

THESIS

CLOSING THE ACHIVEMENT GAP:
FROM TEACHER EDUCATION TO STUDENT LEARNING

Submitted by

Shaynee L. Jesik

Department of English

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2013

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Donna Souder

Ted Taylor
Debra De Witt

Copyright by Shaynee L. Jesik 2013

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

CLOSING THE ACHIVEMENT GAP: FROM TEACHER EDUCATION TO STUDENT LEARNING

The academic achievement gap in the United States keeps growing every day. Beginning in eighth grade, students around the world are compared to each other using one international assessment to measure student performance. The results of the assessment are disheartening for Americans because American students rank among the lowest in the world when it comes to reading, math, and science. Because of the international assessment results, an academic sense of urgency has swept the nation. Legislation is currently writing and implementing new laws and bills to address the education epidemic spreading throughout the United States. All efforts are currently focusing on existing teachers and students in the classroom, as they should because that is where the current state of reality lies. However, everyone seems to overlook one very important contributor in educating students in grades kindergarten through twelfth. That contributor consists of the various teacher education programs within universities. These programs are responsible for preparing future teachers to educate 21st century learners. This research examines the current reality facing public education, discusses the possible reasons for the widening achievement gap in the United States, and offers possible solutions to cleansing and mending the systemic dysfunction found in education today. By exploring rhetoric and its place in teacher education programs and public education, the United States can begin to close the widening achievement gap.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
20 TH CENTURY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS	4
THE EVOLUTION OF LEGISLATIVE MANDATES.....	7
ADAPTING TO CHANGE	9
REVIEW OF LITERATURE	13
THE “PANOPTICON”	13
THE PRESCHOOL TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ACT.....	15
THE EDUCATION ACCOUNTABILITY ACT	18
ENSURING QUALITY INSTRUCTION THROUGH EDUCATOR EFFECTIVENESS ACT.....	19
THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS	20
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TEACHERS’ PREPARATION IN COLORADO	22
ARGUMENT.....	30
PRACTICING RHETORIC.....	30
“PANOPTICISM” AND EDUCATION	33
INTEGRATION WITHIN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	37
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT USING RHETORIC	39
ENTERING A CONVERSATION.....	42
DECREASING REMEDIATION RATES USING RHETORIC.....	44
CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS	47
FINDING BALANCE	50

CONCLUSION.....	54
WORKS CITED	58
WORKS REFERENCED	61
APPENDIX A.....	62

INTRODUCTION

Teaching is difficult and complex, and teaching a complex subject such as the English Language Arts makes teaching all the more difficult and complex. Anyone can become a teacher, but that does not mean they can teach. For example, when I was learning to drive, my parents tried to teach me how to drive a car with a manual transmission. They each knew how to drive a car with a manual transmission, but teaching me, who knew absolutely nothing about it, became relentlessly frustrating. Due to the frustration from both parties, my parents gave up trying to teach me how to drive using a stick-shift, and I gave up trying to learn. I could not grasp the skills or concepts behind driving a manual transmission – I kept popping the clutch and killing the engine. The result of our frustration and desperation was trading in the manual transmission for an automatic one. I complained, cried, and carried on enough about it that all three of us realized it was just easier to have a car I could drive. To this day, I cannot drive a car with a manual transmission. This is a deficiency for me because I am limited in my driving abilities and car choices. I don't think I will ever have the sports car of my dreams.

This is similar to what happens in a classroom on a daily basis. Many times teachers quit trying to help students grasp the skills or concepts they need to know in order to participate in class because the skills and/or concepts are too difficult, or it is too heartbreaking to see the kids struggle. Giving the answers is just easier when the kids complain, cry, or carry on in class. Or worse yet, teachers become so desperate that they completely give up on students due to frustration escalation for both parties; therefore, students never learn what they need to know in order to be successful in the next grade level.

Learning to drive a manual transmission takes practice and critical thinking based on the skills learned while trying to drive on nonthreatening, quiet streets just like learning to

strategically, effectively, and logically communicate takes practice and critical thinking based on the skills learned while trying to communicate in safe environments. Teachers are the key to students learning the necessary skills and concepts to become successful no matter the circumstances.

Apparently, based on test results, frustration and desperation seem to overpower a teacher and her students in a classroom. International test scores and data reveal that American students fall behind in the academic global society and are not showing any signs of closing the achievement gap. The 2009 Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which includes thirty-four countries, and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered to same-aged students, show that 15-year-old American students rank 14th in reading among their global peers, 25th in math, and 17th in science (OECD, 2010).^{1 2}

According to The Broad Foundations:

68% of eighth graders cannot read at grade level and most will never catch up [to peers]; 1.2 million students drop out of high school each year; 44% of dropouts under [age] 24 are jobless; \$300 billion in lost wages, lost taxes and lost productivity [is] due to dropouts from the class of 2007; and \$192 billion in lost income and taxes [is] due to each cohort of dropouts (broadeducation.org).³

In an interview with the Associated Press, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan stated the information from PISA is “an absolute wake-up call for Americans” (Armario, 2010). American students are not properly prepared to compete with their global counterparts primarily because they are being taught using an educational system that was developed over 100 years ago. To

¹ International organization improving economic/social well-being with opportunities for governments to collaborate

² International study that evaluates education systems using tests that assess skills and knowledge of 15 year olds

³ Philanthropist Eli Broad established the foundation to advance and transform K-12 education through better management, governance, and relationships with the public.

keep up with the rest of the world, the United States must go through an educational reform and change what exists today. Students need to be able to compete and succeed in a 21st century global economy.

Many students are deficient in the areas of reading, writing, and speaking; and government officials believe that to succeed in these areas of communication, as well as all academic content areas, students need 21st century skills. The state of Colorado, in conjunction with the national organization Partnership for 21st Century Skills, has defined the 21st century skills as critical thinking and reasoning, information literacy, collaboration, self-direction, and invention.^{4 5} These five basic skills are what politicians, businesses, and educators say students need in order to compete in a global society; yet, the 21st century society is so preoccupied with 21st century technology that the proclaimed 21st century skills, which are needed for basic communication, are beginning to diminish. American students know how to use 21st century technology, such as texting, instant messaging, blogging, and podcasting from their smart phones, iPads, and tablets; however, they do not know how to use this technology to meet the expectations of the 21st century skills. Students need to learn how to strategically, effectively, and logically communicate in the 21st century by receiving a 21st century education which integrates the five basic skills with the technology that surrounds them.

The people responsible for formally educating American students and helping them apply the 21st century skills are teachers. Unfortunately, test results show teachers are not formally educating American youth to be prepared for a world beyond the K-12 classroom; 20th century teachers are not trained to teach the 21st century learner. If teachers are not properly prepared, they cannot effectively educate American youth. Schools can have the best technology and finest

⁴ This national organization promotes 21st century readiness for every student in the U.S.

⁵ See Appendix A

curricula, but if educators do not know how to teach students to strategically, effectively, and logically communicate using those tools, then American students will continue to fall behind their global peers. One way to help students achieve success in any society is to emphasize the purpose, function, and importance of rhetoric.⁶ English Language Arts (ELA) is the content that can best combine the 21st century skills and tools necessary for communication with the classical principles of rhetoric in order to teach and prepare the 21st century learner for the 21st century world.

My question is how can a potential secondary ELA teacher effectively integrate practices, principles, and classical theories of rhetoric in an ELA classroom thoroughly while following new state and national standards in order to engage teenagers enamored with 21st century technology?^{7 8} I believe that by teaching ELA teachers the history, purpose, importance, and characteristics of rhetoric, they will be able to effectively meet the state and national standards' expectations while simultaneously preparing the 21st century learner to succeed. Without the proper instruction during a block of ELA, students cannot and will not know or understand the skills and concepts necessary to communicate in a 21st century world.⁹ When an ELA teacher is prepared to integrate the content standards and evidence outcomes students must master using the training and education received in a teacher education program, then success is inevitable.¹⁰

20th Century Teacher Education Programs

As a young secondary ELA teacher who was well prepared to teach literature and grammar using the most recent lesson planning templates and classroom management practices, I

⁶ Rhetoric as referenced in this paper is the study of effective language and the ability to use language effectively

⁷ Middle school and high school grades 6-12 are traditionally known as the secondary level of education.

⁸ Starting in middle school students are expected to recognize and imitate the rhetorical appeals.

⁹ 60-90 minutes of English Language Arts instruction

¹⁰ Skills and concepts in each standard that students must master at each grade level

was ready to teach literature and grammar usage and conventions.¹¹ I was not, however, prepared to teach rhetoric in a secondary ELA classroom. I struggled with teaching my students to read critically for meaning, to write clearly with a purpose, to speak with authority for a variety of audiences, and to ask relevant questions. I knew how to apply the skills associated with rhetoric, but I did not know how to teach the skills to teenagers.

What I learned throughout my teacher education program during the 20th century was appropriate for what high school students were expected to know and be able to do during the 20th century. It was not until I enrolled in an English master's program as a ten year veteran teacher that I learned the importance of rhetoric, its place in the world, and how to teach literature, writing, and grammar usage and conventions using rhetorical practices, principals, and theories.¹² The irony, though, is what was new to me concerning rhetoric is as old as time. What I learned in my master's program helped me understand how to teach the 21st century learner.

Current efforts to prepare ELA teachers to teach 21st century students are focusing on the existing teachers in buildings by offering a wide variety of professional development and consecutive in-service days prior to the start of the school year. While noble in their efforts, school districts are trying to triage the current state of student achievement gaps and problems. Rather than continuing the broken cycle of reactionary professional development after released state and national test results, focus should be placed on the teacher education programs at the university level. What are future ELA teachers learning in university teacher education programs in order to prepare students to compete in a 21st century world, and does this learning teach those aspiring teachers to effectively engage students in a 21st century classroom? These questions must be addressed so student achievement can ultimately increase.

¹¹ I started teaching middle school and high school English Language Arts in 1998.

¹² Colorado State University-Ft. Collins English MA program offered through Colorado State University-Pueblo

A detailed examination of teacher preparation programs at the university level in English would begin to answer the questions posed. Conducting an audit of various universities' curricula for a bachelor's degree in English with emphasis in secondary education will offer insight to what skills and concepts new English teachers are currently expected to know, understand, and teach their students. The results of an audit can then be compared with national and state expectations. If the universities' programs show they do not incorporate national or state standards and expectations, then aspiring teachers are destined to fail which, in turn, sets our students up for failure.

Training new ELA teachers to clarify learning goals and objectives for students, as well as how to use rhetoric in their classroom, will prepare them to teach the 21st century learner while meeting state and national standards and expectations. Research shows that one of the most effective practices for increasing student achievement is teacher clarity. John Hattie's book *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement* addresses the effect sizes of various influences in education.¹³ Teacher clarity, which is defined as organization, explanation, examples, guided practice, and assessment of student learning, has an effect size of 0.75 (126). This means that if the teacher is explicitly clear about expectations, instructions, definitions, and intentions of the lessons, students will perform better and achieve more (127). How can teachers be clear about what their students need to know and be able to do if *they* are not clear about what students need to know and be able to do? This confusion and lack of knowledge from the teacher only widens the achievement gap American students face; therefore, to help prevent the achievement gap from widening, a root cause must be identified to

¹³ Melbourne Education Research Institute, Univ. of Melbourne Graduate School of Education; School of Teaching, Learning and Development; Visible Learning Laboratories asTTle (Assessment Tools for Teaching and Learning)

clarify the organization, explanations, examples, practices, and assessments put forth by the state in order to explore a more permanent solution.

