, through extremity of terror and of awe. In the next . . . The corpse, already greatly decayed and clotted with gore, stood erect before the eyes of the spectators . . . I had walled up the monster within the tomb!
>
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Black Cat" (115)

Indeed "it is folly to speak" of the dearth of recent thoughts on conclusions. Instructors should look beyond what they think about composing endings and read back to the masters, to Aristotle and Quintilian. Rather than wall up ancient rhetoricians within a tomb, instructors must acknowledge that they are where the current pedagogy began. Both Aristotle and Quintilian address conclusion composition—what they name the epilogue and peroration respectively—in their seminal texts on rhetoric. Aristotle gives four suggestions for epilogues; Quintilian later adds emotion and creativity as well as discussing length.

Aristotle on Conclusions

In Aristotle's "Epilogos" in *On Rhetoric*, he gives four pieces of advice to the rhetorician on how to conclude (3.19). The first three are that conclusions should include: First, influencing the listener toward the speaker and against the opposition; second, "amplifying and minimizing," that is, reinforcing the importance of the argument; third, invoking emotional responses in the listener; and fourth, summarizing (3.19.1).

Composition and rhetoric pedagogues have found many similar ways to apply Aristotle's pieces of advice to writing conclusions. Edward P.J. Corbett's section on conclusions in his chapter "Arrangement of Material" from *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* in 1965 and Dana Elder's article "Some Resources for Conclusions in Student Essays" both expound upon Aristotle's pieces of advice for students' writing

process today and so I will discuss them individually below (Corbett 283-291). As first mentioned by Edward Corbett, Dana Elder's article provides ways to apply the first three pieces of Aristotle's instruction. First, in influencing the listener toward the speaker and against the opposition, Elder points out that "The concern here is the ethos of the speaker" (351). Students are taught about ethos of other writers but should also learn how to prove their own ethos to throughout the essay, including to the end. As for the second, Elder points out that a way to influence the speaker can be when "the writer emphasizes the facts which strengthen his or her position . . . This part of a conclusion goes beyond mere summarization of the preceding arguments" (352). Going beyond summarization is something that students are rarely taught. Elder emphasizes that the third "component for a conclusion, 'to excite the emotions of the hearer,' can be found in most freshman composition textbooks" as the textbook review below will show (353). This idea encourages writers to have a rousing ending and Quintilian expands on it later.

In his comments on Aristotle, Corbett comforts that:

> Aristotle is suggesting that these are the things that we may do in the conclusion, not that we must do all of them in every discourse. Limitations of space may prevent our spinning out an elaborate conclusion. The nature of our subject or of our audience may make it inadvisable to attempt any kind of emotion appeal. . . . The advice here . . . is that we should do what needs to be done, not what convention says must be done. (284)

This lens of seeing the ancient rhetorician's advice as a list of possibilities instead of a checklist is helpful for moving beyond focusing on only Aristotle's advice. It also reminds the instructor and student that the rhetorical situation must be considered all the way to the conclusion and that the ending is part of a whole composition, not an unnecessary appendix. This advice is so helpful that Elder quotes a portion of Corbett's comfort in her article as well (352).

Though there are four ideas which Aristotle recommends, today American students are usually taught only the last. Aristotle's most remembered description of conclusions is "[giving] a reminder," that is, reminding the reader of what you've already said (3.19.1). Aristotle adds that "the starting point" of a conclusion "is to claim that one has performed what was promised, so there should be mention of what these things are and why" (3.19.5). Similarly, elsewhere in *On Rhetoric* when Aristotle mentions epilogues, he defines an epilogue as a "shortening . . . [of] the length" of an argument when it is too long for the listeners to remember (3.13.3). This idea fits with the current idea of beginning an essay with a thesis, proving the thesis with arguments in the body of the paper, and showing in the conclusion that the thesis has been proven.

However, it is clear that Aristotle's advice on "Epilogos" is proscriptive for spoken rhetoric and speeches to a jury, not intended for written rhetoric which used much more infrequently in his time. After the text quoted above, Aristotle mentions disproving what the opponent in verbal argument has shown and well as stating what the speaker has said. He says that one should "use interrogation: 'What has not been shown' or 'What did he show?' . . . [One should state] first one's own and again, if you want it, the opponent's claim separately," (3.19. 5-6). This tension between speeches versus written text is part of the difficulty of applying early rhetoric texts to today's college composition instruction. Our students are writing texts down which can easily be reread, while Aristotle was giving advice to those who would speak to an audience with similar backgrounds. Corbett points out, "When our [written] arguments have been direct and uncomplicated, there may be no necessity to recapitulate or amplify them" (284). Students are learning academic discourse when writing within the university and so are aiming to be direct and uncomplicated in a way that negates the need for recapitulation or excessive reiteration at the end.

After his section on epilogues, Aristotle does not even follow his own advice to remind readers. His discussion of epilogues is the end of his text and he sees no reason to remind readers of what has come before. This is probably because *On Rhetoric* was intended as his own lecture notes (Kennedy 17-18). Nonetheless, his four pieces of advice are well-remembered by rhetorician instructors today and will appear later in a longer discussion of both Corbett and Elder, as well as in the textbook review.

Quintilian on Conclusions

Book VI of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* deals with conclusions, or what he calls "the peroration which some call the completion and others the conclusion" (VI.1.1). Quintilian argues that a good writer "states in the first part of his pleading what is to have its full effect at the conclusion" (X.1.21). This propagates the idea of conclusions making the essay come full circle, similar to Aristotle's idea of repeating what has been said before. It also encourages students to state a strong thesis which they prove by the time they arrive at the conclusion.

As a bit of practical advice, Quintilian expounds on the appropriate length of a peroration. Reminding the audience of what came before is helpful in a 50 page thesis or a spoken argument, but not as important for a 5 page essay. Quintilian supports this: "This final recapitulation must be as brief as possible and . . . we must summarise the facts under the appropriate heads. For if we devote too much time thereto, the peroration will cease to be an enumeration and will constitute something very like a second speech" (VI.1.2). Often students try to create a second thesis in their conclusion or to directly paraphrase their introduction. They spend so much time on this that they have almost "a second speech" that could be seen to "merely sugges[t] a lack of confidence in the judges' [or readers'] memory" (VI.1.2). Like Quintilian, Elder also "caution[s] students about proportion; a three page paper does not warrant a two page conclusion, nor can

the paper be adequately concluded in two sentences" (Elder 354). A 5 page essay may need one or two sentences of reminder but not the entire paragraph, which takes taking the exploratory and creative core out of the conclusion.

Quintilian is a proponent of a creative and exciting conclusion, similar to Aristotle's suggestion of employing emotional appeals at the end. Quintilian says that "the points selected for enumeration must be treated with weight and dignity, enlivened by apt reflexions and diversified by suitable figures; for there is nothing more tiresome than a dry repetition of facts" (VI.1.2). One weakness of student writing is summarizing the thesis to fill up space in the conclusion because "many students believe that the words 'conclusion' and 'summary' are synonyms" and do not understand that "repetition can bore the reader as often as it refreshes her or his memory. Many student essays are so short that summarizing statements are inappropriate" (Elder 353). Students should aim to liven up their essay perorations, ending with something that is not a "dry repetition" of information seen before.

One way that Quintilian suggests to make conclusions more engaging is to include emotional appeals: "The peroration also provides freer opportunities for exciting the passions of jealousy, hatred or anger" (VI.I.14). These help essay writers if their instructors are stirred up memorably. Unlike other rhetoricians, Quintilian does not think that emotional appeals should be used in the conclusion only but says, "All these appeals to emotion . . . may be employed in other portions of the speech as well, but more briefly, since most of them must be reserved for the opening or the close" (51). He recommends that emotional appeals can be used anywhere but are best saved for the introduction or conclusions of essays. Corbett suggests considering the following question based on Quintilian when writing conclusions: "Should we reserve our emotion appeals for the conclusion or distribute them throughout the discourse?" (259). For example, a student

could prove their argument through logos and ethos appeals throughout the essay and end with pathos, the least respected appeal in academic circles, after their ethos has already been proven. Academic writing often resists certain kinds of creativity and emotion but conclusions are places where students are free to craft their applications and emotional pulls.

Quintilian argues that "it is in the peroration . . . that we must let loose the whole torrent of our eloquence," and goes on to expound this point:

> For, if we have spoken well in the rest of our speech, we shall now have the judges on our side, and shall be in a position . . . to spread all our canvas, while since the chief task of the peroration consists of amplification, we may legitimately make free use of words and reflexions [sic] that are magnificent and ornate. It is at the close of our drama that we must really stir the theatre, when we have reached the place for the phrase with which the old tragedies and comedies used to end, "Friends, give us your applause." (VI.1.51-52.)

Quintilian's ideas in this section—including using the conclusion to show creativity, convincing the audience to your side, and closing so well that the audience wants to applaud—are much more exciting than the way students learn about conclusions today. Instructors should begin to see and to teach students that the conclusion is a place to "to spread all [their] canvas" and stir up the minds and hearts of readers. Quintilian saw the ending as a time for creativity, drama, amplification and powerful language. He also looks back to older ideas for conclusions—that of the creative, dramatic works of how "the old tragedies and comedies used to end." Other rhetoricians have looked back to him and now instructors have looked back to these others as well. As an instructor, I would love to be so stirred up by a student's conclusion that I want to applaud. Today, none of Quintilian's creativity and zeal for closings are remembered. I believe that part of moving past employing only Aristotle's advice for endings in modern rhetoric and composition involves greater creativity of what types of rhetorical moves are appropriate for written, short student texts.

The Weaknesses of Only Using Ancient Rhetorical Advice for the Content of Modern Essay Conclusions

Aristotle and Quintilian focused only on oral presentations. Our written texts of today exist in a different rhetorical situation. As composition instructors in a modern world, I argue we should learn the advice of the ancient rhetoricians but also move on to teaching additional rhetorical moves for conclusions. Reasons for this include the fact that the memory required of the audience for oral speeches in Aristotle and Quintilian's time is different than the written texts from students that I have before me and I can flip pages to look back myself and see what the student wrote for the introduction or thesis. I do not need students to summarize a three page paper that it took me five minutes to read because I still retain the beginning in my mind.

Another reason for new models of conclusions includes cultural differences between the ancient rhetoricians and our students today. In her book *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*, Sharon Crowley analyzes the history of first year composition and makes her recommendations for its future. When describing in the chapter "The Emergence of Process Pedagogy" the revitalization of use of ancient rhetoric texts in the 1960s, Crowley provides reasons why ancient rhetoric does not apply to university composition.

One reason is that ancient rhetoric emphasized "communal knowledge" which is "foreign to modern thought and hence to current-traditional rhetoric, which . . . privileges the individual author who can originate and own new ideas" (210). American society is not a high context culture because of our many religious and political differences which results often in writing to an audience very different from yourself and the tendency toward misunderstanding. Ancient rhetoricians lived in high context cultures, where most of their audience had a similar religious, political and socio-economic background. This

assumption of communal knowledge, as Crowley calls it, makes applying ancient rhetoricians' recommendations for the epilogue or peroration difficult in our high context culture. Crowley points out that "ancient rhetorics . . . are not epistemologically consistent with current-traditional pedagogy" and therefore we should not base composition pedagogy solely on ancient rhetoric.

Based on the reasons mentioned above, Crowley therefore argues that "ancient inventional systems were never widely adopted by teachers of the required first-year composition course" after the 1960s (210). Except, I would argue, for ancient rhetoricians' requirements for a conclusion, which both most instructors (based on my reading of Corbett and Elder) use as the only recommended content for conclusions today. I argue that, for writing the conclusion, composition pedagogy remains far too committed to the "ancient inventional systems."

In another chapter, "Composition's Ethic of Service," Crowley discusses the limited validity of use of ancient rhetoric in composition. She then discusses

> serious limits to the uses of ancient rhetorics. Classical rhetorical theory was devised a long time ago in cultures that were rigidly classbound and whose economies depended upon slavery. They were invented for the use of privileged men, speaking to relatively small audiences. Those audiences were not literate, and the only available technology of delivery was the human body. (265.)

I agree that the ancient rhetoricians' advice should be limited in their use—especially when they are used to teach only a limited number of possibilities in conclusions. The cultural differences mentioned earlier by Crowley, as well as the ancient rhetoricians' sexism and racism, means that rhetoric teachers should proceed with caution when applying ancient rhetoricians' advice in the modern composition classroom. Our literate students are both men and women who communicate to both high context and low context audiences (fellow students but from different backgrounds as well as other audiences). The "available technology of delivery" now includes word processor created

and edited text, visual presentations, and video. The rhetorical situation in which our students write has changed from oral to written—surely our recommendations for epilogues should change with technology.

Crowley continues:

> And so, while the ancient rhetorical theory offers much that is absent from modern composing theory, it should be exploited with caution. I see no reason why contemporary teachers cannot develop theories of composition that are fully as rich as those developed in ancient times. Much thinking remains to be done, and I do not doubt that enterprising teachers of composition will do it . . . (264-265.)

Surely we can "develop theories of composition" that are unique from "those developed in ancient times" which are more applicable to the rhetorical situations our students find themselves in. As, I believe, an enterprising teacher of composition, in this thesis, I am trying to think about and craft a new pedagogy of conclusions. I argue that we must offer our students more than the four possible conclusions taught by Aristotle. Surely Quintilian would have allowed for greater creativity in conclusions than their advice from thousands of years ago. The next chapter of my thesis focuses on what modern rhetoric and composition pedagogy teaches on conclusions, leading onward to my own newly developed theories of composition in later chapters.

Chapter 3

The Current Pedagogy in College Rhetoric and Composition Classrooms

> "There was a discordant hum of human voices! There was a loud blast of many trumpets! There was a harsh grating as of a thousand thunders! The fiery walls rushed back! An outstretched arm caught my own as I fell, fainting, into the abyss. It was that of General Lasalle. The French army had entered Toledo. The Inquisition was in the hands of its enemies.
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Pit and the Pendulum" (73)

Here I give an overview of the more recent "discordant hum of human voices" of the pedagogy being taught to instructors on structure and conclusions. Before rhetoric and composition instructors can teach students how to write good conclusions, they need to be taught how to teach. The two main ways to observe this are pedagogy books and their roots in the classical rhetoricians.

There is apparently little written specifically on how to teach writing conclusions; searches for the "pedagogy of conclusions" in databases and the web yield no results. Most pedagogy books focus on teaching structure and teaching conclusions as part of that basic structure in student essays. However, they teach this without focusing specifically on the conclusion. This chapter will focus on pedagogy that does focus on conclusions in some way. I will begin with three pieces focusing on structure, then move on to more recent instruction for teachers. Two articles focused on student writing will end this chapter.

A History of the College Essay: Peter Mack's "Rhetoric and the Essay"

Peter Mack begins his essay "Rhetoric and the Essay" by discussing the tension between how instructors expect student writers to compose essays and the free thinking structure of essays by famous writers such as Montaigne (41). He then explains the connection between rhetoric and the history of American academic essays:

> The most commonly accepted formulae for educational essays . . . look as though they derive from rhetorical precepts on the outline of the oration. In the English model this is the four-part essay (Introduction, points for, points against, conclusion) which appears to derive from the model of the four-part oration (exordium, narration, proof and refutation, peroration) by omitting the narration and altering the function of the refutation . . .
>
> The American model of the five point essay (Introduction, three arguments, conclusion) presumably derives from the same source. (41.)

This commonly accepted formulae was not always the accepted structure. Mack shows that there was once a distinction between "the theme" and the "essay."

The essay was "defined as a free composition" in the early 1800's (Mack 47). According to John Walker in *The Teacher's Assistant* in 1802, "the theme, which has a seven part structure (proposition, reason, confirmation, simile, example, testimony, conclusion), 'is the proving of some truth'" (47). At that time, the structure of the theme was determined by the instructor; students were given headings under which they wrote on certain topics (47). The essay was different and had other rules and topics. According to G. F. Graham in 1848, the essay's "'divisions are arranged morre [sic] according to the will of the writer'" (47). The essay would be similar to what is now considered creative nonfiction or the personal essay.

Mack asks, "So when and how did the four-part essay (or in America the three point or five-part essay) become the standard form? The short answer is: I don't know" (48). Mack remembers being taught a four-part essay in 1965, which "seems to have a continuous tradition from the 1940s up to [1993] . . . with some authors in the 1990s recommending it very strongly" (48). Though Mack does not discover the beginning of the five paragraph essay, he offers a reminder that college compositions' structure was not always as they are now. He also offers a reminder that rhetoric of different times and places offers creative solutions to rhetorical situations in writing, which differ depending on the writer's need, creativity and cultural expectations.

If students want to learn "academic discourse," they are encouraged to write in highly structured models as Mack detailed above. Following structure too closely can decrease the same creativity in writing that Quintilian demanded. These models may not be ideal (as D'Angelo and Burke explain next) but they are the norm in composition and rhetoric classrooms today. Whether teachers or students agree with the structures given in classrooms today, we must consider the rhetorical situation. We should teach our students to be aware of the constraints of the five point essay.

