

SILENT OUTSIDERS:
SEARCHING FOR QUEER IDENTITY IN COMPOSITION READERS

by

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ABSTRACT

This study searches twenty composition readers' table of contents for the degree of inclusivity of queer people and issues. Four means of erasure are labeled as possible erasing of queer identity: presuming heteronormativity, overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity. The presence of other differences are compared to the number of times that queer identity is referenced in the table of contents. The final portion of the analysis examines the two most inclusive composition readers to understand more clearly how the readers present queer individuals and issues.

In a sense, I want to explore the question of how often queer people are discussed or addressed and in what forms within these composition readers. My hope is to develop a means for instructors and students to investigate whether or not, and in what ways a composition reader prescribes presence for the queer individual.

“Other people have ‘sexuality’ but heterosexual people are ‘just people’”.
— Shaun Best

This is dedicated to those teachers that strive to make an impact in all students’ lives: students who are straight and those who are queer identified. If not for teachers like those, I would not have the courage to do this type of project. That courage has enabled me in attempting to find a solution to disempower those enfranchised forces that seek to trivialize, label, and control the presentation of queer people and communities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: RECOGNIZING MY ALTERED SELVES

“There it was, what he wanted—tangibly before him, like the fairy world of a Christmas pantomime; as the rain beat in his face, Paul wondered whether he were destined always to shiver in the black night outside, looking up at it.”
—Cather, Willa (453)

I started this project because I wanted to open people’s eyes: students—gay, straight or bisexual, and faculty, staff, or others who have an impact on education. What I found was that there was much about gay culture that I had never been exposed to which ended up opening my own eyes more than I had expected.

I had never realized my own engrained homophobia until I reached an age where I could look back. I grew up in a very small town in southwestern Virginia, and unfortunately, for me, gay and lesbian studies were not exactly at the forefront of the most influential topics either in high school, college, or the general public. I felt dislocated, distracted, and separated from society—I wasn’t sure who I was. I didn’t know if I was gay, straight, confused, lost, or exactly what I *should* be feeling. I only knew that what I *was* feeling wasn’t exactly *correct* in the southwestern Virginia definition of the word. Even after leaving this small town, going to undergraduate school near home and then on to graduate school, I found that there was a wealth of knowledge that I never realized existed before because it had never been addressed in any of my prior educational or cultural experiences. When I was younger I enjoyed reading, but somehow felt that no book revealed characters similar to me. Lee Lynch takes a similar perspective in her essay “Cruising the Libraries:” “throughout childhood and adolescence, I

searched and searched for images of myself in literature, on television, in movies...I had feelings of discomfort [with] the world” (Lynch 4).¹

It wasn't until my graduate school days that I learned more about gay and lesbian studies, gender studies, and queer theory—certainly I was never exposed to it in my so called liberal, humanist education at my undergraduate institution. Little did I realize at the time how silencing affected society and individuals. In fact, it was not until the end of my undergraduate career while taking bioethics and an independent study in the history of eugenics that I realized silencing as a force existed at all. An issue I read about in this class was the mismanagement of discourse about AIDS / HIV and the ill effects that spread as a result. Still, this never really accentuated what happened in the *language* of AIDS until I starting asking myself questions like: Why was it this way? Why do people still have a common misbelief that AIDS is automatically associated with queer persons or other minorities? What of the language used? How did it silence queer individuals and groups? Why have we not talked more in these classes of the language(s) used and the detrimental effects silencing had on minority groups in America?

In a distorted way I started slowly recognizing the reason behind this—homophobia and heteronormativity. When the only people believed to be affected at the onslaught of the AIDS / HIV pandemic were what was collectively called “The Four Hs” (heroin [or intravenous drug] users, hemophiliacs, Haitians, and of course homosexuals) it did not help. It wasn't until later that I pieced together the exclusionary practices that went on in AIDS / HIV language and the distribution of medicines, the outright discrimination, and the perpetuation of prejudice(s).