Educational standards have been established and used in each state across the country for at least the past twenty years, and teachers have been expected to use these standards in order to prepare students for the next grade level or post secondary choices; unfortunately, accountability for meeting the standards' expectations was minimal. In 1995, Colorado developed and adopted the Colorado Model Content Standards¹⁴. These standards were new and unfamiliar to many educators across the state. Assessments had not been created to hold anyone accountable for the new standards until 1998 when the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP)¹⁵ was introduced for grades three through ten in reading, writing, and math. Still, no accountability was tied to the assessment. If students did not perform well on the test, schools were rated low; but nobody was held accountable.

The Evolution of Legislative Mandates

It wasn't until the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was signed by President George W. Bush in 2002 that any accountability was tied to CSAP and every other state's assessment.¹⁶ No Child Left Behind required students to read at grade level by the end of third grade; if they were not, then a reading intervention was required, and students were placed on an Individual Learning Plan (ILP).¹⁷ Because of NCLB, school districts across the country were held accountable for student performance based on state assessment results. If school districts did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on assessment data, then schools and districts were

¹⁴ Standardized expectations for all students grades K-12 in Colorado. Students were expected to master the skills and concepts of each standard before moving to the next grade level and eventually graduating from high school.

¹⁵ The standardized assessment testing all students for mastery of the Colorado Content Model Standards

¹⁶ NCLB was originally created to help close the achievement gap between economically disadvantaged/minority students and their peers.

¹⁷ ILPs are created by counselors, teachers, and parents to provide interventions to help a student reach proficiency in grade-level reading.

labeled as ‘needs improvement’ and had two years to show adequate yearly growth to meet the AYP requirements.¹⁸ During the two year improvement plan, parents had the choice to transfer their student to higher performing schools or districts (Jorgensen).

Standards, assessments, and government initiatives caused unintended consequences in Colorado. Based on CSAP data, AYP data, and the requirements of NCLB, Colorado began to see a widening of the achievement gap, an increase in dropouts, and a decrease in high school graduates continuing onto and successfully completing a post-secondary education. Of those who did go on to begin a higher educational career, many needed remediation (SB08-212). The unintended consequences caused Colorado to look at the Content Model Standards, CSAP, AYP, and NCLB. In 2009, Colorado revised the Content Model Standards in order to be more focused and specific to the different content areas that were assessed. Then, in December of 2010, Colorado reissued revised standards in Reading, Writing, and Communicating and Mathematics. The revised standards include the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).¹⁹ Together, these two sets of standards created the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS).²⁰

The history of the Colorado Academic Standards is important to know because the CAS for Reading, Writing, and Communicating now include evidence outcomes specific to rhetoric. Beginning in sixth grade, students are introduced to rhetoric; however, rhetoric is implied in the standards and not directly stated. If teachers do not know what to look for, they are going to overlook the importance of introducing rhetoric at the sixth grade. Seventh grade takes a closer look at rhetoric. Students in this grade level are expected to “explain and imitate *emotional* appeals used by writers who are trying to persuade an audience” (CAS, 113). Eighth graders are

¹⁸ Comparison of student performance from one grade-level cohort to the next as determined by NCLB which shows the progress schools and districts make toward having all students reach proficiency in by 2014.

¹⁹ CCSS are the national educational standards Colorado has adopted. These standards are aligned with international educational standards and are designed to help level the educational playing field across the U.S.

²⁰ CAS include CCSS as well as Colorado standards. CAS replaces the Colorado Content Model Standards.

expected to “explain and imitate *emotional* and *logical* appeals used by writers who are trying to persuade an audience” (CAS, 110). In ninth grade, freshmen are expected to “explain and imitate *emotional*, *logical*, and *ethical* appeals used by writers who are trying to persuade an audience” (CAS, 108), and tenth graders must “choose and develop an effective appeal” (CAS, 104). By the time students reach eleventh and twelfth grade, they are expected to know how to identify and use the rhetorical appeals while reading, writing, and speaking.²¹

These are skills and concepts any college freshman level composition class requires of its incoming students as well as skills and concepts needed to succeed in most college classes. They are also necessary skills and concepts in any job that requires communication and interaction with the public. If ELA teachers do not begin preparing students in the sixth grade to recognize rhetoric nor begin scaffolding the skills and concepts from sixth grade to tenth, then students will not be prepared for the grades that follow let alone a postsecondary environment.

Adapting to Change

As the secondary literacy specialist in my school district, I have worked with many ELA teachers; some know what rhetoric is while others have never heard the term used before other than referencing the phrase ‘rhetorical question’.²² This was disturbing to me because I realized that ELA teachers were not ready for the changes Colorado and the nation were making. The standards and expectations are much more detailed and rigorous in the CAS than they were with the Colorado Model Content Standards. Trying to familiarize teachers who are currently teaching in the classroom with the new document, as well as trying to change current teaching practices of veteran teachers, is difficult; but, if newly endorsed ELA teachers from an accredited university

²¹ Ethos, pathos, logos

²² Responsibilities include aligning secondary ELA curricula and assessments to CAS, providing professional development in instructional strategies and content, collaborating with other content specialists

teacher preparation program were prepared to teach the new standards, then success rates for both teacher and student would increase.

Not only do the new CAS for Reading, Writing, and Communicating expect students to know, understand, and apply rhetoric while reading, writing, and speaking in class, they expect students to exhibit 21st century skills as defined by Colorado and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills. The 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies will help students process the information and master the skills, concepts, and content in ELA.²³ By incorporating and implementing the 21st century skills into the CAS, students in Colorado will be better prepared to participate in a global society. These skills will also help students interpret, analyze, and synthesize information so they can effectively and logically communicate to articulate a story, an explanation, information, or an argument. Without the proper instruction during a block of ELA, students will not make the connections between rhetoric and the 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies. English Language Arts teachers must be prepared to integrate the content standard expectations with the expected 21st century skills. As of now, many teachers are not prepared.

Reasons for incorporating and implementing the 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies in the CAS documents are Colorado Senate Bills 08-212, 09-163, and 10-191. These bills focus on standards and assessment, district and school accountability, and principal and teacher effectiveness. Full implementation of the new senate bills will take effect during the 2014-2015 academic school year; and if school districts are not prepared for the full implementation based on data and test results, then the Colorado Department of Education can

²³ See Appendix A.

take control of the schools or district. This is known as the Turnaround/Transformation²⁴ process.

One Colorado school district that is experiencing the turnaround classification is Pueblo City Schools District 60 in Pueblo, Colorado. Four schools are on turnaround status and two are categorized as transformation schools.²⁵ The district, as a whole, is labeled as a turnaround district. What this means is that the district has five years to “turnaround” student achievement. If student achievement does not increase or show a substantial amount of growth by 2015-2016, then the state can take over the school district. The senate bills are designed to guide school districts such as Pueblo City Schools District 60 to begin an alignment process to increase student achievement. Each bill is related to the other; and, if districts adhere to what the bills mandate, then students will be properly prepared for a 21st century post-secondary environment by President Obama’s 2020 timeline.²⁶

Combining rhetoric with the 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies in an ELA classroom will help teachers meet the requirements of the Colorado senate bills and will give ELA teachers the opportunity to help their colleagues in other content areas meet the same requirements. When students understand the principles of rhetoric, they will be able to apply those principles in every other content area, reinforcing their ability to strategically, effectively, and logically communicate. Upon graduation, after practicing the necessary communication skills and applying the conceptual understanding of those skills, students will be post secondary and workforce ready.

²⁴ The process uses data analysis to develop a strategic plan for a school/district. Assessments and progress monitoring show student progress. Another data analysis is completed and adjustments are made to the school plan.

²⁵ Spann Elementary School, Freed, Pitts, Roncalli, and Risley Middle Schools, and Central High School are on turnaround and transformation plans.

²⁶ President Obama’s Race to the Top High School Commencement Challenge is designed to help high school students achieve success and his goal of having the highest percentage of college graduates in the world by 2020.

What a wonderful window of opportunity for both universities and school districts to begin collaborating. The changes education is going through may be frustrating and overwhelming for those in the system; however, these changes can be the springboard to begin working together to prepare America's youth, both future teachers and current students, for the demands of the 21st century. It took ten years and an advanced degree for me to realize how to teach what I knew students needed to know and be able to do in order to be successful.

What I learned in my English master's program must be introduced to future ELA teachers in teacher preparation programs.²⁷ If not, the implications for future ELA teachers will be loss of a job because students will not achieve proficiency or higher on assessments as determined by the district and state. Colorado Senate Bill 10-191 states fifty percent of a teacher's evaluation will be determined by student assessment results at the district and state levels.²⁸ By collaborative efforts between university and school district, professors and teachers can be confident that their students will learn and their future in the classroom will be secure.

Although current secondary ELA teachers should integrate rhetoric while teaching reading, writing, and speaking to increase student achievement, it is critical for aspiring ELA teachers to understand the meaning, theories, practices, implementation, and integration of rhetoric in their potential classrooms in order to meet the expectations of a 21st century learning environment. Each new educational senate bill Colorado has signed into law, the CAS for Reading, Writing, and Communicating, and the Common Core State Standards initiative are reasons why university teacher preparation programs should focus on teaching rhetoric in an ELA teacher's coursework. Only by knowing, understanding, and applying the expectations for today's students can teachers become effective and engaging in a 21st century classroom.

²⁷ I began an English MA program through Colorado State University-Pueblo in 2008.

²⁸ Colorado SB10-191 is the teacher and administrator effectiveness bill which states 50% of a teacher's and administrator's evaluation will be based on test scores from the state and district levels.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The “Panopticon”

Approximately 27% of students drop out of high school and 40% of 25-34 year olds obtain an associates or bachelors degree (Duncan, 2010). These statistics are disheartening but can be prevented. Because of the education crisis described by Arne Duncan, many new educational initiatives are currently being refined at both the national and state levels.²⁹ In order to close the achievement gap, national standards, senate bills, and assessments have been and are currently being written with the expectation that states and school districts across the country begin to implement them. Colorado’s educational state initiatives are expected to be fully implemented by the academic school year 2014-2015.³⁰ The state’s initiatives will contribute to and help meet the nation’s expectation of having the highest proportion of college graduates by 2020 (Duncan, 2010).

What does this mean for future ELA teachers in Colorado? Basically, if future Colorado teachers are not prepared to follow the new educational standards set forth by the nation and modified by Colorado, then these teachers will be dismissed shortly after being hired as a result of Senate Bill 10-191. This is an unfair consequence to those teachers because, through no fault of their own, they will be non-renewed for not using best teaching practices in the classroom, not engaging students in learning, and not showing growth in student achievement in reading and writing. These teachers will know what to teach but may struggle daily with how to teach it because the preparation and support they need to be successful will not take place.

Because student achievement is so low, politicians have now intervened and made decisions for students. These decisions will determine teachers’, administrators’, and schools’

²⁹ High dropout rates, declining test scores, and low student expectations are causing stress on the U.S. economy says U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

³⁰ Senate Bills 08-212, 09-163, and 10-191

futures. This is viewed, in some instances by educators, as the government's way to "discipline and punish" teachers, administrators, and schools in Colorado; however, teachers and administrators need to be held accountable for students' learning, and the government seems to be the only agency that can legally hold them accountable.³¹ Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* describes the "panoptic" as a governing force that is constantly surveying a population, the guardian in the watchtower. The metaphorical guardian in education is the government agency the U.S. Department of Education. To extend this metaphor, the U.S. Department of Education has stated that student achievement must increase by 2014 and the United States must have the highest percentage of high school graduates in the world by 2020 (Duncan). To comply with the demands of the national expectations, Colorado passed three senate bills over four years – Senate Bill 08-212, 09-163, and 10-191. These senate bills are the laws and rules that help the state's guardians watch over teachers, administrators, schools, and school districts in Colorado.³²

Educators know these bills exist and will be implemented soon, but they do not know how each will be implemented. The notion that somebody is potentially watching is enough for educators to become disciplined in each of their disciplines and do what is expected of them. Should student achievement continue to decline, these three bills give educational government officials the power to make the final decisions for all involved from student to superintendent. Senate Bills 08-212, 09-163, and 10-191 are the laws and rules of which educators will always be aware. The "panopticon" is the government officials overseeing the laws and rules to maintain order. Without law and order, chaos will ensue; and as of now, education is in a state of chaos.