Frank D'Angelo's *A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric*

Waxing rhapsodic on the ideas of structure, Frank D'Angelo's A Conceptual Theory of Rhetoric provides a background of rhetoric and composition pedagogy in the 1970s, combining logical rhetorical moves and the philosophy of teaching composition into a visionary book. Much of the book focuses on structure and analysis of sentences and paragraphs.

Although he does not address conclusions directly, D'Angelo studies the details of conceptual principles in written discourse. In his second chapter, "Structure," D'Angelo makes the argument that humans need the idea of structure "in order for the mind to be able to understand anything" (10). Surely then students need the structure of the essay (the introduction, body and conclusion) as well as an understanding of how to write each piece to be able to understand or write academic discourse. If, as D'Angelo says, "Structure is central to the understanding and appreciation of artistic expression," then surely structure is also central to students' ability to recreate artistic expression and artistic argument in their own essays (11). Students can only employ the correct rhetorical devices when they recognize high quality conclusions and their role in the entire essay.

D'Angelo quotes Kenneth Burke's comments in Counter-Statement on form:

> [Burke states,] "Such basic forms may, for all that concerns us, be wholly conventional . . . It may be 'natural' only as a path worn across a field is natural. But if experience has worn a path, the path is there—and in using the path, we are obeying the authority of a prior form."
>
> [D'Angelo explains that] Burke's comments indicate that not only can formal patterns be found in experience, but also that these patterns are exemplified in oral or written discourse. They can thus be abstracted and made the basis of new formal categories and conceptual principles. (D'Angelo 20.)

The structure in student academic essays of introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion "may be 'natural' only as a path worn across a field is natural" since American academics have worn this path. Therefore instructors encourage students to "obe[y] the authority of [this] prior form" in written discourse. Teachers should therefore teach each part of the form fully.

On the topic of coherence, D'Angelo encourages the teaching of repetition of sounds, words and phrases throughout a piece of writing to add "a sense of order, permanence, and stability" and to "signal an increasing involvement in reverie and a progressive moment toward an epiphany" (142-143). Epiphany is a more creative and exciting idea to finish a paper than the word "conclusion" and mirrors Quintilian's advice. D'Angelo finds this idea of structure so important that he states, "In the future, no rhetorician will be able to study the external forms of discourse without simultaneously studying their inner structures" (102). The content of students papers should be ordered in a form that is visible to the reader and these inner structures should be better taught to students and teachers alike. D'Angelo points toward innovations in rhetoric and composition pedagogy in the future. D'Angelo's future is now but many possible innovations are not being employed in our pedagogy of today. We are still teaching using mainly Aristotle and Quintilian, or even some of the composition theory from the 1970s.

Additional innovations are possible. This is part of why I argue for more innovations in the teaching of form, specifically conclusions, in this thesis.

Edward P.J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*

Also written decades in the past, Edward P.J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* was first published in 1965 and has gone through at least three reprintings. His book is considered an important teacher of rhetoric pedagogy even today. He often discusses and quotes Quintilian and Aristotle, as well as occasionally other rhetoricians like Plato. Like D'Angelo above, Corbett considers structure an important part of teaching writing.

Corbett has an entire chapter entitled "Arrangement of Material," in which he considers the four sections of a text: "Introduction, statement of facts, confirmation, and conclusion" (259). His section on conclusions lasts eight pages, providing much more extensive coverage than others. Corbett repeats Aristotle's four pieces of advice for conclusions while focusing on rhetoric (283-284); he discusses models and provides some pedagogical applications of how to write conclusions (284-291). Because Corbett's suggestions stem only from Aristotle, they seem less than relevant to today's rhetorical situation for students. Corbett does draw out some helpful thoughts, such as "a weary audience will invariably resent the interminable conclusion," but no direct application of how a composition instructor should teach conclusions (288). He discusses audience awareness at the end of his section on conclusions, which is important for both rhetoric and composition (290). At the end of his section on arrangement, Corbett reminds us that our structure should fit the rhetorical situation, saying "so many decisions about arrangement depend upon the given situation" and offering more models for study (292).

One difficulty with Corbett's discussion is that he provides many samples which he defines as good conclusions but gives writers no way to know how to imitate these

samples in conclusions, nor instructor any way to teach students to do so. Additionally, many of his examples are much more rhetorical in nature and not similar to the essays students would be writing. When discussing recapitalization, Corbett discusses court trials and quotes extensively from a scene in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (285-287). When discussing becoming more general in the conclusion, Corbett quotes a speech to the National Council of Teachers of English (287-288). When discussing emotional appeals, he quotes "Sir Winston Churchill's famous speech to the House of Commons on May 13, 1940" (287-288) and Abraham Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address" (289-290). His short discussion of "disposing the audience toward ourselves" includes no quotes (291). These are certainly famous samples, but no composition students will be writing speeches or stories about court trials in English 101 or 102. His focus on rhetoric makes his use of these rhetoric examples understandable, but leaves out those of us focused on composition pedagogy. The next text, *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, applies rhetoric to the composing process much more closely.

Erika Lindemann's *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*

The interest in structure is continued in the next book, Erika Lindemann's *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, first published in 1982. This is the first woman's voice speaking about conclusions that I quote here (Elder's article was published five years later). In Lindemann's chapter "Shaping Discourse," Lindemann discusses teaching students many possible forms of argument. She includes information on Quintilian's expansion of Aristotle's "form for constructing arguments," one of the structures Mack discussed above (134). The structure is: Introduction (exordium), statement of facts (narration), proof, refutation, and the conclusion (peroration or epilogue) (135). In her short discussion of the rhetorical moves of conclusions within this form, Lindemann gives two purposes for the epilogue or peroration: Summary and emotional appeals for the

reader to agree with the argument (135). There are more options and purposes which could have been included in her discussion of conclusions.

Lindemann also includes conclusions as part of the suggested paradigms or outlines of essays expanded upon from D'Angelo, encouraging students to think beyond the form passed down from Aristotle via Quintilian (141-144). Though she wants teachers to give students different options for structure, almost all of Lindemann's options end with "Conclusion (includes clincher sentence)" (142-143). I argue that one "clincher sentence" does not liven up a conclusion. This phrase that Lindemann chooses to use does not communicate clearly to students nor does she explain how to teach them how to write a conclusion. Therefore she fails to teach composition instructors how to improve their pedagogy or how to teach composition. Lindemann's most complex suggested ending is for a point-by-point pattern essay, where she suggests: "Conclusion (therefore, subject 1 is similar [dissimilar] to subject 2 in some respect known about 1 but not about 2)" (143). Discovery of new possibilities for conclusions are not found in Lindemann's new ideas for structure. If the forms that students choose to mold their content into should be varied, so also should students' options for conclusions, which Lindemann does not elaborate on.

Lindemann's narrow view of endings continues in her chapter "Teaching Rewriting," which contains questions for student consideration when revising essays; included is a question about conclusions. Student writers should ask themselves the questions Lindemann gives for revision, including, "How does my paper end? Did I keep the promises I made to my reader at the beginning of the paper?" as a way to go back to the beginning (210). This return to the beginning is a more sophisticated way to remind the reader of the beginning than simply restating the thesis.

My problem with Lindemann's otherwise excellent pedagogy book is that she does not address the writing of conclusions at great length and only mentions them

shortly in the above quotations. The problem of teaching structure is complicated if one large part of the structure—conclusions— is not explained thoroughly in pedagogy books.

Many other noteworthy composition pedagogy books do not mention conclusions either. In the past year, I have spent much time searching "conclusions" on various library databases and coming up only with articles that have conclusions themselves but provide no advice on writing some. I have picked up many books on composition and turned to the index, my eye searching for topics beginning with C, and then "com—," and then "con—," usually finding no entries for "conclusion." Some of these books include Jody Shipka's *Toward a Composition Made Whole* (discussing multimodal composition, not the entire composition as the title led me to think), the fabulous Lynn Z. Bloom's (and Donald A. Daiker and Edward M. White's) *Composition Studies in the New Millennium: Rereading the Past, Rewriting the Future* (but not focusing on reading or writing conclusions), and even the above quoted *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays* by Sharon Crowley. These books cover their respective topics thoroughly and beautifully, but do not focus on my topic of interest, conclusions.

It is no indictment of these authors that they do not focus on conclusions, but it is certainly an indictment of composition theory in general that it fails to focus on conclusions at any length. Composition theory currently leaves instructors thinking that conclusions are not worth focusing classtime on and leaves students flailing to end their essays. Composition instructors know how to write their own conclusions but cannot and do not articulate that knowledge to students. Part of this reason is the lack of the discussion of conclusions in composition pedagogy texts such as those listed above.

I had a student ask me last semester during a one-on-one conference how to end his essay and if there was a chapter in one of our textbooks on conclusions that he could read for help. I told him that I certainly wished there was information he could look

up on the topic but there wasn't. Then I gave him a list of a few of the things writers do in conclusions from my own research. Students are interested and feel the lack, why do composition instructors not? The next text by Dana Elder is by one compositionists who has felt the lack, and the most important source on conclusions that I quote throughout this thesis.

Dana C. Elder's "Some Resources for Conclusions in Student Essays"

"Some Resources for Conclusions in Student Essays" covers conclusions in detail as Elder gives advice on teaching conclusions from the rhetorical styles taught by Aristotle. She explains his four pieces of advice on conclusions in *On Rhetoric*. Then she offers examples of how to employ his advice (quoted above in my section on Aristotle). Elder's greatest strength is that she recommends what students should and should not do when writing conclusions, which is appropriate for her genre of composition theory. This may be partially due to her intended audience, as her article appeared in *College Composition and Communication*, where pieces usually offer specific pedagogical advice.

After listing the four pieces of advice from Aristotle, Elder then adds "a fifth option [which] is recommended by many composition textbooks and teachers: . . . To offer the reader specific suggestions for further action, study or reflection" (350). She also encourages instructors to expect students to do more than repeat the thesis and also to think about conclusion length compared to the length of the essay. Little has been written since 1987 about conclusions in student essays because apparently Elder summarized it all in less than five pages.

Tamzin Faull's "Writing in A-Level English Literature Essays"

The most recent composition article which deals partially with conclusions is by Tamzin Faull, "Writing in A-Level English Literature Essays: Professional Reflections on Text Organisation," published in 2007. Faull wanted to teach her students more about the

writing process and essay cohesion, realizing that “Some students struggle with basic, analytical essay-writing skills such as introductions and conclusions” (164). Faull looked for certain things in 10 of her students’ conclusions in her English Literature class and found that: “The best conclusions used language that was positive and assertive . . . intermingled with the student’s opinions/ideas. The least successful conclusions were almost a paraphrasing of the question with a very tentative attempt to give an answer” (169). Assertive language and attitudes are something that students learn in college English courses. Related to students’ problems with writing conclusions are students’ fears of being assertive and proving their own opinions and ideas. “Tentative attempt[s] to give an answer” are seen throughout student essays, which decrease their authority and the engagement of the readers.

It is problematic that Faull’s research looked for only two things for her to decide her students’ conclusions were good—“60% of students echoed the opening and 90% referred to the essay question in their conclusions” (168). Her research of 10 students found that “30% of students wrote a good conclusion, 60% an acceptable one and only 10% a weak conclusion” (168). With her small sample size, this translates into 3 students out of 10 writing a good conclusion (by Faull’s requirements). My personal observations after over three years of teaching are that far less than 30% of students in my composition classes write good conclusions and far less than 60% an acceptable one. Faull’s defining characteristics of a good or even acceptable conclusion are not well rounded or sophisticated. Students should be given more options to conclude than just “echo the opening” and “refer to the essay question.”

Faull continues that “This data suggests that students are reasonably competent at conclusions and are actually better at them than they are at planning (60% good/acceptable) or introductions (60% good/acceptable)” (168). In reality students are

often not “reasonably competent” at conclusions and instructors should teach beyond mere competency in their classes. Whether Faull believes students write good conclusions or not, “the students’ perceptions were that this was one of their weakest areas” (168). If students feel weak in the area, textbooks and instructors should give more training on conclusions so students can feel confident. Even with faulty conclusions and limited sample sizes, Faull’s research has shown that students feel unprepared to write conclusions but more research still needs to be done in the composition field. Two related fields, literature pedagogy and linguistics, have done further research on conclusions; the two books below, *Dr. JAC’s Conclusions: The Unicorns of Composition* and *Research Genres*, give more information on conclusions that most in the composition pedagogy field.

Joyce Armstrong Carroll’s *Dr. JAC’s Conclusions: The Unicorns of Composition*

Though the subtitle of Joyce Armstrong Carroll’s book is “The Unicorns of Composition” (using unicorns for the elusiveness of finding information on conclusions), this book has more of a literature focus than a composition one. Carroll includes essays as one of the many examples of each of her fifteen types of conclusions, but they are often professional or creative non-fiction essays and rarely student essays written for college composition classes or even college classes at all. She focuses on high school students and their level of writing, not on college level or research writing, throughout her book: Carroll often mentions how she offered this research as examples to students in various Independent School Districts in Texas, appropriate since she has her Doctorate of Education (5, 129, etc.) She gives a so what/who cares appeal of why instructors should care about the importance of conclusions. Her appeal is based on high school standardized testing, arguing that “no student will score high on state/mandated tests if a composition lacks a conclusion because a composition *sans* ending is considered

disorganized, incoherent, unfocused, or incomplete" (4). Surely the same could be said for essays without an ending graded by college writing instructors.

Carroll certainly supports my claim that research on conclusions is hard to find, explaining its importance in her introduction by explaining that:

> [C]onclusions add something, something substantive, some additional meaning, some new depth to a composition. . . . Interestingly, while searching through my collection of books on writing, I found precious little about ending a piece. Like unicorns, suggestions about writing conclusions seem to be an endangered species . . . Offering advice about endings is difficult; it is the toughest thing to find when researching. Yet good endings are even tougher to call into existence when writing. (3-4.)

Carroll began to compile samples of excellent conclusions to show students, believing that researching what makes a good conclusion was worthwhile and necessary.

Carroll's main focus in Dr. JAC's Conclusions is providing a compilation of examples conclusions in fifteen different categories. She says that she didn't want her book to be "'textbooky,' all cluttered with heavy theory" so she focused on "models that could be used to teach out of and for students to emulate" (5). Because she does not provide lesson plans or a way for instructors to use her book to teach out of, I believe she fails to focus on composition and instead presents a literature review more than a pedagogical asset. The categories Carroll organizes the models under are her chapter titles: The Call Back, The Surprise, Dialogue, The Question, Funny, The Summary, The Quotation, Direct Address, The Call to Action, The Compositional Risk, Inviting a Sequel, The Theme, The Clincher, Contemplative, and The Image. Obviously some of these are more applicable to literature than to essays, such as "Inviting a Sequel."

Though I changed the wording, I found some of Carroll's categories helpful as I created my handout "Possibilities for Essay Conclusions" (see Appendix A). The six categories I find most applicable to college-level student essays are: The Call Back, which I called move 1, "recall the beginning" and students would call "restate the thesis"

(Carroll addresses this on pages 7-14); The Summary, which I called move 1a, "Summarizing the progress of the essay or argument" (55-62); The Quotation, which I placed under move 3, "Become more specific" (63-74); The Call to Action, which I made move 4, "Call for action or change" (81-90); The Clincher, the weakness of this strategy I address pedagogically under the Textbook Review section of this thesis (111-118); and The Image, which is the pathos Aristotle described in *On Rhetoric*, my move 5c (12-134).

Each of Carroll's chapters introduces the category, explaining her sometimes obscure category titles, and then quotes extensively from examples she has found. The examples come from a variety of types of texts, including essays (which are of the most interest to this thesis), contemporary fiction, classical literature, young adult literature, children's literature, nonfiction, biographies, and even self-help and how-to books. Carroll contains no application of how to use her fifteen categories of conclusions or write them well, only examples, so it is not technically a pedagogy book and certainly has no focus on the type of essays college level writers are expected to compose. After finishing Carroll's book, I believe that more research needs to be done on the types of conclusions employed in composition essays and research articles. The next book is one which mentions conclusions with slightly more pedagogical heft, John M. Swales' *Research Genres*, though it too leaves more to be desired for applications.

John M. Swales' *Research Genres: Exploration and Applications*

Though not directly within composition theory, John M. Swales' applied linguistic research has many pedagogical applications to composition pedagogy (which he often draws out in the conclusions of chapters in his most recent book, see *Research Genres* 171-172, 206, and 240). Both of his books focus on analyzing "English for Academic Purposes" (EAP) to teach speakers of other languages the genre standards for certain types of research writing so anyone may employ them in their own research writing.