¹Lee Lynch discusses the difficulties of finding a queer perspective in any books growing up in her article “Cruising the Libraries:” Essay was dedicated to her high school English teacher Mr. James Fechheimer.

When this piecing together had finally spun around for me near the age of twenty-two after coming out only a couple of years before, I felt hurt, angry, belittled, outraged, and lied to by people who I once trusted—not just the biology department but society. Everything I had deemed as the influential aspects of the *human* life was no longer valued by everyone. I was seeking an education in science to help me understand how nature works—little did I realize at the time that as a homosexual man, I was not considered a part of what most science fields would define as human. I was surprised to realize that most of science and society in general would just rather the homosexual disappear altogether. The science I was being taught was the engrained cultural and discourse barriers prescribed by the ruling class.

Understanding my internalized homophobia and becoming angered by a society that would foster it motivated me to modify what kind of question I wanted the reader to explore in my thesis. At first I had difficulty putting into words what my thesis was actually going to say when asked. Other graduate students, faculty, and staff seemed to be oblivious to the world of the queer as did my family and friends who are not gay. Even some friends who are gay did not understand the engrained misconceptions, stereotypes, and misperceptions within both the overall heterosexual and queer culture.

Consequently, when asked: “What is your thesis about? Or what is your thesis’ topic?” My responses went something like this: “My thesis is on gay and lesbian studies and the rhetoric of composition.” Pretty straight forward, but understandably also pretty vague and at this time meant nothing to me, because I had just started on this journey and was still struggling to find my way.

One has to assume that with a response like mine the person asking the question would want to know what the heck I was talking about—few did. Perhaps when the words “gay and

lesbian studies” came out of my mouth, the person asking the question stopped listening to all or most of what I said after that point and replied after a long pause, “Oh” as if saying... “You are no longer the same person you were a few minutes ago,” or “I do not know you or this wild tongue you speak.” When asked the same question later in the development of the thesis, instead of just blurting out gay and lesbian studies at the beginning of my response, I was able to meander my way through a short response that went something like this: “My thesis is an empirical study on different readers used in the composition classroom in respect to their language and more importantly their use of queer identified narratives, acknowledgment of *others* and/or their sexual identities.” That response really caused a stir among a few people whose response was something like: “Use of *what*-identified stories?” as if they had misunderstood the response altogether and needed to re-ask just to make sure they were not hearing things. At which point I would now have to repeat myself and explain what *queer* was and in some instances why I chose to use *queer* as if it’s not allowed to be used in the academic world and especially in a confining, academic way like—*queer theory*.

When asked the same question by my aunt and uncle while at dinner on our annual family trip, I simply didn’t answer completely—I lied. The dinner was in the presence of my grandmother who does not know of my homosexuality although the rest of the family does. I responded something like... “It has to do with a new theory in rhetoric and composition, and not just rhetoric and composition, but all fields... (hesitation, silence)...and I am examining different readers to check for inherent and/or intentional use of language that may pose problems for students.” I saw in my uncle’s eyes and shortly thereafter my aunt’s as well that this response was not enough. He gave me an odd look as if saying, “Okay...you’re not getting off that easy—what kind of vague *new theory*.” My grandmother was more or less oblivious to

the conversation; however, I felt that she would not think too highly of the words *queer theory*² if they had rolled out off of my tongue, so I did not speak them. I responded instead with: “It’s similar to feminist theory.” At this point my uncle gave me a look that told me he understood what I was saying.