³¹ Reference to Michel Foucault's *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

³² The Colorado Department of Education officials

Foucault’s description of the “panoptic” should not be viewed as a negative. Its purpose is to assist and protect. It provides law and order to a society that has given the governing forces control. Neither the laws nor “panoptic” should be feared; they are established to protect the citizens; or in this case, the students. For too long, students have been plagued with low expectations, now the opportunity is available to cleanse the system and establish a healthy educational environment.

The Preschool to Postsecondary Education Act

The first of Colorado’s three senate bills to pass legislation was Senate Bill 08-212³³. This bill passed in 2008 and focuses on adopting new academic standards and creating new standardized assessments to track student academic growth as well as school and district academic performance. This bill was the motivation for Colorado to write and adopt new standards and a new assessment program. Through the process of all the changes, it was discovered that the state’s educational system needed an overhaul to better prepare students for the 21st century postsecondary environment; therefore, the CAP4K, Colorado’s Achievement Plan for Kids, was created.³⁴ This plan is a direct result of Senate Bill 08-212. It is designed to “align the public education system from preschool through postsecondary and workforce readiness” as well as create a “seamless system of standards, expectations, and assessments from preschool through postsecondary and workforce readiness” (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates). CAP4K contains three components – school readiness, new content standards, and postsecondary and workforce readiness – that will help students be prepared for each grade level in public education as well as what awaits them upon graduation from high school.

³³ The Preschool to Postsecondary Education Alignment Act

³⁴ College, university, or the workforce

The Colorado State Board of Education describes the first component of CAP4K, school readiness, as:

...both the preparedness of a child to engage in and benefit from learning experiences and the ability of a school to meet the needs of all students enrolled in publicly funded preschool or kindergarten. School readiness is enhanced when schools, families, and community service providers work collaboratively to ensure that every child is ready for higher levels of learning in academic content (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates).

Beginning in preschool and continuing through twelfth grade, school officials and teachers will be responsible for nurturing, supporting, and facilitating the social and emotional development, communication and language development, and the physical well-being and motor development of students. This includes, but is not limited to, the ability to form and maintain relationships, work collaboratively with others, understand and comprehend what is verbalized, read, and viewed to become independent contributing members of a 21st century society. School readiness also includes various approaches to learning and content knowledge.³⁵ Senate Bill 08-212 requires school districts to create and implement individual readiness plans for every student, addressing areas needing improvement.³⁶ This plan integrates the 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies students are expected to demonstrate from grade level to grade level.

The second component of CAP4K is new content standards. CAP4K requires the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to revise the state standards in three areas. Those areas are expanding the standards to include preschool, aligning the standards with the description of school readiness and post secondary and workforce readiness, and meeting the

³⁵ Concentration, activities, problem-solving skills, basic knowledge, and concept comprehension are age appropriate

³⁶ Individual Reading Plans will be similar to ILPs except an IRP will incorporate the 21st century readiness skills and competencies.

highest national and international standards that have been implemented successfully and that meet the legislation's other requirements (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates).³⁷ Colorado has already revised and adopted new standards and expects every school district in the state to fully implement them during the 2014-2015 academic school year. CAP4K requires that the new standards be established by grade level, be fewer, clearer and higher, and focus on concepts and skills rather than facts. The new standards must also include 21st century post secondary and workforce readiness skills, as well as contain higher educational expectations for early childhood.³⁸ The new CAS does include all of the requirements of CAP4K's second component, new content standards.

The third and final component of CAP4K is the postsecondary and workforce readiness (PWR) component. The Colorado State Board of Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) define PWR as "...the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential for high school graduates to be prepared to enter college and the workforce and to compete in the global economy...students have developed consistent intellectual growth throughout their high school career as a result of academic work that is increasingly challenging, engaging, and coherent" (Augenblick, Palaich and Associates).³⁹ In other words, high school graduates must be able to demonstrate proficiency in the content areas of literacy, math, science, social studies, and the arts and humanities without remediation. They must also be able to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills, the ability to find information and use technology, be creative and innovative, exhibit global awareness, work ethic, civic and personal responsibility, as well as communicate and collaborate well with others. Students will be assessed at each grade

³⁷ Standards include CCSS, Advanced Placement standards, and the International Baccalaureate standards.

³⁸ Preschool through second grade is commonly known as early childhood.

³⁹ CCHE helps determine what student needs prior to and upon entering a Colorado college. This includes, but is not limited to, enrollment/admission policies, tuition costs, and course offerings within a university.

level to determine their level of proficiency in each area; however, these assessments have not been created as of yet. Colorado belongs to two consortia, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC).⁴⁰ These two assessment consortia have aligned to the Common Core State Standards, and that is why Colorado has joined both consortia. The CAP4K plan meets the initiatives set by Senate Bill 08-212 – new academic standards and assessments to measure student performance on the new academic standards.

The Education Accountability Act

After Senate Bill 08-212 was passed and plans developed to implement the bill, an accountability system needed to be put in place to make sure school districts in Colorado were going to follow the new standards and assessments. Senate Bill 09-163 was passed in 2009.⁴¹ This bill holds the state, school districts, and individual schools accountable for their performance on the same standards-based assessments.⁴² It also requires that there is a statewide system which objectively evaluates the performance of districts, schools, and students while rewarding successful performance and supporting those in need of improvement. As of now, that system is currently under construction at the state level.

This bill is meant to help close the achievement gap by revealing student academic growth rates based on data from the assessments. If a student does not show one year's worth of academic growth, then tier two instruction is required to support the tier one instruction so students can catch up to the academic performance of their peers in the same grade level.^{43 44} The

⁴⁰ Colorado has replaced the state assessment CSAP with TCAP (Transitional Colorado Assessment Program) until it decides which new assessment program it wants to adopt. Colorado is waiting to see what CCSS will adopt as its assessment program.

⁴¹ The Education Accountability Act

⁴² Assessments testing the skills and concepts from the standards students must master at a particular grade level by the end of the school year.

⁴³ Instruction and intervention for struggling students

transparency of school and district data and student performance to the public, parents, community members, higher institutions of learning, businesses, and other stakeholders will allow for additional support the school district and/or school may need in order to increase student achievement. Senate Bill 09-163 allows all stakeholders to offer input, collaborate, and cooperate with schools and districts to increase student performance and achievement.

Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness Act

The final piece, and most uncomfortable, of Colorado's education reform is Senate Bill 10-191 passed in 2010.⁴⁵ This bill will require that an evaluation tool be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers, principals, and administrators based on assessment data, student performance, and student growth – not tenure, reputation, and personal relationships. The evaluation will be used to improve the quality of instruction, enhance program and curricula implementation, measure teacher and administrator personal growth, and evaluate student performance based on teacher and administrator effectiveness. Senate Bill 10-191 will help school districts and administrators make decisions about personnel such as renewing contracts, earning or retaining non-probationary status, as well as hiring, retaining, promoting, reassigning, and dismissing staff and/or faculty. It will also guide professional development needs for individual schools or entire school districts.

Of the three senate bills passed, this one has caused teachers and administrators to feel the possible effects of being disciplined. Whether that discipline is viewed as something positive or negative is going to be based on how an individual school district implements the teacher effectiveness measurements.^{46 47} The Colorado State Department of Education, along with

⁴⁴ Instruction for all students

⁴⁵ Insuring Quality Education Through Educator Effectiveness Act

⁴⁶ Improving instructional strategies

⁴⁷ A punishment resulting from lack of discipline

congressmen and senators, will be watching student performance and questioning instructional practices before intervening; they will be the ever watching “panopticon.”

The Common Core State Standards

Colorado Senate Bills 08-212, 09-163, and 10-191 are a direct result of the widening achievement gap happening in Colorado and the need to standardize education across the country, hence, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). In 2010, Colorado had already begun rewriting the state’s academic standards because of the decline in student achievement; but when CCSS were released, Colorado again revised the standards to include CCSS due to the national status. Senate Bill 08-212 requires Colorado to align to the CCSS national academic standards.

The Common Core State Standards were initially written in 2009 and then released in 2010. The mission statement of Common Core is as follows:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy (Common Core: The Standards).

The basis for CCSS is to prepare students for a 21st century global society. They will need to compete locally and globally for university seats and job contracts. By aligning state standards to national standards, which ideally have been aligned to international standards, all students have the opportunity to succeed upon graduation from high school and be college or workforce bound. As of now, CCSS has only created English Language Arts and Mathematics standards. Other

content areas plan to have national standards developed; but because of the push in literacy and math, these two content areas remain the focus.

Common Core State Standards emphasize postsecondary and workforce readiness skills by aligning with university and professional business expectations, building upon and using strengths and lessons from state standards, containing rigorous content and application of knowledge using higher-order thinking skills, and are evidence-based (Common Core: About the Standards). Common Core's emphasis coupled with the 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies, created by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, should help students become better prepared for the 21st century global discourse community in which they are already members. Colorado has taken the first few steps to begin increasing student achievement and supporting student growth by adopting and implementing CCSS with CAS.

According to the national CCSS and the new CAS, students should be learning to write, learning to read, and learning to speak in the primary grades preschool through second and the intermediate grades third through fifth; but upon entering the secondary grades, students should not be learning to write, read, and speak, but writing, reading, and speaking to learn. Under the old Colorado Content Model Standards for reading, writing, and speaking, rhetoric and the rhetorical appeals were never explicitly stated as expectations in any grade level; therefore, rhetoric may never have been taught in any classroom. If rhetoric was addressed, it was traditionally introduced during the tenth grade and usually in an honors level English course. The teachers who taught Advanced Placement (AP) English classes in the eleventh and twelfth grades had the benefit of teaching rhetoric and the rhetorical appeals to students only because of the training they received from AP institutes sponsored by the College Board.⁴⁸ Now, under the new CCSS and CAS, rhetoric is explicitly introduced in the sixth and seventh grades, practiced

⁴⁸ Week-long trainings providing teachers with best practices and instructional strategies to use in advanced classes.

in the eighth and ninth grades, and fully applied from tenth grade through twelfth. By focusing on rhetoric in English courses required for secondary teachers at the university level, potential teachers will be able to address the demands of the national and state standards to which they will be held accountable through Colorado Senate Bill 10-191.

English Language Arts Teachers' Preparation in Colorado

Colorado universities that have established teacher education schools and programs offer many different course choices for English majors who want to pursue teaching ELA at the secondary level. They also offer different degree emphases from literature to rhetoric to writing. That is part of the problem; although intentions are nothing but good, universities that are preparing future ELA teachers for the 21st century are causing an unintended consequence by offering too many different types of degree endorsements. The achievement gap facing public education in America today starts with the gap that exists in teacher education programs across universities. The United States is now standardizing education from preschool through twelfth grade, which is a major change for our nation; however, teacher education programs that prepare the teacher to teach in this standardized environment are not themselves standardized. Gaps in university teacher preparation programs will unintentionally widen the national achievement gap.