Swales' first book *Genre Analysis* focuses applied linguistics studies on the specific genres of research articles, including his well-known update on the "Create a Research Space" (CARS) schema for the order of information commonly presented in research articles (*GA* 140-141). Sadly, Swales does not analyze conclusions but does go greatly in depth on how to structure and organize introductions (*GA* 142-166). His analysis of introductions in "Creating a Research Space" greatly inspired my schema for looking at conclusions, including my "Handout" and structural analysis of conclusions of student texts contained under my research section. *Genre Analysis* does have a shorter section titled "Results, Discussions and Conclusions" (*GA* 170-174). Swales lists many possible moves to make in a conclusion, usually focused on a call for more research (that may not be appropriate for first year student compositions) or recommendations for the future. Swales argues that his "distilled list of eight moves" from other linguistic researchers "provides a useful provisional framework for *much needed further work* on the structure of RA Discussion [ending] sections" (*GA* 173, emphasis mine). Certainly there is much work yet to be done on conclusions, which his more recent work also emphasizes.

Research Genres: Exploration and Applications follows up on Swales' well-known work and continues to combine and apply "contrastive rhetoric, critical discourse analysis, and corpus linguistics" to genre analysis, in this book focusing on the Ph.D. dissertation and defense, research talks and journal articles (*RG* 1). In the introduction to *Research Genres*, Swales points out that "'rhetorical consciousness-raising' and . . . 'focus on form' are, at least for educated advanced learners, important elements in any major pedagogical strategy" and are the touchstones of his linguistics-informed research (*RG* 3). These two phrases from Swale, rhetorical consciousness-raising and focus on form, can be standard bearers for why my particular research on conclusions will be

invaluable for composition instructors. My thesis' claim is that a focus on form in teaching composition must include the whole form, not only the introduction and the body paragraphs where the main argument is proven in an essay. The conclusion is part of the essay form and should also be taught in depth. This focus on teaching conclusions should raise in students (after raising in instructors) a consciousness of the rhetorical situation and what causes rhetorical effectiveness in essays. Students are able to write good conclusions when they understand the rhetorical situation of the essay assignment—including the intended audience, focus, and requirements—and therefore will also write good introductions and body paragraphs.

Previously in his introduction, Swales mentioned that he believes that "*experimental* research establishing the value of genre-based activities remains surprisingly limited" (*RG* 3). Certainly members of my English department were surprised that I chose to do experimental research with an actual class of students and student texts on conclusions, similar to what Swales would call a genre-based activity. Experimental research is more widely used in linguistics and other fringe-to-English disciplines and is certainly well respected there. Within composition studies, experimental research is well respected and should be encouraged. I chose to do a research study on students and how their conclusions changed after receiving special instruction on it.

Unlike much composition pedagogy research, there are two chapters of Swales' *Research Genres* that do mention conclusions: "The Ph.D. dissertation" and "The research article revisited," the second of which is an expansion of the longest chapter from his first book, "Research articles in English" (*GA* 110-176).

Within the chapter "'Getting done:' The Ph.D. dissertation," where Swales analyzes the structure of dissertations and their rhetorical and linguistic features, he also discusses conclusions. One section combines a discussion of "Introductions and

Conclusions," Swales mentions that "Conclusions . . . are expected in dissertations," as in much student work (*RG* 117). The easily recognizable moves he pulls out of Bunton's model for a dissertation conclusion he orders follows: "Introductory Restatement . . . Consolidation of Present Research (with recycling) . . . Practical Applications/Implications . . . Recommendations for Future Research (Figure 4.5)." Swales argues that conclusions are often a dissertation's greatest weakness, based on the pressure of graduate students to finish, even quoting a dissertation examiner to say:

> Up to this point [penultimate chapter] I thought the thesis was broadly acceptable and I was looking forward to sensible interpretation and recontextualization of the findings in the final chapter. However, all we are given is yet another summary of those findings. I do not think that this is acceptable, so I am suggesting that this final chapter alone be resubmitted. (*RG* 118.)

This response is illuminating. A conclusion should not just resummarize the essay, thesis or dissertation; it should provide "sensible interpretation and recontextualization of the findings." What does the examiner mean by these? I argue these could include many of the moves from my "Possibilities for Essay Conclusions" handout in Appendix A, especially moves 2a, "Explaining what your argument reveals about society or trends," 3a, "Giving one example or implication of your main point, or 4b, "Providing a specific application or recommendation." Swales ends his comments on dissertations conclusions by arguing that many dissertations fail to be published as "scholarly monographs" because of their "weak conclusions" (*RG* 118).

In his chapter "The research article revisited," Swales expands upon much of the information in *Genre Analysis* by providing research done in the fifteen years since that book was published. His section "Discussions (and Conclusions)," which are synonyms, describes the image of "the hourglass, with the Introduction starting broadly and then narrowing down" to the writer's own argument "and with the concluding Discussion incrementally moving outward" and becoming more general because in the conclusions

"the present results . . . have the primary rhetorical focus and are foregrounded" (*RG* 234-235). Swales provides "Three structures for Discussions" in figure 7.6 from other researchers which all seem to end with the importance of results and recommendations for further research, a type of "'blowing one's own horn'" that may be considered more appropriate to English speakers than in other cultures (*RG* 236-238). This section ends with a pedagogical exercise from Swales of asking students "to rank the strength of the claim of the following" four sentences for beginning a conclusion (*RG* 239). Some of the sentences do not follow any of the structures of Discussions he detailed in the section, therefore providing weaker conclusion templates for the students to reject. This is the main pedagogical exercise Swales provides from his research on conclusions.

Swales' two books of genre analysis provide far more information on the common models and structures of college level, research-based writing than any compositionists do. Much of his schemas of rhetorical moves are helpful for composition instructors to be able to identify in their students' conclusions. Though Swales provides some pedagogical applications, I argue that many more are needed.

Now that I have discussed what composition pedagogy experts—and theorists in closely related fields—are teaching—mainly, *not* teaching—about conclusions, the next chapter looks at textbooks, which is a major way that students interact with the topics of a course. Textbooks follow in the footsteps of composition pedagogues and rarely mention conclusions, as will be shown. Many of the pieces of advice given above by Mack, D'Angelo, Lindemann, Elder and Faull were based on Quintilian and Aristotle's writings on rhetoric from centuries past. Now that recent information on pedagogy has been covered, this paper explores how ancient rhetoricians' advice on ending writing and speeches continue to be over-emphasized in writing textbooks.

Chapter 4

How Composition and Rhetoric Textbooks Address Conclusions

> From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast . . . [T]hat once barely-discernible fissure . . . rapidly widened—there came a fierce breath of the whirlwind— . . . there was a long tumultuous shouting like the voice of a thousand waters—and the long deep and dark tarn at my feet closed sullenly and silently over the fragments of the "HOUSE OF USHER."
>
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Fall of the House of Usher" (29)

Listen to a small part of a "tumultuous shouting sound like the voice of a thousand" composition textbooks on how to write conclusions. Now that I have shown how little instructors are taught about teaching the rhetoric of conclusions, I transition into what textbooks are providing to teach conclusions in the classroom.

I have chosen five textbooks from five different and well-known American academic textbook publishers. All of the textbooks have been published after 2000 so as to be a recent snapshot. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing* was published by Pearson Education. Pam Mathis wrote *Blueprints for Writing: Building Essays*, published by Cengage Learning. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing with Readings and Handbook* was published by W.W. Norton and Company. Pamela Arlov's book *Wordsmith: A Guide to College Writing* was published by Prentice Hall. *Write Now: Read. Think. Research. Persuade. Communicate.* by Karin L. Russell was published by McGraw Hill.

Table 4-1 Rhetoric and Composition Textbook Review

	Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing	*Blueprints for Writing*	*The Norton Field Guide to Writing*	*Wordsmith*	*Write Now*
Length	848 pages	804 pages	986 pages	606 pages	445 pages
Publication date	2006	2014	2013	2010	2012
Number of lists for conclusions or endings in index	8	13	20	9	9
Chapter devoted to conclusions	One section of a chapter	Yes	Half of one	Yes	No
Sample conclusions included	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Pages that give instruction on conclusions	4 pages out of 830 = > 1%	22 pages out of 614 = 4%	12 pages out of 968 = 1%	12 pages out of 599 = 2 %	12 pages out of 445 = 3%
	62 pages over all 5 books of 3456 pages total = < 2%				

Table 4 1—*Continued*

Conclusions presented as:	On pages:				
Reminders of thesis	567	9, 94, 144, 164, 182, 200, 216, 233, 251, 268	78, 307	96	170, 198, 385
Summarize main points	567	9, 94	115, 146	97	170, 198, 385
Relate back to the beginning	567	96-97	115, 146, 307		99
Explain what argument reveals	567		78, 115, 307,	188-189	142
Something memorable		9, 96-97, 182, 200, 216, 268			86, 116, 198, 385
Call for action	567	183	146, 307	98	198, 289
End with personal narrative or anecdote	567	144	307		
Other presentations	Give example of main point. Counter-argument. Call for further research. (567.)	Quotation, 9. Brings the two ideas in a compare and contrast essay together, 233.	Satisfying to readers, 50.	Quotation, 101. Prediction for the future, 99.	

This chart highlights that, out of 62 pages on conclusions across 5 textbooks, 17 times students are encouraged to remind readers of their thesis, more than any other piece of advice given. This focus on thesis recapitulation follows Aristotle's most quoted advice. Summarizing main points comes in second with 9 mentions in these 62 pages. Often the advice looked similar to these sentences in *WriteNow*: "As usual, it's a good idea to restate your main idea and summarize your main points in your final paragraph . . . Finally, end with a memorable statement that will linger in the minds of the readers" (Russell 199). The textbooks never explained clearly to students how to end "end with a memorable statement."

Though the textbooks repeat advice to the point of redundancy, there is some advice worthy to be shared. (Some of the especially helpful examples will be included in the Lesson Plans section.) For example, *Wordsmit*h had exercises for students to apply the knowledge gained in the chapter on conclusions and a more balanced approach to the idea of repeating the thesis: "[T]he first sentence or two of the conclusion should take your reader once again to a broad, thesis-level view of the topic. This broader statement may take the form of a summary, a recommendation, or a prediction" (Arlov 96).

The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing contains a section of questions for students to ask themselves when writing, including: "Do you know of an actual instance, illustration or example of your main point that would give it [your conclusion] added weight?" (Ramage 567). Brainstorming questions are often profitable for students. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* ends its chapter on "Beginning and Ending" with questions that help students to consider the rhetorical situation. It asks about the essay's purpose, audience, genre, stance and media/design (Bullock 310-311). For example, "What is your stance, and can your beginning and ending help you convey that stance?" (310). Examples are included after each question, which gives the students ideas.

Conclusions are currently being overlooked even though they are a required part of essays and a large portion of what students are expected to write. By page length, less than 5 percent of the instruction in these any of these is devoted to conclusions. The book that covers conclusions in the greatest percentage, *Blueprints for Writing*, at 4%, also mentions restating the thesis on 10 of those 22 pages. If instructors expect 4 to 6 page essays in college composition courses to have conclusions which are 1/3 to 1/2 of a page, conclusions will make up 6 to 12% of a students' essay. Conclusions are also 33% of the basic structure taught to students.

Based on the dearth of information about conclusions, I recommend textbooks include sections on conclusions and instructors spend class time teaching how to write conclusions. Therefore the next section gives sample lesson plans to promote the pedagogy of conclusions in today's college composition classrooms. Lesson Plan A is the foundation of all of the following lesson plans and provides a handout to cover with students of the main rhetorical moves that writers employ in conclusions as a framework for all of the discussions of conclusions that follow. In Lesson Plan B, I suggest students practice writing endings as an in-class exercise. For Lesson Plan C, I suggest that students read student examples of essay conclusions to see what other writers do. In Lesson Plan D, I suggest that students write alternate endings as an out-of-class exercise. For Lesson Plan E, I encourage instructors to add conclusions to their feedback on student drafts. I end with Lesson Plan E, where I recommend adding conclusions to peer review.

Chapter 5

Helpful Ways to Teach Students How to Write Essay Conclusions

> And now was acknowledged the presence of the Red Death . . . And one by one dropped the revelers in the blood-bedewed halls of their revel, and died each in the despairing posture of his fall . . . And the flames of the tripods expired. And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all.
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Masque of the Red Death" (61)

Textbook limitations should not hold "illimitable dominion over all" but various rhetorical possibilities for conclusions should be discussed in the classroom. Knowledge of the writing vivid conclusions is useless unless instructors can teach it in the classroom. This section outlines some of the most useful and helpful ways to teach students to write conclusions. Student essays should end just as strongly as they begin. Aristotle stated that epilogues should say what has been said, because returning to a thought at the beginning shows cohesion. Teachers should explain that the review should use different phrases, showing sophistication, and that the functions of conclusions are far more complex than just rehashing what has already been stated. The first step in teaching this to students is my chart of possibilities for ending, in which I list the five main things writers do in conclusions.

Lesson Plan A: Classroom Discussion on and Chart of Possibilities for Ending

One goal of composition instructors should be to encourage students to "see a wide range of alternative solutions to a rhetorical problem," to see that there are many different ways of finishing one essay that will work (Wilson 4). A good first step in teaching conclusions is that there should be a class discussion on the various possible ideas in ending. Based on my research above (especially from ideas from *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing, Blueprints for Writing, Dr. J.A.C.'s Conclusions, Norton Field Guide to Writing,* Aristotle's *On Rhetoric, Swales' Research Genres, Wordsmith,* and

Write Now), I have created a schema of the five main rhetorical moves that writers employ in conclusions: 1, Recall the beginning, 2, become more general, 3, become more specific, 4, call for action or change, and 5, include pathos. Great inspiration for the structure of my handout came from Swales' "Creating a Research Space" schema for writing introductions (*GA* 141-143).

I created a handout that I give my students of these five main moves and various examples of those moves (see Appendix A for the full handout). I chose to title the handout "Possibilities for Essay Conclusions" instead of "Possible Rhetorical Moves," trying to use language that is easily accessible to any level of English composition student. (Examples of how students employ these various moves in conclusions will be included in the section "Chart of the Rhetorical Moves Writers Make.")

The five rhetorical moves listed on the handout are not always distinct moves and may even overlap one another in the same sentence of a conclusion. For example, 1c, "Reminding of the so what/who cares," is very similar to 5b, "Relating the argument to the writer's own life or experience" because providing a personal story is often an example of a personal so what/who cares that shows that because the topic matters personally to the writer it should matter to the reader as well. The schema can also be confusing because writers can employ the number without doing any of the specific letters of examples listen below. For example, number 4, "Call for action or change," can be done without doing either 4a, 4b, or 4c. Nonetheless, it is always helpful to provide students with a schema to begin to fit rhetorical moves within so that they can remember, recognize and employ the moves from the imperfect schema.

There are a few moves that can be done in conclusions which I purposefully left off the handout because they can quickly become ineffective when employed by student writers. For example, some conclusions contain counterarguments. This done be done

effectively but it is unlikely for student writers to be able to do so. They are far more likely to weaken their arguments by containing a stronger argument from the other side at the very end and leaving that argument, not their own, in the reader's mind.

Another example is asking a question of the reader at the end. Student writers for some reason love to ask questions in the conclusion of the reader, with varying success. This could be considered either move 4, "Call for action or change," or a 5a, "Appealing emotionally to readers to agree with the essay's argument" with a question. I chose to leave off these two possibilities for conclusions from the handout because I believe students' effort is better focused on rhetorical moves that are more likely to be effective.

As far as I know it is the only schema or handout of its kind on conclusions. Hopefully future research can be done to perfect the schema. By giving this chart to students, we can encourage them to see "a wide range of alternative solutions" to the rhetorical problem of conclusions (Wilson 4). This can inspire students to write a different possibility of an ending, maybe one that they never knew existed. Many of the following lesson plans require this lesson plan as the foundation and would be ineffective without at least a 10 minute discussion of common rhetorical moves writers make in conclusions.

Lesson Plan B: Write Endings as an In-Class Exercise

After discussing different solutions to the rhetorical problem of ending using my handout, a helpful in-class exercise would be to have students practice writing conclusions. The instructor could pair students to write conclusions together. Quintilian teaches that writers should be creative in writing and that "it will be serviceable also to vary our own [language] in a number of different forms, . . . and . . . putting them, as harmoniously as possible, into several shapes just as different figures are molded out of the same wax" (X.5.10). One application of this is to have pairs of students write different endings to an essay to create a different figure out of the same wax. They can read the

conclusions aloud and think about composing the same information with a different tone, focus or story.

The textbook *Wordsmith* suggests the following exercise to practice this type of conclusion: “Imagine that you have written an essay discussing the causes of one of the following social problems. Write a brief conclusion (two to four sentences) making general recommendations about working toward a solution” (Arlov 98). The recommendation conclusion is one that students use less often and by practicing writing this type, *Wordsmith’s* exercise highlights its existence to students as a rhetorical option.

I would change *Wordsmith’s* ideas slightly so as to be more relevant to students. I suggest instructors provide a conclusion-less sample essay which is similar to the essay assignment they are working on. By providing an essay sample which is relevant to the students’ current work, students can be more engaged in this exercise. The exercise will help them think through the assignment requirements and show if they understand the rhetorical situation by writing an appropriate conclusion.