It was at this point that I realized the different types of communication that I like all writers and speakers use with different audiences. That is when speaking to my aunt and uncle I would speak differently than if I was speaking to my professors about my thesis, even though my uncle is a professor himself. What I had actually done was to hide my true identity at least to some extent and to create, if for no more than for a brief second, an altered self in which my homosexuality could not be voiced. What Harriet Malinowitz calls my bifurcated and schizophrenic self had spoken and I existed now as I had not before. By not directly addressing what type of theory I was doing, I was still inadvertently answering the question—as if the words themselves were forbidden to be spoken in certain company. And this problem is not a unique to me. For every class queer students attend where they cannot openly be themselves, they must act as a schizophrenic reader/writer, and as Malinowitz states: “no one in Western culture exists outside the complex web of signification forged by homophobic discourse and silence about sexual difference” (29). There are times when a class is open enough to accept a student’s queerness that the students may be able to come out to the class and be their true *selves*; however, still “in current-traditional homophobic culture—that is, the vast so called ‘mainstream’ space occupied by those who haven’t evacuated to hip, queer-friendly enclaves—

² In this thesis, I use the word “queer” to refer generally to non-normative sexual identities, and when necessary I use gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered/transsexual to refer to specific aspects of what it means to be “queer”—to be something *outside of* the heterosexual majority.

some age-old problems remain in force for the lesbian or gay student writer” (Malinowitz 35).³

This is where learning begins, not just for gay and lesbian students, other minority students who may identify with not being able to be their selves, but the heterosexual student who has not encountered using an altered self before.

While I do not claim to be the expert in composition theory or queer theory, I hope this thesis will create an awareness of the lack of attention to queer issues in composition classrooms. In composition and in education in general there has not been enough attention paid to what it means to be labeled as sexually non-normative, and there has been too much pushing of queer people and issues under the carpet in order to accept heteronormative values.

This heteronormativity can be seen in the basic functions of our culture such as our language and our school systems. The heteronormative, constructivist nature of our culture’s language associates the idea of a *deviant other* with queer identity because those persons do not prescribe to the performative notions of what it means to be a complicitly functioning member of our culture. This process of othering can lead to the understanding that a violent or derogatory homophobic action towards queer identified persons is acceptable; however, even though silencing may not be in the form of an overtly violent act that is physically harmful, silencing is still a violent act because it denies queer individuals their right to exist in any socially significant way.

In educational settings, heteronormative erasure may mean that queer individuals are afraid to speak out because of possible retaliation either from other students or the instructor in

³ Malinowitz takes the idea of a bifurcated self from Schweickart building on it to schizophrenic reader. She states queer students will have trouble identifying with heterosexual texts and demonstrates the following as an example: “I have felt like a schizophrenic reader—as a woman, as a lesbian, as a Jew, and at time in other ways...it is one of being caught between two forces...” (91).

the classroom. Overt inclusion of queer people and issues in course materials is one way to signal to students – queer and straight – that heteronormativity will not be tolerated. This project will explore the presence and absence of queer people and issues in one element of the composition classroom: composition readers.

This thesis investigates the ways composition readers represent queer people and issues paying particular attention to different types of possible queer erasure: presumed heterosexuality, tokenism, othering, and pathologizing. In a sense, I want to answer the overall question of how often queer people are discussed or addressed and in what forms – essays, narratives, poems, or other written selections – within composition readers. Are queer authors represented? Are queer readers represented? What kinds of queer experiences are included? And how does the presence or absence of queer identity compare to other minorities addressed such as race, gender, class, religion, age, and ableness?

This thesis will investigate the presence of queer identities in relationship to other minorities in twenty different composition readers. Then the most inclusive readers, those with the most instances of queer identity since this thesis focuses on that issue, will be investigated for a further, more detailed analysis.

The remainder of the thesis is formatted into four chapters. Chapter 2: *Negotiating Self(s) and Community(s)* will discuss the issue of composition theory, inclusion of different identities, and Queer theory. The primary focus of that chapter is to discuss why the composition classroom is an ideal place for an investigation of this type. Chapter 3: *Marginalizing and Stereotyping: Counting the Outsiders* presents the methods used in this thesis as well as four theoretical factors that influence erasure both within our culture and the composition classroom: heteronormativity, homophobia, tokenism, and pathologizing. Chapter 4: *Actual*

Inclusion: Space for Queer Identity? will analyze the results. Chapter 5: *Silent Displacement: Final Conclusions* discusses what this study may mean for composition readers, teachers, and the composition classroom.