The University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) has three tracks for an aspiring secondary English Language Arts teacher. The first track is a degree in Rhetoric and Writing. This degree provides "...English majors an understanding of how writing constructs and represents the world in which we live...introduce[s] the historical foundations of the English language...the historical and theoretical foundations of the field of rhetoric and writing" (uccs.edu/english). The second track is for a degree in literature. The focus for this degree includes the ability to "interpret a range of literary texts...analyze literary texts... write cogent,

clear thoughtful essays that demonstrate...control over grammar and mechanics...use electronic and traditional methods of research” (uccs.edu/english). The final track is the professional and technical writing degree. This particular degree’s mission is “...to prepare students to participate critically and ethically in professional and technical communication positions upon graduation...[this] curriculum is a combination of two main disciplinary fields – technical communication and rhetoric” (uccs.edu/english).

To receive a teaching endorsement from UCCS, aspiring English Language Arts teachers are *required* to take the two basic 100 level courses of composition – English 131 and 141 – but have the *option* to take English 486.^{49 50} Consequently, a future English teacher majoring in English with an emphasis on literature will only receive two classes of writing and rhetoric with the option to take the Special Topics class in Rhetoric and Writing. On the other hand, a student majoring in Rhetoric and Writing must take English 131, 141, 486 and three different theory courses. The teacher pursuing this degree will have a teaching job for a very long time no matter where he or she teaches, because he or she will have been provided the necessary background to be successful in a secondary ELA classroom. The University of Colorado Colorado Springs Rhetoric and Writing degree inadvertently prepares future teachers to address the expectations set by the national CCSS, which have been adopted not only by Colorado, but by forty-six other states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

Colorado State University at Fort Collins’ (CSU) teacher licensure program for English teachers requires prospective secondary ELA teachers, much like UCCS, to take a basic level composition class, Composition 150: College Composition, and English 402, Teaching Composition as requirements for licensure and graduation. Unlike UCCS, though, CSU only has

⁴⁹ Rhetoric and Writing I Rhetoric and Writing II

⁵⁰ Special Topics in Rhetoric and Writing

one degree track for secondary English teachers. Upper-division English electives offer future teachers the opportunity to experience the foundations of rhetoric in English 305: Principles of Writing and Rhetoric and English 402: Teaching Composition. The problem with upper-division electives is that they are not required courses for English teachers and are “...beyond the distribution requirements [and] may be chosen from any of the courses [offered]” (stepp.cahs.colostate.edu). The only way a secondary English teacher can experience rhetoric is by enrolling in a graduate program which will allow students to take English 501: Theories of Writing. Unless a future ELA teacher consciously enrolls in a class that teaches rhetorical theory and practices, that teacher will not receive the background necessary to teach students in public ELA classrooms throughout the 21st century.

Adams State College requires future teachers to enroll in an education program; however, the only class that may offer specific content knowledge is the content methods course. As far as earning an English degree, options for English classes that may incorporate teaching and using rhetoric include English 101: Communication Arts I, which is a class that is “...designed to provide students with the grammar and composition skills needed to write effective expository essays. Attention to voice, audience, techniques of invention, and rhetorical strategies” and English 102: Communication Arts II which places emphasis on “...source-based writing designed to develop critical reading, thinking, and writing...a series of written assignments...and oral presentations are required” (adams.edu). Other courses that English majors take at Adams State College include the following: English 200: College Writing Review, a class that “...emphasizes composition and writing in the disciplines...”; English 226: Basic Grammar and History of English, which offers the “fundamentals of English grammar and a brief, non-technical history of the language, including historical perspectives on varieties of contemporary

American English...”; English 363: Advanced Composition offers “advanced techniques of effective writing for a variety of purposes [and] includes a unit on writing for the World Wide Web”; and English 416: Teaching of Writing is “a study of theories about writing through reading, research, reflection, writing and practice. Students will practice the teaching of writing and develop instructional strategies and philosophies for all levels including college” (adams.edu). Much like CSU, not all English majors planning to become secondary ELA teachers may take all of the above classes. Again, rhetoric really is not addressed until students enroll in the upper division classes. If future ELA teachers are not aware of what they will need to teach within their content, how will they know what courses to take in order to help them help their students?

Colorado State University-Pueblo (CSU-P) prepares future teachers by offering a plan of study that combines the content area teachers want to teach with the teacher education program. A prospective secondary ELA teacher must take Education 447: Teaching English in Secondary Schools. This specific course “Familiarizes students with Colorado foreign language standards, standards-based lesson and unit planning, and authentic assessment...” (CSU-P). This class might be beneficial for teachers who plan to teach a world language, such as Spanish, French, Italian, or German. World language standards are very different from the CAS Reading, Writing, and Communication because world language focuses on novice low, novice mid, and novice high standards and not individual languages. If the two sets of standards are structured differently and contain different evidence outcomes, why would future ELA teachers be expected to know the foreign language standards? Future ELA teachers should become very familiar with the Reading, Writing, and Communication standards since that is what they will be held accountable for through the evaluation process.

Future ELA teachers graduating from CSU-P are expected to complete a total of 45 credit hours in English beyond the Composition 101 and 102 courses. The expected English courses are English 201: Intro to Literary Study, English 493: Senior Seminar, at least one course in the genre category, which include poetry, drama, fiction, and advanced literary forms, at least four classes in literature which range from American literature to British literature, historical to modern/ contemporary literature, one course covering Shakespeare, English 352: English Syntax and Usage, English 412: Literature for Adolescents, English 452: History of English Language, and two courses in writing, one of which must be English 303: Advanced Composition Rhetoric and Grammar. (CSU-P). This last course offers students the opportunity to practice “advanced persuasive writing, including rhetoric and grammar” (CSU-P). In order to take this class, students must successfully complete English 102: Composition II, which provides “continued engagement with critical thinking, reading, argumentation, and using rhetorical techniques in academic writing” (CSU-P). These classes are great classes for future ELA teachers to take because they give students the opportunity to practice writing using rhetorical strategies, but they do not show students how to teach rhetoric following the CAS in Reading, Writing, and Communication, nor do they go into enough depth about rhetoric.⁵¹

All four of these universities expect future teachers to complete so many hours in a classroom through observations and student teaching. This is where student teachers would have the opportunity to watch master teachers at their craft and to practice the craft themselves. Teachers currently in the classroom, however, have difficulty teaching using standards-based curricula because they themselves are not very familiar with the new standards. Current teachers are also hesitant to allow a student teacher into their classroom because of the high stake changes

⁵¹ Composition I and II explain rhetoric, but don't give the history and theories needed to understand the foundation of rhetoric. ELA teachers should take classes that offer a deeper background in rhetoric should be a requirement.

on the horizon. With Senate Bill 10-191 coming down the pike, teachers want to make sure their students are going to perform well on assessments based on the instruction they provide. Because of the state's initiatives and the anxiety they have caused in classrooms, student teachers do not have a solid opportunity to work with a master teacher who can model in a real classroom setting; therefore, a student teacher's preparation is not going to prepare them at all.

Based on my own experiences, I did not feel properly prepared or comfortable as a secondary ELA teacher to teach rhetoric until I enrolled in my English master's program and attended an AP institute. I understood the meaning and importance of and the purpose for rhetoric after I was given the proper tools through specific professional development opportunities and graduate studies.⁵² Once I knew what to do, I saw my students' standardized test scores and writing scores increase. By second semester, my sophomore's class average in writing went from a 70% to an 83%. My juniors' writing scores went from a 68% to an 84%. They also took practice ACT tests in English, and their class composite score at the beginning of the year was a 16, at semester, an 18; and by the time they took the state ACT test in April, their average in English was a 23. I had all students graph their progress in writing and my juniors graphed their ACT practice scores. This was evidence I could use to persuade them that what we were accomplishing in class was relevant to what they needed to know and be able to do – rhetoric in action in the classroom. My confidence grew as did my students' confidence and achievement.⁵³ They became better readers, writers, and communicators once I understood how to use rhetoric in the classroom and teach it to teenagers.

⁵² I learned the history, principles, and theories of rhetoric, close reading strategies, and note-taking skills in each.

⁵³ My students' CSAP and ACT test scores increased and their writing and speaking became purposeful.

I now try to share my experiences and knowledge with current teachers, but it is a difficult job because current teachers are distracted, disgruntled, disengaged, and fearful.⁵⁴ In the 2011, MetLife conducted its annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher*. The survey revealed that teacher morale has declined over the past 20 years for various reasons; however, the recession seems to have significantly affected teacher morale. Teachers stated three main reasons for the decline in morale: budget cuts, unfair salaries, and lack of parental involvement. Seventy six percent of teachers reported their district's budget was cut drastically. This included job layoffs and program reductions. Because of these cuts, class sizes noticeably increased.

Increased class sizes started a chain reaction. Teachers felt they were working harder and longer for unfair wages and many were considering leaving the teaching profession. In 2009, 59% of teachers were very satisfied with their job, and only 17% reported a desire to leave the profession; in 2011, 44% were satisfied, but 29% reported they would leave the teaching profession. One reason for the increase in fleeing the teaching field was due to job security. In 2006, 8% felt their job security was threatened; in 2011, 34% felt their job security was threatened. Rightly so if 66% reported their school had to dismiss teachers due to budget cuts. Teachers were either laid off or reassigned to another school. Increased class sizes resulted in under resourced classrooms and increased behavior problems. Teachers reported that parental engagement and collaboration was critical for student success; but not all parents are involved, making student engagement more difficult. This survey questioned teachers from across the country. I wonder how the results would change if Colorado teachers were surveyed. With the legislative changes happening and educator performance tied to student assessment performance, Colorado teachers' morale might significantly change the survey results.

⁵⁴Morale is low because teachers are fearful of the future, upset about the things they cannot control, and told they are not doing their job, otherwise, student achievement would not be so bad.

Much of the distraction and disgruntled, disengaged, fearful emotions teachers feel could be alleviated if they were prepared for the realities of public education. The English departments, in conjunction with the teacher education programs, could be the leaders in transforming teacher preparation. If prospective ELA teachers currently enrolled in teacher education programs throughout Colorado universities were taught how to use and teach rhetoric in a classroom, they would become more effective teachers allowing them to become the teacher leaders in the schools where they become members, building capacity among staff as well as boosting morale. Using rhetoric in the classroom will engage students, lessen unwanted behavior, and better prepare students for a postsecondary education and workforce environment. All of this will cause student achievement and teacher morale to increase.

ARGUMENT

Practicing Rhetoric

State, national, and international test scores show that American students are not making any academic gains in our global society.⁵⁵ In Colorado alone, CSAP and ACT scores are, at best, stagnant. Students' scores begin to show a decline in reading and writing proficiency beginning in seventh grade (Assessment - CSAP / TCAP - Data & Results).⁵⁶ Colorado ACT scores have remained stagnant at a 19 composite average in English and a 20 composite average in reading for the past five years (Assessment - Colorado ACT - Data & Results). Nationally, over the past five years, students ACT scores in English and reading show a decline. In 2007 the percentage of students meeting the college readiness benchmarks for English was 69%; in 2011 it dropped to 66%. The percentage of students meeting the college readiness benchmark for reading was 53% in 2007; in 2011, it dropped to 52% (ACT Profile Report – National). The United States ranked 15th in reading on the 2000 PISA results and 14th in 2009 (OECD 2010). The data illustrates that students are not prepared to enter a postsecondary college or workforce environment. Based on the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) 2011 Legislative Report on Remedial Education by Lieutenant Governor Joseph Garcia, 49.5% of first time students who enroll in a two or four year Colorado college or university need remediation in writing and 34.3% need remediation in reading. Remediation is expensive for both student and university. It costs the state \$22 million to fund remediation programs at colleges and universities, and costs the students statewide \$24 million in tuition. Where should blame be placed? I am going to respectfully point my finger to the institutions responsible for teacher preparation – universities. Colorado colleges and universities are not fully preparing future ELA

⁵⁵ CSAP, ACT, SAT, PISA test scores

⁵⁶ Data from 2007 to 2011

teachers to be successful in a secondary ELA classroom and the evidence is found in student achievement within the state as well as across the nation.