The instructor should have students read the sample before they come to class. Then have students work in pairs for about 10 minutes to write an essay ending which is appropriate for that specific rhetorical situation which fits the sample essay. Call on certain pairs to read the recommendation conclusion and then have the class discuss the strengths for each.

Lesson Plan C: Students Read Student Examples of Essay Conclusions

In addition to finishing sample conclusions, students should read many samples of conclusions. Quintilian repeatedly recommends having students read examples of high quality rhetoric. When discussing conclusions, he says “There are however innumerable ways in which this may be done. The finest example is provided by Cicero's prosecution of Verres” (VI.I.3). Similarly, textbooks and teachers which provide examples of good

quality conclusions will be beneficial in teaching students to write good compositions. Seeing how different conclusion examples fit into different rhetorical situations is useful for students.

Examples shown to students to imitate should be as close to conclusions that have really been written as possible. Quintilian indicates that the examples should "be as like as possible to truth" (II.10.4). The examples should also be specific as possible, preferably pulled from samples of other students' work on similar assignments. In the same section, Quintilian asks, why "state a case that all know to be fictitious?" and that he wishes "that it were made a part of the exercise to use names," that is, to include specificity.

I employed this exercise as part of my guest lecture on conclusions for my research project in a future section. Examples of the sample Issue Proposal Essay endings the class looked at are in Appendix B. I recommend including the thesis of the essay before the conclusion paragraph to aid in discussion of quality of a thesis and how a conclusion should fit the rhetoric of the entire essay. This will also help students to know if the writer is employing a move 1, "Recall the beginning." Because creativity often begins with imitation, I believe it is helpful for students to read high quality conclusions written for real essay assignments.

Lesson Plan D: Students Write Alternate Endings as an Out-of-Class Exercise

The anonymous author of *Dissoi Logoi* argues both sides of many arguments, ending with whether or not virtue is teachable. He debates the very proofs on teaching virtue which he gives to the audience. To conclude, he states, "Thus my argument is complete, and you have its beginning, middle and end. And I don't say that wisdom and virtue are teachable, but that these proofs do not satisfy me" (VI.13). Unlike this author, students should have proofs that satisfy and an end which is strong and vibrant. The

author's conclusions are the same for the many topics he debates in *Dissoi Logoi* —from food, drink and sexual pleasures to the demented and the sane—though his arguments are on both sides, which he calls "two-fold arguments" (I.1). What if students wrote two drafts of a paper that had the same arguments but two conclusions, practicing in some way the opposite of *Dissoi Logoi*, a one-sided argument with a two-fold ending?

This exercise looks like students composing the same information with a different tone, focus and story. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing* suggested writing two different conclusions for an essay: "Choose a paper you have just written and write an alternative conclusion using one of the strategies discussed in this lesson. Then share your original and revised conclusions in groups. Have group members discuss which one they consider most effective and why" (Ramage 569). Having students write two endings for their essay would have the goal of helping them think about their conclusion, not just write one to be able to turn the paper in.

An introduction to this assignment for a class could include popular culture: alternate endings for either movies or video games. The instructor could show students a producer's alternate endings to a movie they know well, such as T*he Bourne Identity, I Am Legend, Life of Pi, Secondhand Lions* or discuss some of the many alternate endings for the movie *Clue*. The instructor could discuss how different endings have different strengths. Alternatively, the instructor could discuss video games with students and how the different choices they make while playing the game lead to different endings, all of which feel like a valid part of the storyline. The rhetorical choices we as individuals make when writing lead to different essays which can still be valid interpretations of the assignment, all of which will have naturally different conclusions that are still powerfully engaging.

After the introduction using popular culture, students would be required to write two different possible endings to their essay for the next draft. The students would bring in a printed second or third draft into the next class with both endings. Instructors could give feedback to the students on which ending is more effective and better fits with their rhetorical choices made throughout the paper. Or peer reviewers could look at the two endings and discuss with the writer the different strengths and weaknesses of each version. Or students could write reflectively on their own endings to prompts from the instructor to decide superiority.

I have tried this lesson plan multiple times with students. Mostly recently, I tried this lesson plan as part of my research with students, which I will discuss in that section. I gave the students brief feedback on which conclusion was more effective and why.

The first time I tried the lesson plan was with an English 1301 class a year ago while they were working on their final essay, the Synthesis Essay, where they synthesize quotes from provided articles with their own thoughts on a chosen issue. After discussing possible rhetorical moves in conclusions, I introduced the assignment to write alternate conclusions to the essay by showing the class the alternate endings to *Clue*. Although it is my personal favorite movie with alternate endings, *Clue* was not an effective choice because most of my students hadn't seen the movie before. Nonetheless, the students got the idea, probably because of the printed the assignment instructions I handed out to students, including a picture from the movie *Clue* and the following:

> You will write two different possible endings to the third draft your synthesis essay. Just as in the movie Clue, writing alternate endings can reveal something about what you are trying to say in your essay.
>
> In class on [date], we will be doing a workshop on essay conclusions.
>
> - Bring in two printed copies of the third draft of your essay and two printed copies of your alternate endings/conclusions.

- Your classmates will look at your two endings and discuss with you the different strengths and weaknesses of each version. This will help you to write a strong conclusion.

The class had already completed a peer review on the Synthesis Essay and had one-on-one conferences with me on their essay. I chose to have them do a second peer review on their alternate conclusions (since composition research has shown writing peer reviews are an excellent way to improve students' own papers, this seems wise). The peer review prompt that I used in class for their second peer review read:

> Synthesis Essay Peer Review Prompt Two Instructions:
>
> 1. As the writer reads their essay out loud to you, follow along in your copy. Underline/mark any sentences that they had difficulty reading or that you had difficulty understanding.
>
> 2. Which one of alternate conclusions for their SE is better? Which one makes a more compelling argument or fits better with the themes in their essay? Would a combination of both of their conclusions work well for the paper? Write 2-4 sentences to explain your answer here.

Because we had already spent time discussing the essay assignment as well as conclusions, this was a natural next step. Despite the ineffective introduction with *Clue*, my students were able to write a smoother essay with a more well thought out ending due to this exercise. Classtime was well spent with the writer reading aloud their essay to find confusing or awkward phrasing and their peers being able to give feedback on the conclusions. Additional peer review prompt ideas are the focus of the next lesson plan.

Lesson Plan E: Adding Conclusions to Peer Review

As already mentioned in Lesson Plan D, simply by adding a question on a high quality peer review prompt, conclusions can be kept in the students' mind. This is an especially effective lesson plan because it doesn't take long to add to an already created peer review prompt and doesn't take up any extra time on the part of the instructor during the peer review process. This also shows that the instructor has expectations for the

conclusion. Because I discuss conclusions with my students, include it in my feedback on some essays and on some peer review prompts, my students are willing to ask me questions about how to improve their conclusion. They know I'm reading their conclusions and that I have high standards for conclusions.

Research has shown that a high quality peer review is one in which a student gives specific feedback to another student on a draft of their writing. The best peer reviews provide no opportunity for praise or blame because the prompts ask the student to give detailed feedback to the student writer, even quoting back to the writer sections of their essay to prove that they are or are not making a specific rhetorical move.

First is a UTA First Year English standard peer review on the Mapping the Issue paper for English 1302, an essay where students compare and contrast three to five groups' viewpoints and arguments on a particular issue. I added the following questions on conclusions:

> Conclusion: How does the author choose to end their essay? What moves do they make at the end (comparing and/or contrasting the viewpoints, discussing the importance of the issue again, quoting, etc.)? Feel free to quote the paper back to the author as examples of the specific moves they make in the ending.

The next example is for the Issue Proposal, an essay which involves proposing a topic which is worth of a semester of research. To the UTA First Year English standard peer review, I added the following questions, reminding the students of my handout's schema:

> Conclusion: How does the author choose to end their essay? Which of the five possibilities we discussed last week do they make at the end (recall the beginning, become more general, become more specific, call for action or change, or include pathos)? Quote phrases or sections of the paper back to the author as examples of the specific moves they make in the conclusion. Do you think they should add in another conclusion possibility to strengthen their ending?

As all good peer reviews do, these prompts do not question the quality of the writer's conclusion, only ask the reviewer to narrate to the writer what they are already doing or not doing in the conclusion. They also remind both the writer to have a conclusion and of the possible moves they could be making there. Adding conclusions to peer reviews is a natural outgrowth of discussion conclusions with students, as is the last lesson plan, including it in instructor feedback to students.

Lesson Plan F: Adding Conclusions to Instructor Feedback

Because of that foundation of already having discussed possibilities for essay conclusions with the students, instructors can move on to adding just a few sentences or minutes into their feedback to students to discuss their conclusion. Few instructors feel qualified to give students feedback on their conclusions and already feel as though they are rushed for time to give students quality feedback on anything. Part of my teaching philosophy, based on the teaching philosophy of the English Department at UTA because I have a Graduate Teaching Assistantship here, is that giving students my expert feedback on drafts in progress is one of the most effective ways to improve their writing and much better than spending extensive time on final drafts (when students are more interested in grades than future revision). I believe that giving my students feedback on conclusions, which I feel qualified to do, is a valuable use of my teaching time because my students will write better essays overall if they understand the assignment's rhetorical situation well enough to write a powerful conclusion. Obviously, if the student has major problems in other areas, I won't be devoting time to discussion of their conclusion.

There are two main ways to include conclusions in instructor feedback to students: Mention it during conferences or including it during written feedback to students on a draft.

First, I often choose to give feedback on drafts by scheduling one-on-one conference times with my students during a week that I have cancelled class. For conferences, I give my students printed schema of the major sections and/or requirements of the essay for them to take notes on during the conference and I include "Conclusion" toward the end. I tell the students we may not hit all of the points on the sheet but it helps them to structure my feedback. They are able to connect my feedback with actual parts of their paper, rather than writing a long list of comments that are not orderly or never writing any notes so they will forget everything I said. A schema I recently created for conferences on the Issue Proposal (an essay which involves proposing a topic which is worth of a semester of research) includes the following headings and space underneath each for students to write notes:

Conference on Issue Proposal Essay

Notes on revisions I should make

Introduction

- Incorporation of What They Say:
- So What? Who Cares?:
- Statement of Thesis: This semester I plan to research _____ because of _____.

Body Paragraphs

- What you know about this issue:
- What you don't know about the issue:
- Interested audiences, including potential allies/opponents:

Structure—should I reorganize some paragraphs and add/change transitions?

Conclusion

Citations

- If have quotes, need to add Works Cited page.

Simply because “Conclusion” is printed on their schema, the students will ask what I think about their conclusion or be reminded they need to write one because I expect it. Any instructor could add conclusions to the feedback they give students on essay drafts in whatever way fits best with their teaching philosophy.

Secondly, during written feedback to students on a draft, an instructor could comment on the conclusion. This could include noting a lack of conclusion in an early draft, reminding the student of the handout on conclusion possibilities, or of commenting on the effectiveness of the conclusion they wrote and recommending changes to strengthen it.

Before I give examples of feedback to students I’ve written, I should explain my written feedback strategy. I often use a schema to give written feedback to students, as a way for me to focus myself on what I want to give feedback on as well as to make it easy to copy and paste (from a Word document) comments about certain strengths/weaknesses of drafts from comments to one student for commenting to another student. I include “Conclusion” as part of this schema as well. Last semester I used a schema to give feedback to my English 1302 students on the Mapping the Issue Essay, an essay where students compare and contrast three to five groups’ viewpoints and arguments on a particular issue. I adapted the following schema from one Dr. Jim Warren used to give me feedback on the same paper that I wrote for Argumentation Theory, the class on teaching 1302:

Hi Name,

Introduction:

- Incorporation of What “They Say”:
- “So What? Who Cares?”:

- Statement of Thesis:

Background:

Description of Position 1/Summary of Source(s):

Description of Position 2/Summary of Source(s):

Description of Position 3/Summary of Source(s):

Comparisons and Contrasts:

I look forward to reading your final,

SV

I write my feedback within the schema to fit the needs of each student for improvement, copying and pasting common comments from a Word document and personalizing it to each student essay. I removed the "Conclusion" section off for students who had larger problem with other sections of the essay or with not fulfilling the assignment requirements.

Below are portions of notes I have made to students on their conclusions, some from working drafts and a few from feedback on final drafts:

- I think you're correct [responding to a note from the student] that you should add into this [conclusion] why the overall issue matters to give more of a feeling of finality.
- Great concluding sentence at the end.
- You present each of the viewpoints thoroughly and have a strong conclusion question.
- I especially liked your strong conclusion with a reoccurrence of who cares.
- In your [next draft], work on . . . making sure that your conclusion and your introduction have different goals.
- After that [a quality section of the essay], you seemed to become flustered and rushed. You added long quotes without analysis and had a surprisingly short conclusion paragraph. You lost ethos at the end by doing this. What happened?

- Your conclusion seems to have a good idea but seems to a lot of 'truisms' put together into one paragraph. What are YOU trying to say that is new and unique?

- I felt like your paper just ended without any conclusion or place for me to go from there. You proved that men and women's body images are affected by the media, but what does this all mean for us? Why does the gender gap in body image matter? Can we change it? I would have liked a way to advance the conversation.

These comments to students show that I might not spend much time or text commenting on their conclusions, but I do make a habit of looking at their conclusions, asking questions and making recommendations of how to strengthen essay endings. When instructors feel empowered to be able to do so, it can be an effective way to improve student writing. This can also be an especially good place to recommend changes to more sophisticated writers who have somehow ended up in beginning composition classes, for whom instructors may not always have ideas for improvement.

Overall, these six lesson plans have proven that adding a focus on conclusions to classes is not a difficult or complicated task. It is certainly a task which will improve student writing and understanding of the rhetorical situation. Conclusions are worth just a few minutes of our time as instructors in order to teach our students excellent forms for their essays, from beginning to end.

Chapter 6

Research Study on Students' Ability to Write Conclusions

> This is unquestionably the most stupendous, the most interesting, and the most important undertaking ever accomplished or even attempted by man. What magnificent events may ensue, it would be useless now to think of determining.
> --Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Balloon-Hoax" (*Treasury* 330)

With so very few recent composition pedagogy articles written on conclusions and the lack of pedagogical direction on how to teach students to write them, the necessity for my thesis research becomes evident. Additionally, no previous research in classrooms has been done with students on how they write and teaching them how to write conclusions. My research on students and their process of learning about and writing conclusions is "unquestionably the most stupendous, the most interesting, and the most important [research] undertaking ever accomplished or even attempted by" composition instructors to date. The magnificent events, conclusions and applications ensuing from my research ensued were useless to determine beforehand. I knew that only by teaching actual students about conclusions to learn how they responded by reading and analyzing their texts could all that came before be truly understood.

Composition research with students has made the composition field respectable. Therefore my classroom research will make my claims more respectable as I provide in later sections textual examples from real freshman composition students of their essay conclusions. I used an IRB-approved research study on a class of English 1302 students. I submitted my IRB application for research approval on November 10 and it was approved on November 15.

Research Study Methodology and Overview

Because I did my research on a 1302 class, the students should have some knowledge of composition either from passing or testing out of 1301. The students should have acquired some knowledge of writing essays and be better able to understand instruction on conclusions.

I chose to do my research with students in another professor's class because researching students who are not my own lessens my bias. It additionally lessens my insight into their individual circumstances and personalities, freeing me to analyze their textual examples fairly. It also adds a level of complexity of the students experiencing another instructor's teaching style for three weeks before experiencing mine during the guest lecture.

Dr. Cathy Corder, an adjunct at UTA, agreed to sync her 1302-032 syllabus with my schedule so I could guest lecture in late January. Dr. Corder was my supervising professor for one semester as a GTA at UTA before I had 18 hours of graduate credit, so I have worked with her and know she is both reliable and flexible. Dr. Corder's teaching philosophy and practices are different from my own, which in some minute ways affects the students' process and pacing of creating texts.

My IRB-approved research plan was to obtain first and second drafts of student essays to analyze their conclusions, one draft before and one draft after I guest lectured in that class on conclusions. I also gave the students a questionnaire on what they thought writers did in conclusions when I guest lectured. Because my research involved no harm to the students and was exactly the same amount of risk to the students as their regular instructor teaching them and obtaining drafts, I applied for IRB exempt status and was only required to notify the students of my research with a three page form, not required to obtain their permission with signatures.

My research began when Dr. Corder's 1302 students submitted the first draft of their Issue Proposal essay on Blackboard on January 30. The Issue Proposal is the first essay in 1302 and Dr. Corder gave them feedback on the theses in their first drafts. That same day they submitted first drafts, I guest lectured to the class on conclusions. They submitted their second draft on February 6 with two alternate conclusions. I was able to gain access as a Shadow Instructor to the class's Blackboard module to download the first and second drafts. I then looked at the two alternate conclusions and gave short comments to the writer on which conclusion I thought was most appropriate for their essay. I gave them comments on Blackboard February 7-8 and this was the end of my contact with the students. I did not look at any of Dr. Corder's grades for the students after that, hoping to lessen my bias and focus my attention on the effectiveness of their rhetoric without any type of grading mindset. Having seen only first drafts, which grade only for completion with my own students, made this easier.