CHAPTER 2: NEGOTIATING SELF(S) AND COMMUNITY(S)

“Progressive education, education as the practice of freedom, enables us to confront feelings of loss and restore our sense of connection. It teaches us to create community.”

—bell hooks (xv)

“No one in western culture exists outside the complex web of signification forged by homophobic discourse and silence about sexual difference... the subject of queerness is not the province of some faceless Other, but rather has social and epistemological relevance for everyone”

—Harriet Malinowitz (29-30)

This chapter will discuss composition theory and queer theory. The negotiating of selves, becoming a functioning presence, interpreting normal constructivist-separatist power, and deploying more inclusive identities into the framework of composition is central to the argument.

Some dimensions within composition theory and queer theory are outlined in this chapter such as teaching of community(s), negotiating of self(s), and attempting to create an atmosphere in which a student—regardless of his/her sexual identity, race, class, gender, or any other differences—can feel like a *human* member of that community. And since composition as a college curriculum has tried to focus more on a “social constructionist theoretical framework, it would appear [to be] inappropriate for composition to ignore the way that sexual identity—like race, gender, and class—is constructed through language” (Malinowitz 26).⁴

A composition classroom community should serve as a democratic learning system where students speak and work through their voices and not necessarily just receive information from the teacher being filled as if they were empty pails. Indeed, the composition classroom is unique in that it requires students to express their selves in written language, but composition also requires students to interpret readings, perspectives, and ideas from different authors by

⁴ Malinowitz addresses the composition classroom as an ideal place to situate queer texts.

bringing in their own evaluations. Those evaluations can often be based on society's ideas on a given subject coupled with the student's own belief/value system. Instead of honoring only one perspective, [i.e., the perspective of straight, white, middle class, Christian men] the composition classroom must promote grounds that include all students' identity. Such inclusion is particularly important for those who come from positions outside the mainstream.

Paulo Friere's work is an interesting starting point for this discussion because his critique of the banking concept of education can be related to the composition classroom and queer theory. Freire claims in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that relying on the "banking" method of teaching where students sit in the classroom and get filled with information by the teacher instead of interacting with the teacher is most commonly practiced today. Education should be teachers asking students to question, to participate, and to become a part of that classroom community—the community that is created by the interactions of those students and the discussion facilitator (teacher) enables students to identify with the truth, whether it be society's or their own. Often students may find that society's truth may not be the same as their own truth. This method of facilitating a discussion instead of the "banking" method of teaching also encourages students to question their surroundings and what Freire calls the "dominator" culture.

This struggle is not one that can take place in the writing classroom when a student feels that she or he cannot speak about his/her identity due to fear of negative backlash. From Freire's perspective, classrooms that are created as a place where

education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination—denies that man [or woman] is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; it also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people.

Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man [or woman] nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world (Freire 81).⁵

This reflection on the world as people interacting with the world and their immediate, local community(s) enables democratic learning in place of the “banking” or rote memorization method of teaching. Enacting such pedagogy requires the instructor to become more of a facilitator of discussion to create reflection among students and between students and their text(s). This open facilitation of discussion enables more inclusive perspectives to be brought into the classroom such as race, gender, class, and sexual identity. Inclusive perspectives allow students to associate their selves with perspectives like their own while maintaining that different perspectives are honored.