The academic expectations that have been set forth by Colorado are demanding of both student and teacher. If professors in teacher preparation programs at universities and colleges throughout Colorado take the time to read, research, understand, integrate, and implement the CAS and CCSS in their programs, then future secondary ELA teachers will have professors in a teacher education program fully preparing them for the world of public education. By beginning with the end in mind colleges and universities can produce knowledgeable and highly qualified secondary ELA teachers as well as contribute to increasing student achievement which will, in turn, help lower the increasing remediation rates and expense throughout Colorado colleges and universities.⁵⁷

What I propose Colorado teacher education programs do is adopt a common curriculum that not only educates English majors choosing teaching career about the principles, theories, philosophies, and history of rhetoric, but also shows them how to teach rhetoric by having professors model the very thing they need to know – rhetoric. If this were to become the common practice among teacher education programs across the state of Colorado, then the teachers completing the programs would be much more effective in the classroom and would prepare students for a post secondary education and a place in the workforce.

Rhetoric is nothing new; it is an ancient practice that, once mastered, can be very valuable because it gives individuals the ability to communicate strategically, effectively, and logically. In the editor's introduction of *Language & Symbolic Power* by Pierre Bourdieu, John Thompson states "...words can be used as instruments of coercion and constraint, as tools of

⁵⁷ Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins developed Understanding by Design structure for lesson planning. Begin with what students need to know and be able to do, create the assessment, and then teach the skills/concepts to master.

intimidation and abuse, as signs of politeness, condescension and contempt” (1). Having the ability to communicate strategically, effectively, and logically is just as, if not more important now in the 21st century than it was over 100 years ago. Forms and modes of communication have transformed and evolved considerably from the telegraph to the telephone to the cellular phone to the internet, as have the types of discourse communities in which individuals participate; however, the one thing that has not changed is why people communicate. Participation in a global society includes the ability to first and foremost communicate either through written or verbal modes of communication.

Why do we communicate, though? We communicate for many different reasons: to tell a story, describe an event, to explain an idea or topic, to inform an audience, or to persuade people to listen or take action. Every day millions of people communicate globally via the internet and/or cell phones to tell a story, provide information, or to persuade others; and no matter the topic, they use the three rhetorical appeals to captivate and engage an audience.⁵⁸ The question is, though, do ELA teachers understand this, and do they know how to teach it? As a secondary literacy specialist who works with ELA teachers on a daily basis, I am finding that not all ELA teachers know what rhetoric is, how it is used, or why it should be taught. These are hard working individuals who have a degree in English or reading and have passed state exams deeming them highly qualified to teach secondary English Language Arts; however, their depth of knowledge about rhetoric is lacking depth.⁵⁹ Knowing something is very different from teaching it, and I am reminded of that every time I drive my automatic transmission car to collaborate and work with my ELA teachers.

⁵⁸ Ethos, pathos, logos

⁵⁹ PRAXIS and PLACE tests necessary to pass in order to obtain a teaching license

“Panopticism” and Education

Michel Foucault believed that knowledge is governed by power. In *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, his main argument concerning “panopticism” is that point of view, or perspective, defines what is accepted in society. Societies and populations have empowered certain elements of civilizations and cultures, depending on what is deemed important at the time. Those elements have been allowed to lead or define the parameters of the discourse. People are taught to believe that certain agencies have power. The distribution of power is based on the ethos of the agency. Two such agencies are the government and education. These agencies enforce authority through surveillance of those they control. The government watches the people and, for the sake of my argument, school districts; therefore, the government has power to make decisions for the people and school districts. Society has deemed these individuals as having power, therefore, working as a “panoptic” because they are educated and trained experts in a specific field of study. Because they are seen as having knowledge and power, society trusts them to make the right decisions for the people; the government theoretically makes decisions in the best interest of the people, and a school district, theoretically, makes decisions in the best interest of the students.

Within each agency, the government and education, a hierarchy exists to help watch and survey the actions of the population. For example, the Colorado Department of Education surveys and evaluates Colorado school districts’ actions with the help of a local district school board. A school board surveys and evaluates a superintendent’s actions. A superintendent surveys and evaluates principals’ actions. A principal surveys and evaluates teachers’ actions. And finally, the teacher surveys and evaluates students’ actions. Each person in the hierarchy is a “panoptic”, or the guard in the watchtower, because each is allowed to govern a population,

evaluate the situation, and make decisions about actions needed to be taken in the surveyed population; therefore, one depends on the other for information to keep the system functioning. The government, however, has ultimate control over a school district. If a district becomes dysfunctional, then the Colorado Department of Education has the authority to take control of a school district and reorganize the entire population to make the changes and realignments in the best interest of the students.⁶⁰ Being a governing agency that makes decisions to help and protect individuals as well as keep a system functioning is not harmful; yet, those who do not want the help and protection find the “panoptic” threatening.

The argument Foucault presents is how the agencies watch, survey, investigate, and assess based on what the majority does. If the majority is not performing as it should, the government, in this case the Colorado Department of Education, can take control of the situation and the population to make change happen; case in point, SB08-163, SB09-191, and SB10-212.⁶¹ The government does give local control to the school district to try to help failing schools and dysfunctional systems before it steps in and takes control.

Based on Foucault’s explanation of the “panoptic,” I consider myself a “panoptic.” As a district administrator, I have more access to the laws, assessments, and reformation on the cusp of educational change than some of the principals and most of the teachers in the classroom. This information has allowed me to begin fixing a broken system that continues to function regardless of the situation. Principals and teachers – the educational society – see me as a governing force that is surveying a population because of the position I hold. I do survey a certain population; I survey secondary ELA which includes curriculum, instruction, materials, assessment and student

⁶⁰ The governing state education department has the authority to hire and fire staff and faculty within a school district if the district is not performing based on assessment data. Most school or districts that find themselves in this situation turn to charter schools or districts.

⁶¹ Everyone in the Colorado educational hierarchy from school board to student

performance on assessments. Teachers and administrators know I have access to information that can influence systemic change based on what I have observed from the “Ivory Tower.”⁶² Some teachers see me as a governing force that is going to make them to comply with the initiatives put forth by the district, which are based on state expectations and initiatives; others do not. This has been difficult for me because I have to find how I fit into the governing role for ELA. As a teacher, I feel I know what is best for kids; as an administrator, I feel I know what is best for teachers. Foucault’s “panoptic” has a metaphorical 30,000 foot view to keep a system functioning; I have the same view and need to keep a broken system functioning while making repairs along the way. My role is to help prepare teachers for 2014 by making decisions for teachers using the knowledge and information gained from my educational, teaching, and administrative experiences. When SB10-191 is initiated, teachers should not be worrying about their students’ performance or own evaluations; they should be focusing on instruction to help students gain the skills and concepts necessary for successful futures. If I am a part of the governing force that keeps a system working, then I need to have the 30,000 foot view.

I have the position I have because my knowledge about reading and writing has empowered me to make systemic changes to improve student achievement in reading and writing throughout my district. Educators only know what they know based on the information provided to them and/or the independent research they choose to conduct. Time does not allow for much independent research or collaboration to occur among teachers, both of which are essential for new learning and comprehension; therefore, I provide condensed forms of research and information to teachers to give them the “nutshell” version of the information they need to know and pass along to colleagues and students. Sometimes the provision handicaps teachers because

⁶² The district administration office is often referenced as the “Ivory Tower”.

they do not discover the information on their own, which would allow them to internalize it, understand it, summarize it, compare it, analyze it, and then make it relevant to them.

When given the time, teachers do all of the above; but, because of the sense of urgency to increase student achievement, current teachers are scrambling to find the silver bullet, causing them to forget how to teach. Senate Bill 10-191 is hanging over their heads. Teachers are preoccupied right now with student performance on assessments because that performance will determine a teacher's employment after 2014. It is much easier and safer to provide the information to students without expecting students to do the work themselves, much like it is easier for me to develop and give teachers the lessons that will teach students what they need to know. Again, it is less complicated to drive the car with the automatic transmission than the car with the manual one. I am just as much to blame as the teacher preparation programs because I am doing to teachers exactly what I have said not to do to students.⁶³ This is an unintended consequence of not properly preparing teachers prior to entering the classroom alone for the first time; all of the training and practice that happens in a university's teacher education program is based on what if instead of what is.⁶⁴

Universities are an agency with power to make decisions for a population. This particular agency determines who is accepted, what courses are offered, and how long a student should be enrolled to earn a degree. All students in a university population have complete and total trust in the agency to make the best decisions for their future. The university, however, is an agency that systemically functions in order to continue functioning. Decisions are not always made in the best interest of the student, but sometimes for the best interest of the system. Unfortunately,

⁶³ I am giving teachers the answers they should be discovering on their own; but because of the state of urgency, it is easier to give the answers and worry about learning later.

⁶⁴ Many education programs focus more on theory instead of practice. By creating stronger partnerships with local school districts, theory can find its place in the practice.

some of those decisions are not the best made decisions. People only know what they know; and without collaboration with other governing agencies, universities will have a difficult time helping and protecting students and their futures. The same goes for public education. Decisions are made to keep the system working; sometimes, the system becomes broken causing those who have no control over the system to become affected. Much like Foucault's "panoptic," the governing agency makes decisions in order to keep the system functioning, despite what the population believes.

Parents trust that the teacher will properly prepare their child for academic and professional success as an adult, just as a teacher candidate trusts the teacher preparation program to prepare them for success in a classroom, and teachers trust that administration will make the best decisions to keep the system functioning. Again, teachers, college professors, and administrators are seen as having the knowledge and authority based on the empowerment from society. Why, then, are students not achieving? If teachers, colleges, and administrators are deemed experts in their field of study, shouldn't students be achieving? A gap exists somewhere, and I believe the beginning of the gap starts with the teacher preparation programs.

Integration Within English Language Arts

English Language Arts teachers are having a difficult time integrating genres of literature, modes of writing, syntax and grammar, art and film, and historical context into a single lesson or unit, not to mention the difficulties of managing behavior problems which prohibit teachers from teaching. In the past, each topic in the ELA content was taught as an individual subject in independent units without any connection to the other.⁶⁵ Grammar was taught independently from literature, literature was taught independent of writing, the organizational methods used for the modes of writing were taught separately, and research was

⁶⁵ Designated length of time for instruction on a specific topic

its own subject.⁶⁶ Connections to real-world application were not, and in some cases are still not, being made for the students which can contribute to behavior problems in the classroom; students are not interested because content is not made relevant. Secondary ELA teachers are very good at teaching the ‘what’, but struggle with the ‘how’ and the ‘why’. They are not teaching students how to effectively communicate because they do not know how. By emphasizing rhetoric in the teacher education programs at the university level, future ELA teachers would have the background knowledge needed to teach students how to effectively, strategically, and logically communicate.

Donald Stewart’s speech titled *Some History Lessons for Composition Teachers*, hits the nail on the head when it comes to effective teaching. He focuses on the importance of knowing and “accumulating knowledge of the history of composition as a discipline” (134).⁶⁷ He quotes Daniel Fogerty’s *Roots for a New Rhetoric* who defines current-traditional rhetoric as “emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into words, sentences, and paragraphs; the classification of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage...” (135). This is a very good description of how reading, writing, and speaking are currently taught in public schools; but this is not the best way to teach reading, writing, and speaking. Writing alone should be a “living creature” that has different moving parts with specific functions (135). Language, syntax, organization, rhetoric, psychology, purpose, audience, task are all important components of writing, which is a major form of communication.