The next few sections will provide information on the materials I created for my guest lecture, including a handout on the rhetorical movies for essay conclusions and lesson plans for the guest lecture. Then I will give a summary of how my guest lecture went in Dr. Corder's class and an interview with Dr. Corder to learn more about her students and how their writing process went after my guest lecture. Then I will discuss students' answers to the questionnaire on conclusions. The last two sections will analyze actual student texts, first listing what rhetorical moves students actually made in their essay drafts, then comparing a few examples of students' first and second drafts and how they improved after learning more about how to write conclusions.

Materials for the Guest Lecture: Chart of the Possibilities for Essay Conclusions and Lesson Plan

My plan for my guest lecture was to: introduce my research (to fulfill all IRB obligations); then give the students a questionnaire on what they saw in conclusions; look at my handout on possibilities for conclusions; look at a good sample student conclusion; then have groups look at different sample Issue Proposal conclusions, and discuss which rhetorical moves were most appropriate for the Issue Proposal. I planned to end by discussing movies with alternate endings and their assignment for the next draft to write two conclusions which I would give them feedback on. (The discussion of alternate endings in movies is part of my Lesson Plan D above.)

The foundational material for my guest lecture in Dr. Corder's class is my handout on the rhetorical possibilities for essay conclusions (Appendix A). Having a conversation with the class of the rhetorical moves that authors make in endings to inform them and offer options for when they revise their own conclusions was the main focus of my lesson planning and lecture. The option-based content of my handout provides a tremendous range of strategies for generating good conclusions as well as revising them to fit within the complex argument of the entire essay.

I believe my handout is pedagogically effective because it encourages students to see different options of what they can do in conclusions instead of requiring students to make certain moves. Composition theory of recent years focuses on possibilities, not requirements, as the best way to teach students to reflect on their own writing and choices. This is supported by Elder in her article, where she encourages instructors to "offer students not rules but options—throughout the composing process; forms yes, but forms which provide various avenues for further development rather than lock-step procedures" (350). The handout offers forms for students but does not offer any value

judgments on which forms are better. Elder goes on to say "Our pedagogy must be descriptive, predicated on how writing and communication in general happen, rather than prescriptive," echoing many other composition theorists. This is why I based the handout on actual moves writers make in conclusions from my years of reading and research on conclusions. Teaching what writers *actually do* in conclusions to students as possibilities of what they *could do* is not too restrictive while still being helpful.

After creating the handout, I spent a lot of time choosing an appropriate sample conclusion to discuss with the students (see Appendix B). I wanted it to be a student text because that is what the students were being asked to create, a text worthy of 1302, not a research article or publishable text. I have a copy of the *Norton Pocket Book of Writing by Students*, which contains high quality student writing. I chose the essay "Making Waves: Finding Keys to Success in the Failures of the Fish Industry" by Andrew Skogrand because it employed many different rhetorical moves seamlessly (170-181). Skogrand's conclusion is an excellent one that I enjoyed reading. "Making Waves" is an argumentative essay and therefore his conclusion contains a lot of calling for change (move 4). I chose to include Skogrand's thesis in the handout as well so students could see that he returns to his original topics even though the essay contains a less direct thesis than I require my students to write.

After that, I chose Issue Proposal conclusions from essays written by my own students in the fall semester (see Appendix C). I chose only essays from my students who signed a waiver for their writing to be used in future classes as student examples. Again, I chose to include the essays' theses on the handout so that the groups could see if the endings summarized the progress of the essay or argument (move 1a) or brought back topics from the beginning (move 1b). This also provided time to discuss other parts

of the essay assignment and so to check improve the students' understanding of the rhetorical situation.

I wanted the groups to be small enough to be effective so chose 6 samples for groups of no more than 4 students from a class of 24. The theses from these student essays are not as strong as their conclusions, possibly because students do not spread their revisions or time equally throughout an essay. I chose not to edit any grammar or other mistakes when copying the text, to represent real student writing. Despite the errors, I believe these are generally fairly strong conclusions for freshman-level writing.

By choosing to have groups analyze the quality and rhetorical moves within the sample conclusions, they applied the knowledge they gained from my handout. By critiquing others' conclusions, they were able to practice the collaborative aspect of writing and also learn more from discussion than from listening to me lecture. This also provided an opportunity for me to talk to smaller groups of students and hear their thoughts, something that I always find helpful for checking the understanding of a class because students are more willing to voice doubts to me or a small group of their peers than to a whole class. I believe this is one of the strengths of my teaching style and so I felt it was important to include it as a part of my guest lecture.

Quintilian's pedagogy would also approve of this close analysis of only a section of text. After discussing reading high quality examples of rhetoric, Quintilian says that students should be able to analyze the texts. They should be "read with attention, and indeed with almost as much care as if we were transcribing them; and every portion must be examined, not merely partially, but a whole book" (X.1.20). My application of this is that encouraging students to analyze these sample Issue Proposal conclusions closely will be helpful for them. Usually when analyzing an essay as a class activity, professors run out of time to analyze the conclusion, so it seems appropriate for my guest lecture to

examine the portion that is often passed over—the conclusion. In that same section, Quintilian states that rhetorician state “in the first part of his pleading what is to have its full effect at the conclusion” (X.1.21).Therefore Quintilian would also approve of my pulling out the thesis to discuss with the conclusion on these in class handouts. The next section will explain how I actually used the handouts during the guest lecture.

Guest Lecture and Feedback on Alternative Conclusions

I taught a section of 1302 as well this semester and so chose to practice the guest lecture using the above materials with my own students two days before guest lecturing in Dr. Corder’s class. I gave my students a freewrite on a reading we discussed at the beginning of class, as I figured Dr. Corder’s introduction of me, the IRB form and the questionnaire would take about that much time on Thursday. My students seemed very engaged and interested in the lesson on conclusions, more so than Dr. Corder’s class did later. Maybe the excitement was easier for me to see with my own students than someone else’s students because we are already comfortable with each other. Or maybe the fact that my class is at 9:30AM and Dr. Coder’s is at 8AM makes a difference in student engagement. My students came up with more things to do in conclusions when we brainstormed together before going into the possibility handout.

When I lectured for Dr. Corder’s class on Thursday January 30, I arrived a few minutes early. When Dr. Corder called roll there were about 20 students present. She introduced me; then I introduced my research project to the students. I first went through the three page IRB Informed Consent Document with them, notifying them that the class was receiving additional training on how to write conclusions and that there was no harm to them, to let me or Dr. Corder know if they are under 18 or wish to be exempt from the study (no one requested exemption).

Next I gave them the questionnaire on essay conclusions. I think some of them flipped it over when they passed it around and might have started on page two. I asked those under 18 or who wanted to be exempt to draw a star on the questionnaire because they were anonymous. Some of them looked like they were writing quite intently, long answers to question 1. They turned in the questionnaires after about 5 minutes. I will discuss their questionnaire answers in the next section.

After they finished the questionnaires, I asked the class what writers do in conclusions and wrote their answers on the board. They gave the usual "restate thesis," "sum up what they had already said" and a few other answers that didn't communicate clearly what writers do. Then I passed out my rhetorical possibilities for conclusions handout and we went through it. I asked the students to read the handout aloud, section by section. I tried to connect it back to what some of the students had answered earlier. My explanations of each type of rhetorical possibility seemed to make sense to them and they didn't have any questions.

I then handed out the excellent sample conclusion and gave them a few minutes to read it to themselves (see Appendix B: Sample Conclusion for Guest Lecture). When I read the thesis from the essay aloud, I mentioned how it was not as direct a thesis as I prefer from my 1302 students. Then two students read aloud the conclusion while the conclusion was up on the projector screen. I read it sentence by sentence and we discussed which moves they saw in each sentence. The students were good at applying their knowledge from the handout by identifying which moves they saw in the sentences. We discussed how it was a coherent paragraph yet many the author was doing many different moves was doing in the conclusion—all five on my handout. Paragraph coherence is something that many freshman composition students struggle with and so it

was a good example of sophisticated transitions between ideas that created a powerful whole.

We moved on to the group analysis of sample conclusions. I gave each of six groups their own sample Issue Proposal conclusion from student work in my 1302 class last semester from students who had signed a form that agreed to let their writing be used in future classes. (See Appendix C: Sample Issue Proposal Essay Conclusions.) I gave the groups 15 minutes to read and discuss the conclusions.

While they began to work, I asked Dr. Corder what kind of thesis she had told them she wanted in the Issue Proposal and wrote it up on the board: "This semester I will research/investigate/explore issue X because of multiple reasons." The reasons would ideally relate to the order of reasons presented in the structure in the essay and to their answers to the invention/content questions in the assignment prompt for the Issue Proposal essay. Discussing the thesis with the students in tandem with the conclusions should have helped focus the students on the rhetorical situation of the Issue Proposal.

As they worked, I walked around to the groups to see how they were doing and what they were discovering. The students seemed to think the conclusions were decent but not really good, at least not compared to the amazing first sample we looked at together but were doing a good job of recognizing different rhetorical moves. Most groups found at least three of the moves in their samples.

I then brought the class back together to look at the sample issue proposal thesis I had written on the board together. As we went through, we analyzed the quality of the theses together as well. None of them were really very good or like the sample Dr. Corder suggested—the conclusions were slightly better than the theses. Group 1 recognized moves 1, 2, 3, lots of 4 and 5 in their sample. Group 2 recognized moves 1, 3, 4 and 5 in their sample and wanted more elaboration in the conclusion, which was very

short. Group 3 recognized moves 5ac, 3, 1, and 4 in their sample. They saw a lot of move 5 (pathos) in this conclusion, including the phrase “passions and pursue their love for art” and a moving quote from the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities that “arts education ‘is not a flower, but a wrench.’” Group 4 recognized moves 1b, 5b, 4a, and 1 c in their sample. We discussed how there was not a thesis but a “first sentence” as I titled it on the handout, then discussed how to improve it. Group 5 recognized moves 1, 2a, 2c, 4 and 5 in their sample. They discussed how they saw “becoming more general,” such as street artists and art in general in the conclusion. Group 6 recognized moves 1c, 3a, 4a and 5 in their sample. Group 6 didn’t like their conclusion at all—I encouraged them to look past the grammar problems to the good rhetorical ideas. One student pointed out that the writer of conclusion 6 focused far too much on the so what/who cares and how the topic related to his own life but didn’t address the so what/who cares of his assigned audience (the class and teacher). The students were able to mark the conclusions and showed good awareness of how the rhetorical moves could look in different pieces of writing. However, after I read their resulting conclusions, I realized the students could recognize the moves but did not know when to use them.

I went back to the possibilities handout and asked them which conclusions would be most logical to use on the Issue Proposal. They said 1c (reminding of the so what/who cares) and 5b (relating the argument to the writer’s own life or experience) would be best. I encouraged them to think of 4a (suggesting additional research) as very logical for the Issue Proposal, where they are proposing a semester of research on a specific. This is interesting because in their actual conclusions 15 students used a reminder of the so what/who cares, 9 suggested additional research, and 14 related the argument to their own life. These three moves the class or I emphasized at the end were by far the most common moves to be used in actual student texts produced after this class.

To conclude, I introduced their next step: Writing two alternate conclusions in the second draft of their essay, due one week later on February 6. I asked them what movies they knew with alternate endings, and they came up with *Inception* while I mentioned old movies like *Clue* and *Secondhand Lions*. I explained that they needed to write two totally different conclusions in the next draft of their essay, encouraging them to try to do two different rhetorical moves in each and see what they come up with. Emphasizing that it didn't matter to me which moves they tried, I reminded them that I would give them feedback on Blackboard about which conclusion I thought was better and best went with their essay.

The next weekend, I gave them feedback on their alternate conclusions. Because I was only skimming the essays and then reading the conclusions in detail, I was able to give this feedback quickly and effectively. I used the following template to give them feedback on which of their conclusions was stronger (usually the second one they wrote, as the first was often the same as their first draft and had not been revised after learning about conclusions):

> Hi Student Name,
>
> I believe your alternate conclusion is a stronger conclusion because of its emphasis on X. Your first conclusion seems more focused on Y.
>
> I did like the sentence/ideas in the other conclusion, "Quote." I think you could add this in to the second conclusion to strengthen it.
>
> Good luck with the rest of your semester,
>
> Sarah Visser

I believe that quoting students back to themselves is always useful as they will be able to see their writing with new eyes and it validates them as writers who are worthy of being quoted, as well as modeling correct quoting. Sometimes I also encouraged them

that “This sentence in this conclusion seems more appropriate for your introduction or thesis statement than a conclusion.”

Some of their conclusions were too short and weak, following Elder’s complaints that students write conclusions which are “too short” and her encouragement to discuss length with students (349, 354). To those students I recommended the following: “I believe you can combine elements from both of your conclusions and then expand some of your ideas to make a stronger conclusion. In both conclusions, you focus on why you are suggesting additional research, which is very appropriate for an Issue Proposal.”

Unlike the aforementioned students, many missed the *proposal* part of the Issue Proposal assignment. Instead they wrote a research paper without having done any research, weakly arguing their opinion on their chosen issue. This misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation and the assignment created many conclusions which were weak or simply just inappropriate for the assignment. An effective conclusion is based on a thorough understanding of the rhetorical situation of the essay itself, which includes an excellent understanding of the assignment prompt. I used the following template to give feedback to these confused students:

> Hi Student Name,
>
> Both of your conclusions seem like they would be more appropriate for a research paper than for an Issue Proposal. They both focus on an argument you want to make in future papers (that the topic is important) rather than why your issue is worthy of a semester of research.
>
> I encourage you to write a new conclusion, possibly calling for additional research that you will do this semester, rather than focusing on arguments you want to make about your topic.
>
> Good luck with the rest of your semester,
>
> Sarah Visser

Though my notes were short and I recycled much of my advice, I believe it was still helpful for the students. It is certainly the only research-based advice they are likely to ever receive on a conclusion.

Interview with Dr. Corder on Her 1302 Class

I interviewed Dr. Corder about her class one month after I guest lectured to get an idea about the class's quality of writing overall. Dr. Corder said that overall that section of 1302 has a few students who are excellent writers. Most of the rest of the class finds writing difficult. As far as the class demographics, most of the students took English 1301 at UTA. About one third of the class is non-native English speakers so they have read fewer academic texts in English than their fellow students. The class tends to be quiet and ask few questions, possibly because it is an 8A.M. class. Dr. Corder said they were in some ways more engaged with my guest lecture than with her usual class.

When teaching the Issue Proposal, Dr. Corder went over the Issue Proposal prompt several times—both before and after I guest lectured—but students in general find the rhetorical situation of this assignment complicated and so fail to situate their writing within it. She talked with the class about important problems of today as a way of brainstorming for their own topics. She also discussed the difference between a topic and an issue; a topic is a fact that everyone would agree with verses an issue is something worth arguing about. (For example, foreign aid is a topic and something that exists. Whether or not the United States government should give foreign aid to Israel is an issue.)

Dr. Corder discussed an acceptable thesis statement template with the class multiple times: in the class before I came; on feedback for their first drafts; when I guest lectured, we discussed the template; and she mentioned it again in conferences. However, few students used anything like her sample thesis in their papers and did not

structure their essay around the thesis. She discussed with them that this is not an argument paper and that they should not assert a solution but they should only convince their classmates that this is a topic worth spending the semester researching.

The class day after my guest lecture was in class workday for the students where Dr. Corder reviewed the Issue Proposal assignment and the students wrote in class. They didn't ask very many questions as they worked. The week after I guest lectured, Dr. Corder had one-on-one conferences with her class on their third draft of the Issue Proposal and offered further advice on situating themselves within the rhetorical situation and suggestions for revision.

In their final drafts of the Issue Proposal, the students' chosen topics were too broad or too narrow for the assignment according to Dr. Corder. Many of the students ending up writing not an Issue Proposal but a research paper where they argued their own ideas without research because they did not take the time to truly understand the assignment prompt. Despite their weaknesses, Dr. Corder said that their conclusions were good overall in their finals.

Dr. Corder said my guest lecture was helpful for her as an instructor and would change the way she teaches composition in the future. My guest lecture will add to what she teaches and she intends to use my handouts in future classes. She became aware that she usually teaches the introduction of an essay, then focuses on thesis statement and gives one or two templates of what thesis statement should sound like. She told me that now she believes conclusions should not just be something to tack on to the end of an essay. She thinks that teaching conclusions can offer students a coherent, overarching perspective on the paper.

Answers to the Student Questionnaire on Conclusions

Though I believed I would find more information from analyzing student texts than having them self-identify things they believe they or accomplished writers do in conclusions, I still believed having a questionnaire would better identify what students already know about conclusions before they actually start writing. To see the questionnaire format that I used, see Appendix E.