Allowing students to interpret meaning from their own identities, to identify with the readings, or identify with other students in the class requires not only open facilitation as opposed to the banking method of teaching, but an approach that encourages students to question the social assumptions, values, and discourses of a community’s language. Social-epistemic rhetoric is one pedagogical approach to teaching that enables this questioning and re-positioning between students and social values of language to happen. The social-epistemic approach to teaching composition is defined as being “concerned principally with how knowledge is produced and codified in social groupings through language” (Malinowitz 65). Thus one goal of social epistemic pedagogy is to encourage students to inquire about community(s) they are a part of: the composition classroom communities, their own personal communities, and the

⁵ Freire examines the relationship of teaching and the banking method in chapter 2 of Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Here, he is specifically referring to students having difficulty associating with the academic information presented in the classroom—most of the students to which Freire refers are working class students with little “academic” knowledge; however, it applies to all students in every classroom situation.

communities of their audience(s). Berlin describes the practice of social-epistemic teaching as it relates to the “self:”

There is no universal, eternal, and authentic self that beneath all appearances is at one with all other selves. The self is always a creation of a particular historical and cultural moment. This is not to say that individuals do not ever act as individuals. It is to assert, however, that they never act with complete freedom (731).⁶

Social-epistemic rhetoric asks students to identify the ways in which a community will act together and still be many different voices of the whole. Its main goal according to Malinowitz is to “fashion their students as critical intellectuals...;” this is important in composition for negotiating the “self,” but does not, some would argue, go quite far enough (92). Social-epistemic rhetoric is important because it allows students to question their role in society and more importantly the role that language has in shaping and maintaining their identity(s).

Liberatory pedagogy would be the step above social-epistemic pedagogy toward creating communities: beyond the social-epistemic questioning approach and the open facilitation of discussion, liberatory pedagogy places action on the forefront, by seeking to empower students to act upon their society instead of just viewing it through a speculative lens. Liberatory teaching “wants to bring students to self-realization as actors in history and ‘empower’ them [key word] to change the conditions of their lives” (Malinowitz 92).⁷ Feminist or Freirian in origin, liberatory pedagogy is “education that is about healing and wholeness. It is about empowerment, liberation, transcendence, about renewing the vitality of life” (hooks 43).⁸ Thus the liberatory

⁶ From Berlin’s “Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class;” Berlin explains three main pedagogies of composition and teaching writing: cognitive, expressionistic, and social-epistemic.

⁷ Malinowitz describes her interpretation of Berlin’s social-epistemic approach to composition.

⁸ From bell hooks *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* describing education, for all classrooms, in similar method to Freire’s with the students as the center subject of the classroom and making education more liberatory and progressive in its aims.

approach has the most potential to provide the means of bringing sexual identity (and other difference markers) into substantive discussion in composition classes.

One way to begin understanding what it means to make the composition classroom liberatory involves the concept of “discourse communities” defined by Patricia Bizzell as “a group of people that share certain language-using practices...the key term ‘discourse’ suggests a community bound together primarily by its language, although bound perhaps by other ties as well, geographical, socioeconomic, ethnic, professional, and so on” (222). When interpreted this way a composition classroom seeks to create a discourse community where students can express their “voice,” or “self(s);” however, it is also true that there will be several discourse communities within any one composition classroom. For example, assume that there is a student who identifies as male, queer, and Hispanic; his discourse community will be different than that of another student who may be a heterosexual, black female, and then still another student who is white and lesbian. There are, of course, other identities besides race, gender, and sexuality that matter as well [i.e., class, education, occupation, location]; all of which may contribute to one’s identity formation. Thus, although all students will share some basic functions of a shared language in a particular classroom, they will interpret classroom discourses differently with different construed meanings. Just as a single classroom contains many discourse communities, we must also understand that students will bring a variety of perspectives to the readings published in a composition reader; thus, composition readers that bring several perspectives to bear will likely be more relevant to all students. In this sense, the task of a composition teacher or a compiler of a composition reader is to address different communities and try to hear from them *all* so as to foster a learning environment where all students can feel

appreciated as a functioning member. Without such effort, it will be difficult for students to start the process of negotiating themselves through reading, writing, and critical thinking.