The modes of composition is content that has been drilled and killed into students’ heads; what hasn’t been offered to students, save a select few teachers, are the reasons for using a

⁶⁶ Compare/contrast, definition, problem/solution, cause/effect, narrative/description, chronology, illustration, climax

⁶⁷ Delivered at the 34th annual CCCC meeting in Detroit, Michigan on March 17, 1983

particular mode.⁶⁸ Stewart states “in the pedagogy of a current-traditional teacher without historical knowledge, they [the modes] become *types* of papers for which students must find subjects” (138). Students must choose a topic, record their thoughts about the topic, narrow the topic to a manageable size, and then begin writing about the topic. Why? What is the purpose? Who is the audience? These questions are some of the questions students must be able to answer prior to graduating from high school and moving forward with their adult lives because they will be engaging in discourses where they will need to communicate strategically, effectively, and logically. Unless they know how, why, and to whom they are communicating, communication is pointless.

Prospective secondary ELA teachers need to study the “life and growth of languages in general and the English language in particular,” they need to have “an attitude of restraint in correcting other people’s speech,” and finally “intelligent[ly] listen to the language which goes on around us all the time” (Stewart, 139). These three concepts presented by Donald Stewart in 1983 are the foundational concepts found in the new Colorado Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, and Communicating in 2012. If we had ELA teachers completing teacher education programs with the skills to support the content and knowledge learned throughout the program as well as the ability to connect with kids, our students would become engaged, raise achievement, and succeed in all classes while receiving preparation for a 21st century world.

Student Engagement Using Rhetoric

Before student achievement can begin to increase, teachers must first and foremost be engaging in the classroom.⁶⁹ Applying and teaching rhetoric can create an engaging ELA environment for students to learn because the teacher would be introducing new and relevant

⁶⁸ Narration, description, exposition, and argument

⁶⁹ Capturing and captivating teenagers’ attention to teach the skills/concepts to mastery by the end of the school year

information to students in a creative way. Rhetoric allows for teachers to become creative and engage students all while addressing the necessary content established by the Colorado Academic Standards and the Common Core State Standards. This practice would help increase student attendance and decrease behavior problems.

Students decide to quit school for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons students drop out of high school is because they are disengaged and bored. In the March 2006 report *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Drop Outs* 47% of students surveyed stated the reason they dropped out of high school was because classes were not interesting; they were “bored and disengaged” (iii).⁷⁰ Two-thirds of dropouts stated they would have stayed in school if “more was demanded of them” (iii). Forty-five percent of dropouts stated they felt they were not academically prepared in elementary and/or middle school to enter high school, therefore, fell behind their peers and could not catch up (iii). According to the responses gathered by the report, 81% of the participants stated that “opportunities for real-world learning” would have made classroom experiences more relevant, and “better teachers who keep classes interesting” would have been helpful as well (13). These reasons for students dropping out of high school can be completely avoided if teachers were prepared to teach all learners. Learning the importance of rhetoric prior to entering the classroom would give ELA teachers the ability to teach all students regardless of their background or demographic classification.

When a teacher walks into a classroom, the only demographics they know about their students are what counselors provide. This information includes name, date of birth, gender, age, disabilities, and possibly ethnicity or race. What the teacher will not know and may never know until she meets and develops a relationship with the students is socioeconomic class, religious

⁷⁰ Written by John M. Bridgeland, John J. DiIulio, Jr. and Karen Burke Morison of Civic Enterprises, in association with Peter D. Heart Research Associates for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

beliefs, political affiliation or beliefs, familial situations and circumstances, personality, and personal experiences or background knowledge. This information is vital for a teacher to discover and know about her students in order to create a safe environment for learning.

Researcher John Hattie developed over 800 meta-analyses of the influences on student achievement. According to Hattie, the effect size of positive student-teacher relationships is 0.72.^{71 72} Because of this effect size, a good assumption to make is attendance will increase, interest will rise, behavior problems will decrease, and learning will occur. Understanding all aspects of rhetoric will help a secondary ELA teacher realize the importance of student-teacher relationships because they will understand the foundation of communication. Without communication, positive or negative, relationships cannot be formed.

Many times teachers, and professors, enter a class with a personal agenda.⁷³ Students can identify that agenda immediately and learn how to perform for that particular teacher or professor. When a student realizes a teacher's or professor's platform, they lose their personal perspective, beliefs and values, and ultimately voice because the grade becomes more important than learning the content and gaining valuable knowledge. In his essay *Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*, Richard Fulkerson states "Teachers dedicated to exposing the social injustice of racism, classism, homophobia, misogyny, or capitalism cannot perform accept student viewpoints that deny such views or fail to register their contemporary relevance" (665). In order for students to be successful, educators must first be aware of their own biases and prejudices; once they realize this, then they can start to be effective in the classroom. This is

⁷¹ A meta-analysis combines the results of several studies that address a set of related research hypotheses which are converted to a common measure or effect size. His research took fifteen years to complete and involved millions of students around the world. It represents the largest ever evidenced-based research into what actually works in schools to improve learning.

⁷² Students learn more when they have a positive relationship with their teacher. When the teacher shows she cares about her students and the students know she cares, then students will attend and participate in class.

⁷³ Express their personal views, beliefs, and values because they have a platform in a college classroom and a captured audience.

especially important in a secondary ELA classroom because of the literary, historical, artistic, and musical content that can be discussed. If a teacher is not aware of herself, then she can lose control quickly. This is another reason future ELA teachers should understand the history and application of rhetoric prior to entering the classroom.

Entering a Conversation

Fulkerson quotes Gary Tate: "...if we are serious about teaching *writing* rather than literature or politics or religion, we can – should – make the writing of our students the focus (content) of the course" (665). Writing is the vehicle for communication; literature, which is already written, can be the starting point for writing that leads to communicating. Students must learn how to enter the conversation literature has started; therefore, secondary ELA teachers need to teach students the importance and purpose of literature first and then teach the content of the literature in order to understand its importance and purpose. Questions such as why was the literature written, what was happening at the time the author wrote the text, how can you relate to what the author says and why, are questions students must critically think about in order to effectively respond.

Too many times teachers are asking students to regurgitate the plot, setting, characters, point of view, and theme of a text. These tasks have nothing to do with critical thinking; however, being able to identify the parts of a literary text is important because students need to use evidence from the text to support their beliefs or argument. Direct instruction needs to occur in order to guide students in the direction of critical thinking. If students do not have the academic vocabulary necessary to enter a conversation, then they will never be able to participate in the conversation. Integration of teaching methods and practices is important, and

the only way an ELA teacher will learn this is by experiencing it and then learning how to execute it.

When incorporating any type of literature in a secondary ELA classroom, the teacher should be the facilitator, not the presenter. According to Fulkerson, Sherry Stanforth believes students should “take a topic they are familiar with, locate an arguable issue within it that would be interesting to an (unspecified) audience, and then develop an argument with a thesis, necessarily including sufficient explanation of the concepts involved” (673). Middle school and high school ELA teachers need to first teach students how to do what Fulkerson and Stanforth suggest, then let students practice what was taught in a safe, unbiased environment. Effectively communicating an arguable topic through written or oral means is a direct result of understanding rhetoric. Teachers should be facilitators in the learning process for students, but they must also be the instructor. Direct instruction of skills and concepts must occur before a student can take charge of his or her own learning. Bottom line, the teacher matters in a classroom whether she is directly instructing or facilitating the learning. She must find that delicate balance between instruction and facilitation.

Mike Rose’s *Lives on the Boundary* is a text that illustrates the importance of teaching students the vocabulary necessary for entering conversations. Rose specifically mentions the importance of providing the academic vocabulary to disadvantaged and minority students who may not have the means to gain vocabulary otherwise; however, the skills and instructional strategies necessary for students who need intervention, and the skills and instructional strategies used to teach advanced students are instructional strategies that will probably work for all students. As the saying goes, what’s good for the best is good for the rest. Providing students with the vocabulary of the current classroom conversation in context will only enhance their

ability to participate in the various discourse communities awaiting them upon graduation. Teachers sometimes forget that students do not arrive to class totally prepared; what should have been learned in the previous grade level many never have been fully understood; therefore, finding the balance among direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice is crucial to student learning. Sage on the stage is not best practices, nor is learn on your own.

Gerald Graff wrote *'Lives on the Boundary' at 20* and stated:

...once we become experts in an academic field we forget what it was like to have been clueless about it. Becoming smart about our subjects makes us pedagogically stupid. Forgetting that there was once a time when even we – staggeringly brilliant scientist or humanist though we are – could not do long division or make sense of a sonnet, we are incurious about why students find our teachings impenetrable, and we take no responsibility for clarifying ourselves.

This one paragraph can describe secondary ELA teachers in the classroom today. Middle school and high school teachers are divided into content departments because they are considered the experts in that content; they sometimes forget that not everyone, including teacher and student, knows the different functions of a comma or the reasons for one word choice over the other. Focus on content is important in order to understand why things are the way they are; but like Stewart, Fulkerson, Rose, and Graff point out, process, which requires critical thinking, is much more important than product, which can include regurgitation. Teenagers can learn, but it is a whole different process to understand and apply what is learned.

Decreasing Remediation Rates Using Rhetoric

Critical thinking skills are central in the new CAS and CCSS. Most teachers know how to critically think, but do not know how to teach critical thinking to a group of 25 or more

teenagers. How can rhetoric help ELA teachers teach critical thinking skills? I believe that if professors in teacher education programs clearly understand what the CAS are asking future ELA teachers to know and be able to do in a classroom of their own, high school graduates will score higher on the English and reading portions of college admission exams such as the Accuplacer, ACT and SAT, therefore, decreasing the remediation rates in entry level reading and writing courses at the post secondary level.

Based on the CCHE 2011 Legislative Report on Remedial Education by Lieutenant Governor Joseph Garcia, first-time college student remediation rates in math, writing, and reading have and will continue to increase because student demographics are changing. More students are given the opportunity to apply and go to a two or four year college than thirty to fifty years ago. College is no longer for the privileged and elite; anybody can attend college. If students do not have the basic skills to enter college, that is okay; they can enroll in remedial courses that will prepare them for the 100 level classes they should be taking upon initial enrollment. If students were properly prepared for the rigorous expectations colleges and universities set for them, then there would be no need for remediation no matter what the demographics of an entering freshman class may be. How can first-time college freshmen know what they need to know in a 100 level course if the teachers do not know what to prepare students for in a 100 level course?

According to the CCHE report, 49.5% of first time students who enroll in a two or four year Colorado college or university need remediation in writing and 34.3% need remediation in reading. Of the four high schools in the Pueblo City Schools District, 424 students who enrolled as first time college students in Colorado, 124 needed remediation in writing and 97 in reading.⁷⁴ The state is looking at remediation programs at the postsecondary level of education in order to

⁷⁴ Average graduating class is about 200

prepare students for the workforce upon graduation from college; however, not all of the students enrolled in remediation classes will complete their post secondary degree.

Remediation is very expensive. It costs the state \$22 million to fund remediation programs at colleges and universities, and costs the students statewide \$24 million in tuition. This is an unnecessary expense to both students and higher education. Post secondary institutions are trying to remedy a problem that public education is currently trying to address through new standards, assessments, and evaluation systems. If the two governing agencies – the respective “panoptics” – worked together, money might be saved, efforts more productive, and outcomes more positive. This is yet another unintended consequence of not fully preparing secondary ELA teachers to teach the 21st century learner.