By first having question 1, "Writers do many things in their conclusions. What have you seen accomplished writers do in their conclusions?" on its own side of the page, I hoped not to prejudice students to write items I considered important, such as those listed next to the check boxes on the two questions on the back side of the questionnaire. I chose to simplify the information I included on the handout of Possibilities for Essay Conclusions as the possibilities for questions 2 and 3, which I had students check those they recognized as belonging to conclusions. For moves 1, 2, 4 and 5, I listed the headings for the move. For move 3, "Become more specific," I only listed 3a and 3b, "Give an example" and "Quote another author." I also provided "Other" with a space for them to write in other possibilities.

For question 1, "Writers do many things in their conclusions. What have you seen accomplished writers do in their conclusions?" the students had a variety of answers. A surprising number of answers were a variant of both summarize essay progression and restate the thesis. For example, students wrote:

> "The conclusions usually restated the topic again and sum together all the points made in a short concise manner."
>
> "They recap what they wrote about."
>
> "Writers will summarize what their main points in the paper were. Usually, the thesis is restated in a different way."

> "I have seen writers restate the thesis and a slight different format & give a general summary (possibly 1 sentence) for each of their main points."
>
> "What I have seen is people restate their claim and resummarize their paper."

This last student's verb, resummarize, emphasizes the redundancy of doing both of these to me. I imagine that placed near an excellent thesis should be metacommentary that forecasts the structure of an essay; a good thesis is a type of roadmap for the essay so the reader can follow along easily. However, students saw a thesis and recapping the points as distinct actions that do not need to be near one another nor that are connected in anyway. The progress of the essay seems better for the introduction than the conclusion in my mind but not in students'. By having both, students saw the conclusion as merely the restatement Aristotle recommends for epilogues, the "shortening . . . [of] the length" of an argument (3.13.3). This summarizing certainly seems unnecessary for 3 to 10 page student essays, both I and Elder would argue, as the reader should be able to remember what came before (354). Resummarizing a short paper would fit Quintilian's comment that it suggestions "a lack of confidence in . . . memory" (VI.1.2). The number of students who mentioned *neither* restate the thesis or summarize was only 3 (17%).

Some students mentioned rhetorical moves I chose not to include in my handout, including two mentioning counterarguments or naysayers: "They also tend to plant a naysayer sometimes" and "If the paper is an argument or persuasive essay, the final opinion may be stated along with why the counterargument is invalid." As I mentioned before, this can be done effectively although it is unlikely for student writers to be able to do so. Two students suggested to ask a question of the reader (which is not on my handout but could be considered move 5a): "Besides, they ask a question at the end of their writing to a specific audience which expresses hope and positivity" and "Ask the reader a question."

Many students wrote similar ideas to what I included on my handout. Two students mentioned including a so what claim (move 1c): “They have a SO WHAT claim in their conclusions also” and “quickly stating the overall importance.” Two students mentioned becoming more general (move 2), saying “go from a specific topic to a broad one in the conclusion” and “Most writing’s I have read went from specific to general.” One mentioned move 2a (Explaining what your argument reveals about society or trends) by saying, “Talk about how it may lead to something much bigger,” One student suggested a move 4, call for action or change, by saying “call for change in some way.” Another student said to “end with some sort of universal truth,” possibly the same student who used trite truisms at the end of their conclusion.

Many of the students marked different things on page two of the questionnaire. Though students marked a variety of rhetorical moves, no one marked all of the options; most marked around 50%.

Table 6-1 Questionnaire Answers

2. Check any of the following you think accomplished writers do in conclusions:	*Number of Students Who Checked (out of 18 respondents)*
Recall the beginning	14
Become more general	8
Give an example	1
Quote another author	3
Call for action or change	13
Include pathos	10
Other:	“Summarize” “Recall the main aspects of the paper”
3. Check any of the following you have done in a conclusion you wrote:	*Number of Students Who Checked (out of 18 respondents)*

2. Check any of the following you think accomplished writers do in conclusions:	*Number of Students Who Checked (out of 18 respondents)*
Recall the beginning	15
Become more general	12
Give an example	3
Quote another author	2
Call for action or change	11
Include pathos	7
Other:	"Restate thesis" "Recall the main aspects of the paper" "Sum together points made"

The students marked many possibilities for rhetorical moves to make but were not as effective in actually employing multiple rhetorical moves in their conclusions, as the next section on their texts in general shows.

The Rhetorical Moves Students Made in Essay Drafts

I obtained 23 first drafts and 21 second drafts from Dr. Corder's 1302 class for this analysis. Appendix F provides a chart which lists the number of students who used in any draft of their conclusion each of the rhetorical moves recommended by my handout. I also provide two quotes from the student texts as examples of how students employed the rhetorical moves. Obviously they employ them less sophisticatedly than more accomplished writers do, as they are grappling with learning new complex ideas, but it is always helpful to see how and what real students write. Overall the student texts were of average freshman composition quality.

Though this thesis is not specifically about revision, it is interesting to note that only 8 students made what I would consider significant revision between drafts. An additional 6 students made small revisions, such as paragraph reordering or paragraph breaks. In the second draft, which required two alternate conclusions, 12 students (or more than half of the class) made no revision to their first draft's conclusion and 2 did not include an alternate conclusion. This reminds me that my definition of revision and drafting as a composition instructor is certainly different than students' ideas of revision. Substantive changes in ideas in the conclusion part of the structure shows students an expectation of writing as a recursive process which requires revision and complex, extensive consideration. At least 21 of these students made revisions in creating an alternate conclusion if nothing else.

It seems that the way we ended class during my guest lecture, highlighting some of the rhetorical moves from the handout as more appropriate for Issue Proposals, remained in the students' minds strongly. Then the students identified moves 1c (reminding of the so what/who cares) and 5b (relating the argument to the writer's own life or experience) as most appropriate for the Issue Proposal. I highlighted move 4a

(suggesting additional research) since it aligns with the main goal of the Issue Proposal assignment. These first two moves often overlapped in both the samples we looked at in class and the resulting student texts; relating the argument of why the research mattered to the writer's life was the so what/who cares for the writer herself or himself. There were many examples of 1c and 5b in the example texts and maybe this is why the students identified them as valuable. In both drafts of the conclusions I analyzed, 15 students make move 1c, 14 made move 5b, and 9 made move 4a. These are three of the most common moves students attempted.

The other most common move in the conclusion was move 4, call for action or change, which 9 students made. Often a call for change was written by students who misunderstood the assignment as a research paper and so concluded their argument on the topic with a call for change. I will discuss applications from these student missteps further below and in the next section, where I analyze an entire student conclusion which misunderstood the rhetorical situation and made move 4.

Moves 2 and 3, becoming more general or more specific respectively, are not common, with only 4 students attempting each. The only move which no students attempt is move 5c, describing an image that represents the issue or your argument. This might have felt less argumentative and more creative to them and therefore inappropriate for 1302, or it might be a more difficult move for beginning writers to connect argument and physical, creative description.

Interestingly, some students felt comfortable only with certain moves. 8 students made exactly the same moves in their alternate conclusion as they did in their other conclusions. 6 students employed distinctly different moves. If composition instructors are encouraging students to be creative within the constraints of the assignment and improve their writing, students should be made to feel comfortable employing what may feel like

daring moves within their writing. Yes, this may result in more grammatical mistakes and rhetorical missteps, but as students learn new techniques they will fumble around. Eventually they will get it right with practice and will improve their writing significantly. I believe instructors should encourage students to try new things in revisions to their drafts. One on one conferences with students may be the most appropriate and comfortable setting to encourage them to take these risks. Not being willing to attempt new things in writing often leads students to not being willing to make revisions, which often leads to frustration with their instructor because of lower grades than the students expected.

Overall, the students who wrote good conclusions appear to be better writers and to have paid attention during my lecture. An effective conclusion is based on a thorough understanding of the rhetorical situation of the essay itself, which includes an excellent understanding of the assignment prompt. For the purpose of teaching my own students as well as for analysis during this research, I define a good conclusion as one which makes a variety of rhetorical moves common in endings, synthesizing the different moves together smoothly with a sense of finality. Any recapitulation should be short, considering the assignment's required length is three to five pages. This assessment criteria is holistic and came intuitively from my research on conclusions without a rubric or specific criteria.

Elder taught five possibilities for conclusions based on Aristotle and encouraged her students to "employ at least two of these five in every conclusion" (354). After studying these student texts, the conclusions which employed at least three different rhetorical moves seemed to have longer and stronger conclusions with a greater sense of finality. The finality was provided partially by length and partially because they did more of the things which writers do in conclusions and so told me the essay was ending by

combining many thoughts. In the future, I will recommend that students synthesize at least three of the rhetorical moves in their endings to produce higher quality conclusions.

I saw throughout my analysis of the student texts that many students cannot write a good conclusion if they don't understand the goal of the assignment and what the essay should be trying to do. An Issue Proposal should be more like a prospectus, a future goal-oriented text. It should not be a text giving an opinion on the issue but focusing on why the issue is worthy of the student researching it all semester, how they will gain more information and what questions they want to answer about the issue this semester.

Instead of Issue Proposals, some students wrote "research" papers (without doing more research and usually failing to cite outside sources) where they presented their opinions about the issue. Often this research paper included a thesis that was appropriate for an Issue Proposal and not a research paper, then continued to write a research paper. After three or four pages, the student decided all of their research was done, they wrote conclusions that emphasized the opinions they had on the issue and what kind of claims they argued, not how they should be researching the issue throughout the course of the entire semester. Their conclusions would have been more rhetorically effective for an actual research paper but instead were rhetorically ineffective for the type of paper they were assigned to write. If a student does not understand the goal or the rhetorical situation of the essay, they cannot write a good conclusion. These weak conclusions, mostly based on making move 4 (call for action or change), was yet another way to reveal to readers that the students did not understand the assignment or the rhetorical situation of the Issue Proposal. This is an important reason for a great emphasis to be placed on teaching conclusions; reading the conclusion can be an effective way to check a student's comprehension.

There were a few student texts which did a competent job focusing on what they wanted to research this semester yet ending abruptly with their opinions. This shows, not a misunderstanding of the entire assignment's rhetorical situation, but a misunderstanding of how the conclusion should be closely connected with the goal of the text and should not start something entirely new. Instructors should be teaching students the goal of each part of an essay, including the ending, as a part of first year rhetoric and composition courses. Therefore instructors should be correcting this type of misunderstanding with students.

These general conclusions about student conclusions are a helpful beginning in analyzing what students do in conclusions after they have been taught about them. However, examining full student texts of conclusions in the next section will offer greater and more specific knowledge.

Textual Analysis of the Conclusion between Three Student Drafts

In this section I will look in depth at three sample student conclusions. I will discuss the revisions they made between drafts and the different rhetorical moves they employ as well as how effectively they do so. First I will discuss the example of a student who did what I just discussed—failed to understand the Issue Proposal assignment and so wrote a weak conclusion. Second, I'll discuss a student who showed improvement between drafts and wrote a conclusion of average decency. I'll finish by looking at a student who make significant revisions between drafts and applied my guest lecture well.

First is an example of a student who failed to write an Issue Proposal and therefore revealed her misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation. This student made some small revisions between submitting her first and second drafts, mainly rearranging paragraphs and changing the ending of her conclusion. From her second draft's thesis to the very end, she shows that she is thinking of the essay as showing her own opinions

based on mild research: “I plan to investigate the issue of steroids in professional football. It is a very significant issue in today’s sports world and there will be plenty of information to use as research.” Thus the student reveals that she plans to investigate while writing the Issue Proposal itself, not throughout the entire spring semester. She uses information as research in her Issue Proposal instead of looking forward to other assignments in the class (such as the ten source Annotated Bibliography, where she will do much more thorough research).

Her second draft is only one and a half pages and is filled with calls for a cessation of steroid use in the NFL, not calls for her own further research on the topic. One of her conclusions in the second draft argues:

> The players of the National Football League are subjected to a lot of pressure to be the best football players they can be and sometimes that pressure can force them to make bad decisions in order to succeed on the field. Steroids and other performance enhancing drugs are being used in the NFL, however; the current policy does not appear to be forcing significant change in players’ behavior. Some players become repeat offenders, while others may look for loopholes with other drugs that may mask the steroids. Our children, the future of sports, are exposed to the idea that several professional athletes are involved in steroids and can be pushing them the wrong direction. As fans and as people who simply respect the business, we must lift up our voices together and decide that a change must be made to current illegal substance policies in the NFL.

This conclusion is the alternate conclusion, a slight fuller explanation of the first conclusion. In both conclusion drafts, the student makes the same two rhetorical moves—calling for change in steroid use in the NFL (move 4) and focusing on the so what/who cares (1c). These two moves were two of the four most popular in this set of student texts but were employed much more successfully by other students. I encouraged students to use at least two of the rhetorical moves from my handout, but this conclusion feels meager with only two (rhetorically inappropriate) moves. Both of these moves focus on an argument she wants to make (that steroid usage in football is

wrong) rather than why this issue is worthy of a semester of research. During the drafting process would be the appropriate time for an instructor to discuss revision with the student.

After the drafting process is finished and a final essay turned in, often an instructor finds that the recommended revisions have not been made. Thankfully for the student above, this was a second draft that I looked at and the student still could look forward to a peer review on that second draft, a conference with Dr. Corder on their third draft and then turn in their final. This is plenty of time to realize her misunderstanding and plenty of drafts for significant revision to be made. However, if I received a final from a student that was written like this second draft, I would fail the paper. If an instructor receives a paper that is off the mark, such as this student's, they can encourage the student to write a new conclusion, possibly one calling for additional research that she will do this semester on steroid use in football or the so what/who cares about her topic, rather than focusing on arguments she may want to make in future papers. This clarification of the assignment should be helpful for the student's whole paper and their ability to pass the assignment and course. Teaching conclusions and using them as part of an instructor's check of the student's rhetorical effectiveness can make the difference between a student failing a course if they listen to the instructor's advice.

My second example is from a student who wrote an actual Issue Proposal. The two drafts show that the student's understanding of the assignment improved between the first and second draft (one submitted before and one after my guest lecture), their thesis and entire essay improved as well. In their first draft, his thesis reads, "I propose the issue of good versus evil of genetic engineering for this assignment and plan to work on it throughout the semester, because I'm greatly interested in this issue, and realize that I need to find out a lot more about it." His second draft includes a more specific

thesis: “I intend to weigh out the good and the bad of Genetic Engineering and develop a research paper by the end of this semester, because I want to prove that Genetic Engineering is a gift of science to the world, even though it is known for causing harm to animals and plants.” Here he shows a clearer understanding that the research will last the entire semester. He made other revisions to his essay between the first and second drafts, adding sections to better fulfill the assignment prompt, including what he doesn’t know about genetic engineering, why he is interested, and more of what he wants to research this semester. This shows that he obviously found my guest lecture and Dr. Corder’s class helpful and made thoughtful revisions to his essay.

In his first draft’s conclusion, which is also the first conclusion in the second draft, there are three rhetorical moves: First, relating the topic to the writer’s own interest in it (move 5b); “I've been reading about genetic engineering since I studied genetics in high school.” Then he includes so what/who cares (1c); “Many different views, especially the strong ones made me feel that this issue is very compelling. I can understand why people oppose and encourage it.” He ends with calls for further research (4a); “This made me want to choose this issue for my research position paper . . . I'm open to the possibility that my perspective might change by the time I'm done with my research.” Though paltry, this conclusion is appropriate for an Issue Proposal; however, his alternate conclusion shows great improvement.

His alternate conclusion in the second draft uses many of the same moves, though amplified with much more pathos (move 5) and 4c (predicting the future with and without genetic engineering):

> There are two sides of every coin. Issues exist because two or more sides cannot come to a state of agreement. Should we encourage playing with genetics, modifying nature to reshape the world? Could genetic engineering really help create organs in laboratories, for which many people will be able to fight death and thank this field for being their savior? Or should we accept nature the way it is and prevent mutilation

> of living beings to prevent them from being exposed to inhumane experiments? I find these questions hard to answer. I wonder how my classmates will respond to these questions. I wonder if my opinions will shift toward the opposing side by the time I'm done with my research. The fact is, I have a lot to learn; which is precisely why I find myself curious. For now, I believe that genetic engineering will do a lot of good to this world. Abundance of healthier food, human organs and a more stable ecosystem could be the result of our genetic engineers' success because of their passion and good intentions. As for the negative effects, I believe those can be controlled by law; for example, cloning of humans should not be legal unless sufficient evidence can be provided to convince us that it's going to be safe. We should encourage what's going to be best for all of us in the long run.

The length of this ending is also more appropriate for the length of their Issue Proposal than the first ending. Many of the sentences here reflect the assignment prompt: "I wonder how my classmates will respond to these questions" shows awareness of the intended audience, the class and instructor. Musings such as "I wonder if my opinions will shift . . . I have a lot to learn" show that he plans on researching genetic engineering and is willing for his opinion to change over time.