To create an environment where *all* students can become functioning members, students should feel free to associate their own self-identified voice with the readings they may encounter and with other students in the classroom—straight, bisexual, or gay. Queer students who do not feel their particular composition classroom is a place they can feel safe about writing, speaking, and thinking freely without fear of retaliation or disapproval from the teacher and/or other students will either hide their own sexuality or choose to write from an altered self. The danger of writing from an othered perspective for queer identified students is a sort of schizophrenic reading and writing, one that Malinowitz describes as “one [voice] being caught between two forces” (91). Malinowitz refers to “decentering the subject” as “a drive to move beyond reliance on received categories of identity in formulating the structures that make us understand one another—the postmodern gesture of decentering the subject” (91). Decentering the subject separates the subject from its social order, discourse community, and re-directs it to a less rigid, less constructivist nature. This would assume that students need to seek more than just the acknowledgement of a social class and system of discourse communities and its markers, but instead move to the approach of working around those *labels* and definitions to create an altered, new form of community.

Even when teachers attempt to decenter the subject and to open all discourse communities in classrooms, students will carry other cultural experiences with them that can create fear of rejection before the class even begins. Such experiences may lead queer-identifying students to want to withdraw from class, either literally, physically, and/or emotionally—setting up a wall of silence and exclusion. These students may be referred to as

what bell hooks calls fear-based students: students who are afraid to interject, speak in class, or just be themselves due to fear of retaliation from other students and/or teachers. Fear-based students “doubt that they can accomplish what they need to accomplish...they are overwhelmed by the fear of failure” (hooks 132). And being overwhelmed by the fear of failure, students will not willfully participate in these facilitated discussions, thus further excluding their voice from the classroom community and building more definite borders in the classroom.

Another way to understand the challenges of making a “safe community” in the classroom – a place where discussion around selves is enabled – is by acknowledging that pedagogy can stifle marginalized perspectives. Richard E. Miller discusses this kind of stifling in an essay, using Mary Louise Pratt’s definition of a “contact zone,” stating that “reimagining the classroom as a contact zone is a potentially powerful pedagogical intervention only so long as it involves resisting the temptation either to silence or to celebrate the voices that seek to oppose, critique, and/or parody the work of constructing knowledge in the classroom” (251). “Contact zone” defined by Pratt is the place “where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power” (34).

Composition classrooms may serve contact zones when individuals are invited to affirm their “selves” and affirm their selves in relation to their community(s). One danger in such an approach is when a “safe house” is created that fails to address marginalized perspectives such as alternative sexual identity, because queer students may not be able to express their true feelings towards a given subject—which will only further perpetuate borders inside the classroom, setting up power relationships that may stifle what can and cannot be said. Miller discusses a narrative essay written by a community college student at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, California that describes both gay bashing and homeless bashing as performed acts—it is not clear if these

were actual acts, intended acts, or imagined acts. In spite of the essay's obvious homophobia, implied hatred, and painfully disturbing content, Miller suggests using it as more of a forum for open discussion where relationships of sexuality and power among culture and cultures' values, norms, and prescribed notions of what is *right* may be probed and analyzed. More importantly he wished to "define a course in which students use their writing to investigate the cultural conflicts that serve to define and limit their lived experience" (251).⁹ This approach would seek to answer questions from students like: What kind of emotion does this narrative provoke? Why is this content seemingly okay for some people? Either as a joke or other intended political meanings? Why is it that such an essay could be produced at all in our westernized culture? How does society reinforce the views of the author in this narrative?