Because of remediation rates, numbers, and statistics, the blame game is often played. Colleges and universities place blame on the high schools for not properly preparing students for college; high schools blame parents for not being involved in their student’s education; parents blame teachers for failing their children; and the game continues. When in reality, nobody investigates the expectations the state has placed on students and teachers, the expectations universities have for incoming freshmen, or the expectations the workforce has for graduates.^{75 76}
⁷⁷ How ironic; effective communication skills are what students need to learn and be able to do in order to be successful in the workforce, yet nobody is communicating with each other to find out what students need to know and be able to do to be successful at each and every level of education.

⁷⁵ Academic standards

⁷⁶ CCHE requirements (grade point average, credit requirements, ACT/SAT scores)

⁷⁷ Employment pre-requisites, job application requirements

Current State of Affairs

Thus far, the preparation of prospective secondary ELA teachers has been the focus but let us not ignore the current secondary ELA teachers in our Colorado public schools today. What is currently being done to help them transition into the new CAS and CCSS? Many school districts are providing various types of professional development and sending teams of teachers to state and national conferences to help them transition from the old Colorado Content Model Standards to the new CAS and the senate bills tied to the new standards. Conferences offered by various agencies and vendors give teachers and administrators the opportunities to come together to share ideas and collaborate.⁷⁸ Teachers who attend week long AP Institutes are fortunate enough to have intensive training in best teaching practices because AP focuses on using rhetorical strategies to teach literature, speaking, and composition. The teachers who get to go to conferences and institutes have had an opportunity to be re-energized and refreshed and want to implement new strategies to help students critically think about what they learn. These teachers then return to their district or buildings and try to share their excitement and energy with their colleagues; but if they do not receive continued support in their efforts, the energy begins to fade, and they are back at square one and morale can continue to decline.⁷⁹

School districts are trying to help improve student achievement; but so many drastic changes are occurring in education right now that districts and teachers are having difficulty keeping up with the changes, not to mention their classroom responsibilities and the ever looming state assessments. Of course, these should not be excuses; despite the changes, teachers should still be focusing on students and learning. Once this happens, achievement will

⁷⁸ The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Inquiry by Design, Solution Tree, and Leadership and Learning

⁷⁹ Conferences for furthering educator knowledge are great if the information from those conferences can be shared when educators return to their districts. Professional development and Professional Learning Communities should offer a venue for teachers and administrators to share the information learned from a conference.

automatically increase. The focus should not emphasize achievement so much that it is stressful for teachers, administrators, students, and parents; rather, the focus should emphasize student learning. What should students learn to be successful in our society and world today? They should learn how to effectively communicate. By learning this, they will increase critical thinking skills, oral and written expression skills; skills that will help students on standardized assessments at any grade level.

Graff was accurate when he said we become “pedagogically stupid” when we become experts in our academic field. Teachers are experts in both the content they teach and in the field of education; therefore, their stupidity is doubled.⁸⁰ The reason a young teacher is enthusiastic, eager, and excited to teach is because she has the romantic idea that she is going to change the future of America; she will make a difference in young people’s lives. Wendy Bishop said “every new teaching theory and strategy was a delight, offered me insights” (326). I would have to agree with her because I felt the same way when I was studying to become a teacher. Dreaming of what my classroom would look like, how I would engage students, the lessons and assignments I would develop all caused me to lose my patience with the mundane of the college setting. She goes on to say “Then, I found myself helping new teachers learn to use an activity for the first time. I had to remind myself that what was beginning to sound like old news to me might still be new – not overworked or mined out – for them” (326). I too have experienced this along my educational career, as both a teacher and district literacy specialist.⁸¹ What is new to students in a classroom is not new to me as the teacher because I have taught it for so long that I begin to assume students come to me with the knowledge I think they should have, as do many veteran teachers. Truly, though, that is most definitely not the case.

⁸⁰ Teachers are considered experts in their content area as well as in education as both are their field of study.

⁸¹ Not all ELA teachers have the knowledge I’ve learned as a literacy specialist and from my master’s program.

As an administrator, what sounds new to a secondary ELA teacher concerning assessment, standards, and rhetoric is old to me because I have been living, breathing, sleeping, and eating it for the past three years.⁸² I become especially disappointed when some English scholars in my field of education do not share my depth of knowledge in rhetoric; at the same time, though, I feel energized when I find teachers do not share my depth of knowledge because I can teach and help them be successful in their classroom, which will ultimately help the students become successful.⁸³ Yet, when I am presenting to a group of professional ELA educators and one decides to interrupt my presentation to inform me of how the information is too overwhelming and cannot be done because of stress levels, heavy workloads, and rotten kids, while bringing the rest of the group to mutiny, my disappointment and frustration far outweighs my energy. What can I do other than empathize for a while and then try to continue with my presentation developed to ease the stress and workload.

For them to have the comfort level with me to share how they really feel could be seen as a positive experience because I have established a relationship with them that allows the comfort level; but, despite their comfort with me, there is such a thing as professionalism.⁸⁴ The feeling of despair and helplessness has led to a relaxation in professionalism among the current teaching ranks. The secondary ELA teachers I work with have not let go of the distractions to really allow them to focus on content and students, which leads to unproductive instruction. If teachers had a firm grasp and understanding of rhetoric, then professionalism would be a common practice and teachers might begin to effectively communicate and collaborate to promote student learning.

⁸² Start of English MA and career change from classroom teacher to district administrator.

⁸³ middle school and high school English Language Arts teachers, assistant principals, and principals with an English degree

⁸⁴ Teachers see me as a peer who taught with them for twelve years and as someone who understands the classroom.

Finding Balance

English Language Arts is the one content with the heaviest workload by far. Once teachers enter the secondary ELA classroom, they realize how heavy the workload really is.⁸⁵ Grading student writing is probably the most time consuming activity in which an ELA teacher engages. Randall Popken said,

...the very nature of the subject of written composition meant it would demand great amounts of time from the faculty...once writing became the object of rhetorical pedagogy, commentary required the faculty member to have large blocs of time outside of class to sit quietly reading and rereading student manuscripts...and holding private conferences with students” to discuss the work submitted (619).

This may be true in some cases, but by teaching secondary ELA teachers how to teach students to effectively communicate, the teacher workload decreases tremendously.

If teachers taught students how to use a writing workshop model when writing compositions using a standardized rubric based on the CAS, then students begin to look for each other’s arguments.⁸⁶ Before a writing workshop model can be implemented, direct instruction must take place in order to teach the students what they need to know to perform the tasks they will be asked to complete. Again, the delicate balance between teacher as instructor and teacher as facilitator must be found. Once students understand the format and expectations for a writer’s workshop and the content to be applied during a workshop, they begin to become critical of grammar and syntax because they will recognize the misplaced comma or semicolon interrupting

⁸⁵ Lesson planning, reading material, researching, and grading multiple pieces of writing

⁸⁶ I learned this workshop model in my creative nonfiction and poetry classes. The professor had us bring copies of our papers for everyone in class. We read the papers, responded and offered feedback, then shared our comments during class. I modified the model to help students become more accountable for their writing and learning. It took a semester to train and build trust. Second semester, students didn’t want me looking at their drafts, only the final. My workload decreased because students knew what I expected from them.

the sentence fluency. They will start to offer suggestions to clear up confusion in organization and structure. They will be able to identify tone and voice that are not appropriate for the subject matter, and the vocabulary not suitable for all audiences. These are skills and concepts students will understand and apply when the teacher uses and teaches rhetoric in her classroom.

Why must the teacher be the only one with all the answers? Why can students not collaborate to help improve their writing and communication skills? Teaching prospective secondary ELA teachers how to provide effective feedback on assignments so they can model effective feedback practices and methods will help decrease some of the workload because students will become accountable for their learning. A writing workshop model will also help new ELA teachers organize writing instruction because students will understand the importance of rhetoric. When the teacher fully understands her content's skills and concepts, the integration of skills and concepts will help students to communicate. By combining all of the above, strong student-teacher relationships can occur and help decrease stress levels, workload overload, and undesirable behavior current teachers experience.⁸⁷

When working with secondary ELA teachers I sometimes reference Wendy Bishop. In her address to the 52nd Annual Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in March 2001, she discussed the importance of the renewal process for teachers. What she says in *Against the Odds in Composition and Rhetoric* is not only for composition instructors, but useful for all educators. Her statement "Pressures to professionalize, to produce better writers, to provide inoculating three-day in-services for new teachers that press teachers to work ever more efficiently under stress-inducing conditions wring shorter and shorter half-lives of many" (327) can very accurately describe how teachers feel today. I help develop

⁸⁷ CAS

and deliver the three-day in-services for teachers hoping that the material will help reduce the stress, when in reality it can add to it.⁸⁸

I believe stress reduction in current teachers will not happen because they are not ready to listen or ready to try to find the balance between direct instruction and facilitation of learning. They are too worried about trying to change the things they cannot control when all they should be focusing on are the things they can control.^{89 90} Rita Dove once said in an interview with *Bookpg JK*, “There are times in life when, instead of complaining, you do something about your complaints.” This holds true for educators. Complaining will not accomplish anything positive; therefore, be positive and work with what you have to make your personal situation better. Because the tower of the government “panopticon” in education is so tall and casts a long shadow in the teachers’ perspective, they forget to look at what is positive. The government “panopticon” is really a positive structure that is trying to help teachers mold the future despite the challenges and obstacles.

Not all secondary ELA teachers are negative, distracted, and constantly complaining; most are stressed, but they want to do what is right and in the best interest of the students. I share the same worry Bishop expressed when she said, “I worry not simply about age, time in the field, time in the saddle, but about good people having chosen good work under difficult conditions” (329). There are teachers who are trying to do good work in the difficult conditions created over the past decade.⁹¹ How or why these difficult conditions came to be is now irrelevant. She goes on to say “...these individuals continue [to teach] because they have chosen to, because they are

⁸⁸ Professional development offered throughout the year based on state initiatives

⁸⁹ The current administration, the bell schedule, the senate bills, the assessments

⁹⁰ Instructional delivery methods, increasing content knowledge, departmental planning, student-teacher relationships, providing relevant feedback to students, and many others

⁹¹ Implementation of NCLB, AYP, CSAP without preparation for educators from the institution implementing them – the Department of Education and the Colorado Department of Education

engaged intellectuals and activists, because they are teachers in love with writing and teaching. Every working day these individuals tilt the odds, incrementally, in our field's favor" (329). Most people who become teachers are intellectuals and activists and want to make a difference, but that passion can disappear as time goes by because teachers forget how to be an intellectual and activist who can make a difference in the world. The romantic idea each teacher-elect felt during his or her teacher preparation program should not be completely lost – teachers do make a difference.

If the excited, eager, energetic, and enthusiastic prospective secondary ELA teachers, whom we must remember are still students themselves, are taught how to stay intelligent, active, keep material new and fresh no matter how many times they teach it, and continue to be in love with teaching and reading and writing, students would flourish and prosper. They would be ready to take on the world and make a difference in their own unique ways because they will have had the preparation to do so.

Gone should be the days of talking at our students, high school or college, and here should be the days we talk with our students and model the skills and behavior we want to see. We need to provide them opportunities to engage with material to make it relevant to them. The traditional text to text, text to self, and text to world connections offer teachers and students the opportunities to make learning literature relevant. Teachers should follow Rita Dove's advice and do something about their complaints while keeping in mind Mahatma Gandhi's world famous quote "Be the change you want to see in the world." Teachers have the knowledge and power to be the change the world of education needs to see, and teacher preparation programs are the first stop on the road to change.