He ends by discussing the two possibilities he sees himself finding during his research, the good and bad possibilities for genetic engineering, describing the two possibilities with great emotion and vivid description (move 5). "We should encourage what's going to be best for all of us in the long run, *without* specifying which conclusion he agrees with. This is an appropriately open-ended so what/who cares of why it is worth researching for an Issue Proposal.

Overall, his alternate conclusion, written after my guest lecture, is a much better conclusion that shows greater rhetorical awareness. There are certainly additional revisions that could be made but an instructor could focus with the student on revisions to the ideas and phrasing instead of telling the student to cut the entire conclusion as would be necessary in the above weaker example. This student's new conclusion is more lively and engaging, inching toward the improvement in sophistication of writing that freshman

composition aims for. Learning about conclusions was a part of this essay's improvement and so validates instructors spending classtime on conclusions. Discussing conclusions is another way to teach students to improve their writing.

My last example is from student that showed great improvement between the first and second drafts. This student also showed great awareness of which of the rhetorical moves she was making which we discussed as a class. Her first draft had a short conclusion:

> Overall, I have stated that genetic screening is a significant issue when it comes to testing in children and how much information the insurance companies should be allowed to get their hands on. I also have great interest in this topic because of my major and personal experience. Research will be heavy with this topic because there are a lot of questions to be answered. This topic will be a great choice for committing an entire semester of research to.

Using crutch phrases like "Overall" show that the writer is not confident enough in the rhetorical moves she is making in their conclusion for the reader to know it is their conclusion (assuming the reader cannot even figure it out from the paragraph being the last one in the essay). She begins with summarizing the progress of the essay (move 1a), then relates the essay to her own interest in the topic of genetic screening (5b), and ends with mentioning her future research (4a). Phrasing is awkward throughout, such as "research will be heavy with this topic" and ending with trite restatement of why genetic screenings are important. This is the mediocre type of ending students often write when they are not sure how to end or do not provide time and space to end powerfully.

In the second draft, this student made some revisions and lengthened sections. She also showed awareness of the ending rhetorical moves I discussed during the guest lecture. The other students had great awareness of the rhetorical moves when discussing the various sample Issue Proposal conclusions different groups looked at but did not necessarily show me they remembered all the moves when writing their conclusions. This

student added comments in Microsoft Word's Review function to note which moves she believed she was making throughout both of the conclusions in her second draft. This was not a requirement for the second draft and she is the only student who did so, so it was remarkable. Her mindfulness told me that she learned from my guest lecture not only how to identify various rhetorical moves but also was aware of crafting them in her writing. Greater awareness in writing as well as the ability to write better is the end goal of any discussion of conclusions with students and so I am glad my guest lecture met its goal with her.

She expanded her original conclusion for her first draft and then wrote a strong alternate conclusion. She added to her conclusion an interesting reminder of a slightly out of context personal story that she used for pathos in the middle of the essay: "Currently, it costs somewhere around $10,000 to get your entire genome tested, but as technology advances the price will go down significantly. After a several years, it may only cost a few hundred dollars, and then everyone will be getting this testing done." This adds the rhetorical move of becoming more general by giving one example of her main point that genetic screening is expensive (move 3a). Again, because the story seemed out of place to me earlier, it seems to weaken her conclusion by revealing yet again a misunderstanding of the rhetorical situation.

Her alternate conclusion is a stronger conclusion because of her emphasis on the so what/who cares for her audience (1c). She also employs many different rhetorical moves seamlessly, which shows sophistication and improvement in her writing:

> Overall, I have stated that genetic screening is a significant issue when it comes to testing in children and how much information the insurance companies should be allowed to get their hands on. I also have great interest in this topic because of my major and personal experience. Research will be heavy with this topic because there are a lot of questions to be answered. Imagine for a moment that you had your genome screened, and they found out that you were absolutely 100% going to get Huntingdon's disease if you grew to an old age. They can

> figure this information out at any age, so you could know even at age 18. Well, few years later or even right now for some of you in this class, you are trying to get health insurance or life insurance, but they flat out deny you because somehow they know that you will eventually get Huntingdon's disease. Right now, you are perfectly healthy, though. Wouldn't that be terrible to be perfectly healthy and denied because the insurance companies know the results of your testing? I do too, which is why I think research in this along with genetic screening in children will be a worth my time this semester.

She spends little less time in the second conclusion restating what she has already proven in the paper (which felt inappropriate in a four page paper). When she discusses how some of her classmate might be trying to get health insurance and be rejected because of genetic screening, she appealing for her readers to care (1c) and to agree that her research of genetic screening is relevant and meaningful (5b). She ends by reemphasizing her continued research (4a), an appropriate move for this assignment. She showed an understanding of which rhetorical moves she was employing in her endings, an awareness of her own writing which will aid her in future revisions for any type of paper. Many students do not realize what they are or are not doing in the actual words in their essay and so exercises in class which encourage both revision and awareness, such as my lecture on conclusions, can help students strengthen their writing in other areas as well.

Many applications can be made from this analysis of these three students' conclusions and drafting process. First, the last two student examples show improvement between drafts of not only their conclusions but the entire essay as well. This authenticates how instruction on conclusions helps students' writing as a whole improve, not just their conclusions. Both of these students showed greater sophistication and discernment in which rhetorical moves to employ to end their essay after my guest lecture.

Overall for the class, those students whose conclusions improved the most also seemed to be the students who made the most revisions to their entire paper between drafts. Elder, who has also thought through the pedagogy of conclusions, agrees that "A conclusion is not a separate but an integral part of a complete essay" (353). As an integral part of a text, a superior ending will help make a superior text overall, and so should be a part of the focus of freshman composition courses. Composition instructors should be teaching conclusion. As the ending is the last thing the instructor and peer reviewers read in an essay, a better impression of a student's writing and argument will remain with the readers if the student has written a pleasing conclusion. This is what Aristotle called "[giving] a reminder" to the reader of what one has already argued (3.19.1). A strong conclusion will lead to a better overall essay and oftentimes a better grade from an instructor such as myself who grades holistically.

It seems that the students who thought more about their own topic and the writing of conclusions were able to write better conclusions and better overall essays, especially the last student who reflected on what moves she was making in both of the conclusions in her second draft. This would follow logically from the process theory of composition, which holds that writers who think more about what they're writing write better. In her discussion of the history of composition process theory in her chapter "The Emergence of Process Pedagogy," Crowley explains 1960s theorists and researchers Jerome Bruner and D. Gordon Rohman's focus on a student's thoughts:

> The concept of the self-directed student allowed Rohman to theorize the scene of composing in very different terms than those given by the humanist pedagogical tradition. . . . The student would become, rather, a person who actively reflected upon experience, someone who could, in Brunerian terms, assimilate the conceptual structure of a subject and alter it to fit conceptual structures already in place in his or her mind; the student would, in other words, learn. (197-198.)

Reflection is now considered a helpful part of the composing process and I would argue that reflection from the very beginning to the end are an important part of what compositionists should be teaching in their classrooms. The might be from the beginning of the essay to the end of the essay, or from the beginning to the end of the process of writing the assignment (which does not necessarily begin with the introduction nor end with the conclusion), or from the beginning to the end of a student's own thoughts on both the essay and the process. The student must learn about their own writing process, which involves knowing the possibilities of what writers put in conclusions and may very well include knowing what rhetorical moves they themselves are more likely to put in their own conclusions so as to expand their possibilities.

I believe that my guest lecture on conclusions and the resulting student texts are indeed part of the "'rhetorical consciousness-raising' and . . . 'focus on form'" which Swales called "important elements in any major pedagogical strategy" in college-level classes (*RG* 3). My guest lecture raised rhetorical consciousness in the students, resulting in improvements to their entire essay and realignment of their texts toward the assignment prompt. My focus on the conclusion part of essay form resulted in improvement in the students' form as a whole. If discussion of conclusions and their appropriate rhetorical moves are effective parts of a pedagogical strategy, why are composition teachers *not* including these types of discussions in their courses? In the last chapter, I call for greater instruction on conclusions in college composition classrooms and more research on the results of instruction on conclusions.

Chapter 7

My Amazing Conclusion

> No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick—on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat!
>
> ----Edgar Allan Poe,
> "The Cask of Amontillado" (121)

Here I hasten "to make an end of my labor" for now of fighting for a greater focus on conclusions in the pedagogy of composition and rhetoric instructors. "For more than half a century" few teachers have been expanding research into conclusions even though they make up a large part of expectations about student essays. The lack of pedagogy surrounding conclusions is concerning. There is "no answer still" for what to do except what I have proposed in this thesis.

Throughout this thesis, my findings are that discussions of essay conclusions in composition classrooms fulfill many of the main goals of composition classes and will improve students' entire essays. Awareness of the rhetorical situation and of the audience, two important goals of composition classes, is required for students to write a powerful and appropriate ending. I chose to define a good conclusion as one which makes a variety of rhetorical moves common in endings, synthesizing the different moves together smoothly with a sense of finality, with limited recapitulation. Because writing good conclusions involves making at least three of the different rhetorical moves writers often make in conclusion, teaching conclusions also teaches paragraph coherence and unity to students. Considering all of the above when writing their conclusion leads to improving students' writing and revision process and their awareness of their own writing and revision. My research with 1302 students showed that those students whose

conclusions improved the most were the students who made the most revisions to their entire paper between drafts. Teaching the writing of conclusions is yet another way to improve students' writing and so should be a required component of composition classrooms.

No other voices are adding to my proposals of how compositionists can teach conclusions but there should be. The best solution is better instruction for teachers as well as inclusion of conclusions in both lesson plans and textbooks, and more research on all of these avenues of composition. In this conclusion, I call for more research and action in the following three areas: Composition pedagogy, instruction, and textbook content.

Composition Pedagogy Theory

First, composition pedagogy is where everything starts and is therefore the most important. We must teach composition instructors to discuss conclusions as one of the many best practices which should be incorporated in classrooms. When composition theory holds this as a as best practice, it will lead to better, more coherent instruction, which will in turn lead to stronger student essays.

To create a more thorough pedagogy of conclusions, further research should be done. My ideas for further research include creating an order of information commonly included in essay conclusions as which is as thorough as Swales' "Create a Research Space" schema but more closely tied to composition than Swales' focus in his books (*GA* 140-141, *RG* 226-234). My research on conclusions focused on included listing common rhetorical moves; surely there is a familiar order of these moves which should be analyzed so beginning academic writers could follow the genre standards as a loose template for creativity. This could be called something like "Closing a Research Project" (CARP) after Swales.

Other research could include training a large number of instructors at a university to teach conclusions and analyzing their students' resulting essays compared to a control group. One there are many ideas, more research should be done on the most effective ways to teach conclusions. Finally, more models of impressive examples of each of the rhetorical moves made in conclusions should be compiled for pedagogy purposes.

Instruction: Syllabi and Lessons

After composition pedagogy embraces and publishes on conclusions as a valuable part of instruction, instructors will be qualified to articulate to students how to write rhetorically powerful conclusions. So my second call to action is to writing instructors to include instruction on conclusions in both their syllabi and lesson plans. Implementing the lesson plans included earlier in my thesis is an excellent starting place. Instructors should create and share additional exercises and assignments based on conclusions in their actual classrooms. I look forward to someday information on classroom materials relating to conclusions being published in journals such as *College Composition and Communication*, in pedagogy books, and books published by university presses. I hope that conferences will include presentations that promote the pedagogy of conclusions in today's college composition classrooms.

This is in one sense the easiest section in which to call for small changes to happen; networking among teachers happens casually and often inspires wonderful lesson plans. However, teachers are also often set in their own ways and own syllabi and are not looking for something makes their lesson planning more complicated. It is also most likely the first change that will happen before the theory actually progresses to include conclusion instruction as a best practice. I anticipate that my thesis defense and sharing my handout with instructors I know will create small ripples of change in how

other instructors perceive conclusions, as I already influenced Dr. Corder when I guest lectured.

Textbook Content

Textbooks may be the last change to happen as textbooks usually reflect what is already happening in classrooms and is often far behind pedagogy best practices. In the five composition textbooks used in my textbook review in an earlier section, they spent between 4 and 22 pages discussing conclusions, which is between less than 1% and no more than 4% of their overall page count on conclusions (or an average of less than 2%). 2% is not enough if the conclusion is taught as a third of the structure of an essay. Surely it is not unreasonable to expect textbooks to spend consistently even 5% of their content on how to write good conclusions, on model conclusions, and to expect them to more consistently relate what is written in the conclusion to the overall rhetorical situation in essays. Textbooks would be a wonderful place to publish information on conclusions, much more extensive information than the 2% currently. This material could include tables and models of conclusions. Instructor manuals could include exercises that include conclusions.

All three of my calls for action and research must overlap, because textbooks are often used by beginning composition instructor as the basis for their pedagogy. Many frazzled adjunct instructors assigned to teach composition receive little training and read only the textbook when teaching their class. Textbooks—and instructor manuals—are often the pedagogy of the overworked instructor. By including information on conclusions in textbooks, it would bring awareness to instructors and students alike. If there is a substantial chapter on conclusion in a textbook, surely the instructors would be at least slightly more likely to include conclusions as part of their lesson plans. Obviously all three

of these areas—pedagogy, instruction and textbooks—should be improved to promote the pedagogy of conclusions in today's college composition classrooms.

Conclusion, Epilogue, Peroration, or Ending

Compositionists cannot let the instruction of conclusions rest as it now stands but should implement my three recommendations for further research and action. Instructors should encourage students of the delight in creative endings that Quintilian spoke of, to "let loose the whole torrent of [their] eloquence . . . to spread all [their] canvas . . . [with] words . . . that are magnificent and ornate" (VI.I.51-52.). Think of the ending of a student's paper as one canvas in a triptych of introduction, argument and conclusion. Teachers need to give students vibrant colors, words and ideas of the emotion and power that can be crafted into a peroration, enabling higher quality conclusions and therefore higher quality entire essays. Students need to be given a range of powerful rhetorical options from which to craft "magnificent and ornate" endings. Students can craft high quality conclusions if instructors take the time to teach them. Let compositionists move forward to a world where students are empowered to write conclusions that say, "'Friends, give us your applause'" (Quintilian VI.I.51-52).

Appendix A

Handout of Possibilities for Essay Conclusions for Guest Lecture

(*Note:* With written permission of the author, Appendix A may be photocopied for handing out to students during a class, for educational and non-commercial use. No changes may be made to the handout. Contact Sarah Visser at conclusions.handout@gmail.com to procure permission.)

Possibilities for Essay Conclusions

Accomplished writers do many things in their conclusions, only briefly restating their thesis as one rhetorical move out of many. Some possible moves to make in your conclusions include:

1. Recall the beginning:
    a) Summarizing the progress of the essay or argument.
    b) Bringing back topics/examples/images from the beginning.
    c) Reminding of the so what/who cares.
2. Become more general:
    a) Explaining what your argument reveals about society or trends.
    b) Synthesizing ideas from separate parts of an essay (or a compare and contrast essay).
3. Become more specific:
    a) Giving one example or implication of your main point.
    b) Including a quotation from an author or researcher.
4. Call for action or change:
    a) Suggesting additional research.
    b) Providing a specific application or recommendation.
    c) Predicting the future if something mentioned happens/does not happen.
5. Include pathos:
    a) Appealing emotionally to readers to agree with the essay's argument.
    b) Relating the argument to the writer's own life or experience.
    c) Describing an image that represents the issue or your argument.

These ideas were compiled by Sarah Visser from the following: *Allyn and Bacon Guide to Writing*, *Blueprints for Writing*, *Dr. J.A.C.'s Conclusions*, *Norton Field Guide to Writing*, *On Rhetoric, Research Genres: Exploration and Applications*, *Wordsmith*, and *Write Now*.

Appendix B

Sample Conclusion for Guest Lecture Sample Issue Proposal Essay Conclusions

Sample Conclusion: Overfishing

"Making Waves: Finding Keys to Success in the Failures of the Fish Industry" by Andrew Skogrand in *the Norton Pocket Book of Writing by Students*

Thesis:

In both the heavy reports filed by scientists and the light catches brought in by fishermen, the truth has surfaced. America's fisheries, along with global fisheries, face eminent collapse.

Conclusion:

The time has come to face realities. The fate of the fishermen and the health of the ocean are inextricably linked. Eventually overexploited fish stocks will bottom out and, ironically, it will be the fishermen who will face extinction. Overfishing does not simply concern marine health, but the health of the fishermen and the health of the economy. Therefore, the ocean must be treated as an investment—one that must be allowed to mature wisely; it is not a honey pot in which we can endlessly dip our hands. Although current trends are bleak, the future remains full of possibility; restructuring the system may initially upset the fishing industry, yet "300,000 related fishing jobs could be gained from better management and protection of fish stocks" (McGinn 33). Fishermen of the near future stand to increase their catch by 25 percent—or twenty million tons—if they simply allow fisheries to rebuild (Weber 8). The scientists, the economists, and even the politicians have unanimously sounded a clarion call for reformation. Let us not wait until the time has passed to respond. If we fail to heed the warning, if we are slow to act, then our pockets may be full and our stomachs may be satisfied, but our oceans, our hopes, and even our futures will be empty.

Appendix C

Sample Issue Proposal Essay Conclusions

These are the six sample student conclusions I used when giving my guest lecture on conclusions. I have not edited for spelling or other errors.

Issue Proposal Example #1: Genetically Engineered Crops

Thesis/End of Introduction:

Thus, I have chosen to research this semester, "Why should genetic engineered crops be permitted?" There are several sides to this debate and the common ground between them is the concern over world hunger. Most people agree that with the growing population, more crops must be grown.

Conclusion:

Overall, I am very excited about beginning this semester long research process because this topic is extremely interesting in my opinion, has many sides to the debate, and impacts several different communities. There are also many resources available to me throughout the semester and I feel that by researching this issue, not only will I clear up all of the questions, I will also personally find out more about the world of genetics and whether or not GE crops are what I want to work with in the future. I also hope, that through my research, my audiences will understand the pros and cons of GE crops and will then work as a community to ensure that the benefits of GE crops always outweighs the negatives. Both sides already know that the sight of hungry children, asking for food, is not a welcomed site at our dinner tables.

Issue Proposal Example #2: Overhauling the Architecture Industry

Thesis:

As both a studying designer and a member of the public, I feel the architecture industry is in need of a serious structural overhaul. This semester I want to explore how interior designers and architects can work together to restructure the profession, to better serve the public, and ultimately, how this can result in better design.

Conclusion:

In order to help strengthen my profession, I am committed to gathering several sides of argument on this issue and further the discussion towards solutions. I will to explore the areas of corporate professional structure, hierarchal entities, and independent professionals and what they are currently doing to address these issues within the industry. The architecture industry should be definitive and forward thinking, allowing both architect and designer to focus on design and not design politics. The structural overhaul of architecture is long overdue and by addressing these tough questions and issues, will prove to be a benefit to the industry, the public, and the profession overall.

Issue Proposal Example #3: Funding Art Education

Thesis:

This semester, I would like to conduct research for the purpose of determining whether or not school board directors can modify education budget cuts in such a way as to preserve arts programs while also accommodating an ever tightening purse.

Conclusion:

Ultimately, my goal is to raise awareness of the lack of funding for arts programs in north Texas, an area that is least affected by it, and to encourage others to search for alternate solutions to this particular pitfall of the budget crisis. With thousands of young adults being denied the opportunity to grow in their passions and pursue their love for art, we cannot allow our board directors to lull us to sleep with the assurance that there is nothing to be done. As stated in a recent report by the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, arts education "is not a flower, but a wrench." In other words, the fine arts is not elective, but essential to a well-rounded curriculum—as much so as any academic subject—and if treated as such, could change secondary education as we know it for the better.

Issue Proposal Example #4: Gender Inequality in Mathematics

First Sentence:

The issue of whether inherent biological factors contribute to differences in mathematical performance between genders is a topic that has yet to be resolved.

Conclusion:

Based upon what I have learned on the subject, I believe that everything involved in the reason for the performance gap between genders is culturally based. Going to personal experience, I have never seen mathematical ability follow any kind of pattern in terms of gender. In a mathematical proofs class I took last semester, I learned that one of girls in the class was only 13 years old. And she was one of the better students in the class. In short, we are individuals with our own talents and skills. Personal experience and a few articles on the subject will not be enough for me to go on for the remainder of this semester. I believe that consulting more of the actual research that has gone into the topic will be an excellent first place to start. An abundance of scholarly work has been done and locating such work in the library or online shouldn't be too difficult. Also, many of the articles I have read on the subject not only lead me to the source material, they also make me want to learn more about the subject. Additionally, given that almost everyone could provide an opinion on the matter, faculty could also be a great source of information. Even personal experiences and stories from such individuals could be very illuminating.

Issue Proposal Example #5: Street Art

Thesis:

In the research I'll be doing I will evaluate the true value of street art, both its monetary value and its influence on the public. In this paper I will be stating the background of street art that I already know, where I got this information, the unanswered questions I still have and my target audience including my allies and opponents.

Conclusion:

While most automatically assume that street art is worthless, I intend on investigating both sides of the spectrum and finding the truth in the value of street art. Contrary to the belief of most, street art is meant to help not hurt. It's not as much as a rebellious act of vandalism as it is a beautiful display of opinion. Street artists view the world in a different way than most. As Banksy once said, "Some people become cops because they want to make the world a better place. Some people become vandals because they want to make the world a better looking place". This insight demonstrates the idea that these artists don't have the mindset of destruction and defacement but rather the enhancement of a city. This semester I will be writing and researching about the issue of street art and intend to come up with a conclusive answer of the over all value of it.

Issue Proposal Example #6: Government vs. Non-government Jobs

Thesis:

Therefore, I plan to research comparing pros and cons between government jobs and nongovernment jobs in order to find whether government jobs should be in the consideration of many Americans who aren't quite positive about their future careers.

Conclusion:

Although not everybody may not be in need of looking for jobs as of now, there are still many people at this moment, and many more in the future who will struggle to find careers that's reliable especially when different careers are eliminated by technologies time to time. It is often warned by peers in my life that joining military is suicide. Common sense seems to dictate that having careers such as, military and police can be extremely dangerous at certain times. However, from other point of view, government jobs can be more of a reliable job than the nongovernment jobs that won't be taken over by technologies. That is why I believe that it is necessary for me to look into this issue of government job vs. nongovernment jobs in order for me to reconfirm of my decision of government job could be a better option than nongovernment jobs for the future.

Appendix D

IRB Informed Consent Document

The following three pages are the Informed Consent Document which I presented to students at the beginning of my guest lecture. Because my research involved no harm to the students and was exactly the same amount of risk to the students as their regular instructor teaching them and obtaining drafts, my IRB exempt status only required me to notify the students of my research with this three page form. I was not required to obtain their permission with signatures.

UT Arlington
Informed Consent Document

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
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FACULTY ADVISOR
Dr. Timothy Morris
Professor of English, University of Texas at Arlington
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TITLE OF PROJECT
Conclusion Pedagogy Instruction

INTRODUCTION
You are being asked to participate in a research study about the knowledge English 1302 students have and can gain about writing essay conclusions. Your participation is voluntary. Refusal to participate or discontinuing your participation at any time will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You will still need to attend class today and submit another draft of your paper to Dr. Corder, which I will also read. Please ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

PURPOSE
The specific purposes of this research study are to learn what students know about writing conclusions and how their writing changes after they have been taught about conclusions.

DURATION
Participation in this study will last approximately for today's entire class period and until the submission of your second draft of your Issue Proposal.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
The number of anticipated participants in this research study is 24 (or the number of students enrolled in 1302-032).

PROCEDURES
The procedures which will involve you as a research participant include:
1. Listening to my instruction in class.
2. Complete a questionnaire form on past knowledge of writing conclusions.
3. Reading conclusion samples and participating in group discussions.
4. Writing two alternate conclusions in the next draft of your Issue Proposal.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS
You will gain knowledge on how to better write essay conclusions and my feedback on the next draft of your Issue Proposal's conclusion.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS
There are no perceived risks or discomforts for participating in this research study. This study only involves normal educational practices, education instructional strategies and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques and curricula on conclusions.

COMPENSATION
There is no compensation other than my additional feedback on the next draft of your Issue Proposal's conclusion.

ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES
There are no alternative procedures offered for this study. However, you can elect not to participate in the study or quit at any time at no consequence.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this research study is voluntary. You have the right to decline participation in any or all study procedures or quit at any time at no consequence. Should you choose not to complete all study procedures, you will still receive extra classroom instruction on conclusions and my feedback on the next draft of your Issue Proposal's conclusion.

If you are under age 18, please notify me, and you will not be a participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy the IRB application and all drafts of your essays from this study will be stored in the English Department Office (Carlisle 203) for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a participant. Additional research studies could evolve from the information you have provided, but your information will not be linked to you in anyway; it will be anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the UTA Institutional

Review Board (IRB), and personnel particular to this research have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above. The IRB at UTA has reviewed and approved this study and the information within this consent form. If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review your research records, the University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS
Questions about this research study may be directed to researcher Sarah Visser at vissers@uta.edu or to Faculty Advisor Dr. Timothy Morris at tmorris@uta.edu. Any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant or a research-related injury may be directed to the Office of Research Administration; Regulatory Services at 817-272-2105 or regulatoryservices@uta.edu.

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, the procedures, the benefits, and the risks that are involved in this research study:

_____

Signature and printed name of principal investigator or person obtaining consent **Date**

CONSENT

You can choose not to allow the researcher to use this information by notifying your professor or the researcher at any time.

By *not* notifying your professor or the researcher, you voluntarily agree to this study. You confirm that you are 18 years of age or older and have read or had this document read to you. You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time.

You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. You are not waiving any of your legal rights. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits, to which you are otherwise entitled.

IRB Approval Date: 11/15/2013

Appendix E

Student Questionnaire on Conclusions

Questionnaire on Essay Conclusions

1. Writers do many things in their conclusions. What have you seen accomplished writers do in their conclusions?

Questionnaire on Essay Conclusions, continued

2. Check any of the following you think accomplished writers do in conclusions:

- □ Recall the beginning
- □ Become more general
- □ Give an example
- □ Quote another author
- □ Call for action or change
- □ Include pathos
- □ Other: _____

3. Check any of the following you have done in a conclusion you wrote:

- ☐ Recall the beginning
- ☐ Become more general
- ☐ Give an example
- ☐ Quote another author
- ☐ Call for action or change
- ☐ Include pathos

  Other: _____

Appendix F

The Rhetorical Moves Students Made in Essay Drafts

Note: All textual examples are pulled directly from the students' texts, typos and all. The only changes I made are changing double quotes to single.

Table Appendix F-1 The Rhetorical Moves Students Made in Essay Drafts

Rhetorical Move from Handout "Possibilities for Essay Conclusions"	**Number of Students Who Used** (in 23 first and 21 second drafts)	**Two Textual Examples**
1, Recall the beginning 1a: Summarizing the progress of the essay or argument	3	"Overall, I have stated that genetic screening is a significant issue when it comes to testing in children and how much information the insurance companies should be allowed to get their hands on." "I am sure that my great interest in this topic, as well as the importance of this issue, and the large amount of research available, will make for a strong semester-long paper for this class." (Very similar to this student's thesis.)
1b: Bringing back topics/examples/images from the beginning	3	"I believe that the main audience for my research paper with this topic will be parents of minors and any adult who may ever want to get their genome tested. Currently, it costs somewhere around $10,000 to get your entire genome tested, but as technology advances the price will go down significantly." (Discussed on page 2 of the essay.) "Many fraternities and sororities haze all the time. People believe it is a part of the new member process and its tradition. They believe hazing is fun and nothing wrong can happen. Others believe hazing is just wrong and should be illegal for Greek organizations to participate in it."

Table F.1—*Continued*

1c:Reminding of the so what/who cares	15	"The topic of whether or not illegal immigrants from Mexico should be allowed to enter the United States has played a substantial role in not only Texas history but also the United States. This topic of illegal immigration from Mexico repeatedly comes up in my discussions with others and as a political science major it is simply unavoidable." "Overall the issue of factory farming is an ongoing argument that can be supported through the claims that it allows a reliable food source and provides more land available to the human population, but it can also be criticized for its supposedly harsh treatment of the animals. Both sides to this heated issue need to be looked at by us who consume from these factory farms because whether factory farming is eliminated or kept, it's affecting our daily lives in some way."
2, Become more general 2a: Explaining what your argument reveals about society or trends	3	"I obviously have a very strong emotion toward the idea of making health care a very business oriented project with business model and things of sort. However, I do also understand that, in reality, money is the driving forces almost every single little thing in the capitalistic nation. Thus, I will also fairly consider the opposing view and ideology of the potential opponents. Through that process, I will weigh between the benefits of the commercials with their harmful effects and make a decision for myself upon that balancing scale." "If you enjoy something and you want to see it continue to thrive in the future you would want changes to be made for the good of what ever it is you enjoy. This is how I feel about basketball and adding a shot clock to the high school game."
2b: Synthesizing ideas from separate parts of an essay (or a compare and contrast essay)	1	"Using anonymous sources has both negative and positive effects on a news outlet and the journalist. Also, how far they are willing to go to expose this information and if the credibility of the journalist and news outlets and is it worth spending the time and effort on following through with the information given by anonymous sources."

Table F.1—*Continued*

3, Become more specific 3a: Giving one example or implication of your main point	2	"When you think about the fact how many people were watching the super bowl it is very interesting and important how these super athletes feels like, with all the pressure they have." "Currently, it costs somewhere around $10,000 to get your entire genome tested, but as technology advances the price will go down significantly. After a several years, it may only cost a few hundred dollars, and then everyone will be getting this testing done."
3b: Including a quotation from an author or researcher	2	"For us to have a better future, we will need to be much more creative [about military-oriented technology] on our own. As President John F. Kennedy famously said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country!' "'I have a dream' that one day, it will become a wakeup call to everyone that we are slowly losing our nurses; the people who ensure our safety."
4: Call for action or change	9	"By informing the public about the seriousness of allergies, people may begin to consider what they eat and how they eat in order to protect innocent allergy sufferers around them." "If we checked the genetically modified food is safe, why we cannot use it to have much and cheaper food for the people."
4a: Suggesting additional research	9	"This made me want to choose this issue for my research position paper because I'll be embarking on the journey of learning a lot more about this issue I'm very interested in. I'm open to the possibility that my perspective might change by the time I'm done with my research, therefore it's going to be challenge I'm willing to undertake to see how everything winds up for me and my audience." "We not only need to know the negative effects of factory farming but also what good it does for us that we may take for granted everyday. I propose the issue of factory farming because we need to erase our ignorance of what is simply one of the most primitive parts of life- maintaining a stable food source."

Table F.1—*Continued*

4b: Providing a specific application or recommendation	3	"I suggest people should use technology to become more efficient rather than inefficient." "The time is now to learn more and more everyday about how to keep one's information safer and protected from potential threats. There are tons of articles out there in which help and give you tips on protecting one's information on mobile devices. By using these tips one can help mobile security technician's job become a bit easier, but a mobile security technician's job is never really complete."
4c: Predicting the future if something mentioned happens/does not happen	4	"Observing and acknowledging the themes, messages, values, characters, or plot in a more interactive setting with video games just might be the future when it comes to stories and perhaps even literature." "But I think we can solve these problem by latest technology in future. Genetically modified foods are major food in our future life."
5: Include pathos 5a: Appealing emotionally to readers to agree with the essay's argument	5	"Athletes are becoming a part of a market which did not exist a few years ago. In my opinion, the world should not allow the media to create a new market which is based on sports, but should focus more on the game and its magic." "It's not a lie when I say that I am actually thrilled on getting the opportunity to research the topic. Words cannot explain the love I have for video games and the stories I have experienced through them. Not only do I wish to further argue over this issue, but I hope that it could possibly alter some perceptions others have on video games in general."

Table F.1—*Continued*

5b: Relating the argument to the writer's own life or experience	14	"Everyday time I walk into a classroom, even with the awareness that this is an issue, I would take out my cell phone and ignore everybody else. Considering that even with the awareness, I could not help but be a part of this issue since the use of technology has become addicting and a lifestyle." "It's not a lie when I say that I am actually thrilled on getting the opportunity to research the topic. Words cannot explain the love I have for video games and the stories I have experienced through them. Not only do I wish to further argue over this issue, but I hope that it could possibly alter some perceptions others have on video games in general."
5c: Describing an image that represents the issue or your argument	0	
Other: Ask Questions	2	"Do we not want a bright future for our children? Do we not want the children to be active, intelligent and social? With technology dampening social interactions, how do we expect the children to have any social skills?" "We are addicted to technology. Technology is changing us, the only question is, for better or for worse."
Other: Trite Sayings	1	"We have changed with the changing technology. Everyone sees this change from a different perspective. What might be a boon for a person can be curse for other. No one knows what the future holds for us. All we can do is hope for the best."

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Biographical Information

Sarah Visser is interested in composition, multicultural classrooms, technical writing, and how theory applies to pedagogy. These interests stem from her past experiences: Her B.A. is in English Writing from Eureka College in Illinois, where she took classes on Linguistics and Professional Writing. She has taught English as a Second Language at Tarrant County College for many years in a multicultural environment. She has spent two years as a Graduate Teaching Assistant at University of Texas at Arlington, teaching English 1301, 1302 and Technical Writing at the fifth most diverse university in the United States. Her two conference presentations during graduate school relate to her interests as well: She presented “Self-Actualization, Utopia and the Freshman Composition Classroom” at the North Texas Graduate Student Conference at the University of Texas at Arlington in April 2014 and “Using Theories of Multicultural Communication to Aide in Textbook Selection in Multicultural Classrooms” at the Popular Culture and American Culture Association National Conference in Washington, DC in March 2013. Her future plans are to continue to teach college level composition and technical writing, especially conclusions.