CONCLUSION

Many of the current practices for teaching ELA at the secondary level are either outdated or ineffective; stagnant or declining state, national, and international test results can support this statement.⁹² The modes of writing are important to know, but what is more important to know is how to use the modes. An effective secondary ELA teacher has to be open and willing to try new things and take risks. Donald Stewart states the teacher “knows the contexts in which theories have been put forth and applied,” which means she has the background knowledge needed to teach (142). A good composition teacher knows how to balance the old with the new, traditional with non-traditional. But if a secondary ELA teacher does not know the old, new, traditional and non-traditional theories, contexts, and practices, then how is she going to be successful in the classroom?

Assessments and standards will continue to change and evolve over time. It took Colorado fifteen years to revise its state standards; but, once the revisions were made, changes occurred the very next year because of the national sense of urgency to improve student achievement. Colorado’s CSAP test is currently in the process of change and evolution. Teachers cannot, and should not, teach to a test; but because of the high stakes involved with student assessment, many teachers will teach to the test in order to keep their job instead of teaching students the content, skills, and concepts necessary for success. The practice of teaching to the test is only detrimental to students and their intellectual growth.

To avoid the possible stunted growth of intellect, teachers need training on how to survive no matter the initiatives, mandates, and expectations a state develops. All academic contents are complex, but secondary ELA is one of the most difficult contents to teach because reading, writing, and speaking are all intertwined like a giant nerve; if one is cut off from the

⁹² ELA teachers focus on teaching what to do instead of applying knowledge in relevant settings.

rest, paralysis occurs.⁹³ Teaching potential teachers how to integrate the ELA skills and concepts is essential for student success. Teacher preparation programs would be providing an immense service to students in secondary ELA classrooms across the state if they ensured the teachers understood the methods, reasons, and practices for strategic, effective, and logical communication.

The data from the assessments that assess the standards is always going to be the driving force for decision making in education. Are students achieving? Are students learning? How do we know? Data answers these questions on a universal level; data is always present. What lies beneath the data, however, is where most of the efforts and energy must be placed. What should a first year ELA teacher expect when she walks into her classroom for the first time? Teacher preparation programs do a very good job teaching students how to lesson plan, what to do with specific behavior problems, how to use technology in the classroom, and possible strategies for intervention; but what teachers really need is a depth of knowledge in content and how it fits into lesson planning, classroom management, technology, and intervention.

English majors get the depth of knowledge through their core undergraduate work, but how deep is the knowledge in rhetoric and its place in the classroom? Are specific content areas at the university level collaborating with the teacher education programs, and are the teacher education programs communicating with the surrounding school districts? It really does take a village to raise a child; the academic schools in the university, the teacher preparation programs, and the school districts are the villagers responsible for raising the children. If the collaboration does not occur among these agencies, then the children will suffer many deficiencies.

Rhetoric is the foundation for all communication. Babies tug on the heart strings when they can't even talk yet, communicating with adults what they need and or want; small children

⁹³ Math, science, social studies, world languages, music, art

gain language knowledge and acquisition based on the environments in which they are raised and participate, then they begin to use that language to communicate with others; teenagers start applying and practicing the language acquisition from childhood to develop arguments based on their background knowledge, communicating with peers, parents, and teachers to try to influence decisions; adults are fully immersed in rhetoric while communicating at work and home and in social, religious, and political settings. The one skill that drives our communication seems to be glossed over in an ELA teacher's preparation. The one skill needed to help today's 21st century learner be successful is not addressed in the classroom because the teacher's depth of knowledge is not deep enough.

I was that teacher who only knew what she knew. I thought I was preparing my students for college and the workforce. It wasn't until I began my master's program in English did I realize the disservice I was providing my students. Then, the reality of not fully preparing my high school students for college truly hit me when I began teaching a Composition 101 course at the high school and university level.⁹⁴ After ten years of teaching secondary ELA, I finally realized what I needed to do in order to prepare my students from 9th grade to 12th grade for college, the workforce, and civilization. I needed to introduce them to rhetoric. I needed to model rhetoric. I needed to teach them rhetoric. Once this happened, they began to practice and use rhetoric on a daily basis. They were the detectives trying to find the reasons for what people were saying and why they were saying it. They were learning the what, how, and why to say something themselves. They were learning to effectively, strategically, and logically communicate; as Kenneth Burke would say, they were learning to "put in [their] oar" (110).

⁹⁴ Senior to Sophomore (STS) Composition 101 is offered to high school seniors for college credit because it is the same Composition 101 curriculum offered at Colorado State University-Pueblo. High school seniors can enter college as sophomores, hence the Senior to Sophomore name. I taught one section of STS Comp. 101 and one section of college Comp. 101.

What is taught in a master's level English course should be shifted down to a methods course for teaching writing in an English Language Arts teacher preparation program. My knowledge and preparation from my master's program would have served me well fourteen years ago.

No matter the preparation future secondary ELA teachers and current ELA teachers receive, all of them need to keep the student at the center of learning. English Language Arts teachers should be focusing on process and not product. Donald Stewart was very clear about that. Richard Fulkerson shares the same view as Stewart; it is the process that helps students create the product to share, whether the product is written, artistic, musical, or verbal. Students need to know the process and reasons for communication.

Fulkerson looks at the analytical scheme of composition. He asks four main questions: the axiological question, the process question, the pedagogical question, and the epistemological question. The axiological question explores "what makes writing good?" The process question asks "how do written texts come into existence?" The pedagogical question wants to know "how does one teach...students effectively...?" And the epistemological question asks "how do you know" (657-658)? These questions generate some deep critical thinking for the ELA teacher. If teachers cannot think about and engage, or "put in [their] oar (Burke, 110), in a conversation regarding these questions, how can we expect students to? Once a teacher leaves a teacher education program, the game changes because theory now becomes practice; and if the theory does not work, teachers are left to fend for themselves, and potentially great teachers leave the profession. Support for ELA teachers should begin in the teacher preparation program and continue once a teacher is hired by a district.

WORKS CITED

- ACT Profile Report - National. "Graduating Class 2011 National." *act.org*. ACT, n.d. Web. 19 Apr. 2012.
- Armario, Christine. "'Wake-Up Call': U.S. Students Trail Global Leaders - US News-Life-
msnbc.com." *msnbc.com - Breaking News, Science and Tech News, World News, US
News, Local News- msnbc.com*. Associated Press, 7 Dec. 2010. Web. 29 Dec. 2011.
- "Assessment - Colorado ACT - Data & Results." *Colorado Department of Education Home
Page*. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2012.
- "Assessment - CSAP / TCAP - Data & Results." *Colorado Department of Education Home
Page*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Apr. 2012.
- Augenblick, Palaich and Associates (APA), and the Colorado School Finance Project. "Analysis
of the Costs of Colorado's Achievement Plan for Kids (CAP4K) First Interim Report." 1
Mar. 2010. Print.
- Bishop, Wendy. "Against the Odds in Composition and Rhetoric." *College Composition and
Communication* 53.2 (2001): 322-335. Print.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, and John B. Thompson. "Editor's Introduction." *Language & Symbolic Power*.
Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991. 1. Print.
- Bridgeland, John M., DiIulio, John, J., Burke-Morison, Karen. "The Silent Epidemic:
Perspectives of High School Dropouts." Civic Enterprises. March 2006.
- Broad, Eli, and Edythe Broad. "Home Page - The Broad Foundation - Education." *Home Page -
The Broad Foundation - Education*. Hello Design, n.d. Web. 19 Nov. 2011.
- Burke, Kenneth. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*. 3. ed. Berkeley,
Calif. Univ. of California Press, 1973. Print.

Colorado Senate Bill 08-212. *The Preschool to Postsecondary Education Act*. May 2008. Print.

Colorado Senate Bill 09-163. *The Education Accountability Act*. April 2008. Print.

Colorado Senate Bill 10-191. *Ensuring Quality Instruction Through Educator Effectiveness Act*.
May 2010. Print.

Colorado State University – Pueblo. *Spring 2010-2011 Course Catalog*. Vol. XLVIII.

"Common Core State Standards Initiative About the Standards." *Common Core State Standards Initiative Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 June 2011.

"Common Core State Standards Initiative: In the States." *Common Core State Standards Initiative: Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 June 2011.

"Common Core State Standards Initiative: The Standards." *Common Core State Standards Initiative: Home*. N.p., n.d. Web. 10 June 2011.

Doorly, Sean. "Interview with Ms. Dove." *Department of Mathematics, University at Buffalo*.
The Book Report, Inc., 1998. Web. 8 Feb. 2012.

Duncan, Arne. "International Engagement Through Education: Remarks by Secretary Arne
Duncan at the Council on Foreign Relations Meeting." *ED.gov*. N.p., 26 May 2010. Web.

"English CSU Undergrad." *English CSU Fort Collins, CO*. N.p., n.d. Web. 31 Jan. 2012.

"English Program Courses - Adams State College." *Adams State in Alamosa, Colorado*. N.p.,
n.d. Web. 31 Jan. 2012.

Foucault, Michel. "Part Three: Discipline 3. Panopticism." *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the
Prison*. 2. Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books, 1995. 195-228. Print.

Fulkerson, Richard. "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century". CCC. June 2005.
56:4. Print.

- Graff, Gerald. "'Lives on the Boundary' at 20". *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. 9 Nov. 2011.
- Jorgensen, Margaret A., and Hoffmann, Jenny. "History of the *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001 (NCLB)." Pearson Assessment Report. Pearson Education, Inc. 2003. Print.
- Matsen, Patricia P., Philip B. Rollinson, and Marion Sousa. *Readings from Classical Rhetoric*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990. Print.
- MetLife, Inc. *The MetLife Survey of The American Teacher: Teachers, Parents and the Economy*. Harris Interactive. March 2012.
- Stewart, Donald. "Some History Lessons for Composition Teachers." *Rhetoric Review* 3.2 (1985): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (Taylor & Francis Group): 134-144. Print.
- Trilling, Bernie. "The Partnership for 21st Century Skills." *The Partnership for 21st Century Skills*. N.p., n.d. Web. 13 Sept. 2011.
- "Unit of Academic Standards - Colorado Academic Standards." *Colorado Department of Education Home Page*. Colorado Department of Education, n.d. Web. 7 Dec. 2010.
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs. "College of Education." Spring 2012. Print.
- University of Colorado Colorado Springs. "College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences (LS)." Spring 2012. Print.

WORKS REFERENCED

- Colorado Department of Education. *Transitioning to the Colorado Academic Standards: Curriculum Transition and Redesign Support*. 2010 Power Point Presentation.
http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/UAS/Presentation_and_Resources.html.
- "Exploring the 21st Century Skills." *21st Century Skills*. Colorado Department of Education, n.d.
Web. 22 Jan. 2011.
- Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: The Struggles and Achievements of America's Underprepared*. New York: Free Press; 1989. Print.
- Schmoker, Michael J. *Focus: Elevating the Essentials to Radically Improve Student Learning*. Alexandria, Va.: ASCD, 2011. Print.

APPENDIX A

The 21st Century Skills and Readiness Competencies⁹⁵

Critical Thinking and Reasoning – identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation, collect and analyze data...using multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions

Information Literacy – plan strategies and guide inquiry, locate, organize, evaluate, synthesize and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media, evaluate and select information sources...based on the appropriateness to the specific tasks, [and] process data and report results

Collaboration – interact, collaborate and publish with peers, experts or others...communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences...[and] develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learnings of other cultures

Self-Direction – students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior

Invention – students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge and develop innovative products and processes...apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas...create original works as a means of personal expression...[and] identify trends and forecast possibilities

⁹⁵ This information comes from the *Department of Education Home Page* "Unit of Academic Standards - Colorado Academic Standards."