Miller's examples illustrate the unlikely reality of a "safe house" in a real democratic and liberatory classroom(s). The safe houses created by teachers in a classroom may only further perpetuate silence or create a "safe [place] presumably, for the return of the repressed parts of hegemonic culture...[and] expecting coalitions to be warm, nurturing havens of like-minded people is preposterous" (Malinowitz 128). If teachers assume that all students will have similar political and personal views, those teachers are only defining borders in the classroom that students have to stay within merely mimicking the greater society around them—creating the same oppressor/oppressed classroom as the outside world. To promote a democratic environment, teachers have to enable students to grapple with these difficult subjects and come to their own understanding of the subject's context and meaning. Likewise we have to teach our students to question, understand, and re-evaluate all that they know about themselves. And

⁹ Miller reviewed this essay at the CCCC conference and discussed ways of using the essay to promote deconstruction of power and fuel discussion.

furthermore since queer perspectives are often absent we “have to teach our students to be gay because there is no one outside the classroom to do it...” (Haggerty 13).¹⁰ Presenting queer identities and other identities in composition readers is a place to start; the more a queer identifying student sees different perspectives, the more likely those students are to find an affirmation of their selves.

Too often, when writing in the academic classroom students are encouraged to subvert their true identity and become a part of the identity that David Bartholomae suggests as the “academic voice,” a voice which more-than-likely is heteronormative. Most students may assume that homosexual academic voices don’t exist; that queer identified persons can only exist in the borders of a community, the slums of the outside barriers, the ghettos of language society. The academic voice Bartholomae describes is a privileged community, and he reasons that students must be able to become a part of that community to produce academic work and “speak the language of that community” in order to be successful. What Bartholomae’s position does not explicitly take into consideration is that expecting students to assimilate to his privileged academic voice merely reinforces the constructivist and separatist nature of society further separating identities and creating definite borders. Problematic or uninformed values a student may bring to the classroom community may only be reinforced, not questioned. Thus, Bartholomae does not go far enough in questioning the presumptions of this academic voice, Harriet Malinowitz asks this of Bartholomae’s “privileged” essay:

Neither does he interrogate the socially charged terms “status” or “privilege”—nor his assumption that they always represent the goals of student writers. Is there anything strange, to him, “naïve,” about accepting the need to mimic a privileged system?

¹⁰ George Haggerty in his article “‘Promoting Homosexuality’ in the Classroom” investigates the inclusion of gay people – queer identified – people in literature, classrooms, and in general English courses. Since there is often no “queer” perspective we have to either bring that perspective into the classroom or promote an understanding that queer identities are valued as well.

Barholomae's "successful" writers' strategies resemble those of successful players in corporate capitalism... (83).¹¹

Malinowitz's argument against Bartholomae's "privileged system" is pertinent to my study because "mimicking a privileged system" further perpetuates that same "privileged" system that oppresses marginalized minorities. This mimicked system seeks to make marginalized minorities feel unsafe to write about, read about, or speak about their own culture due to a fear of repression, oppression, and shaming. Bartholomae may have an argument that could be true for some, if not most of the heterosexual, white, upper middle class majority of our western culture, but for the other lower class, or racially non-white, or queer identified, or any combination of minority groups will only be placed further down the spectrum of slicing. Seeking to speak another person's language – academic, privileged, or any other derivatives of an oppressor's tongue – is not empowering, instead it is oppressive.

I would not argue that Bartholomae is wrong in his position that helping students engage with academic discourse is important, but I do deny that it is the only important one. An equally important goal is for students to develop their own voices. When discussing academic voice and selves Jacqueline Jones Royster "examined moments of personal challenge that seem[ed] to have important cross-boundary discourse... [in her need to understand] human difference as a complex reality... [she has] come to realize that the most salient point to acknowledge is that 'subject position really is everything' (611).¹² Subject position is the perception(s) of the student and their surroundings and their own struggles with acknowledging aspects of culture that are not entirely aligned with themselves.

¹¹ Malinowitz interrogates Bartholomae's position of the "academic voice." She questions the ability of this notion to encompass what composition is intended to encompass.

¹² Royster writes about using the writing classroom, the practice of composing, to overcome personal strife. This is relevant as it relates to overcoming the loss of identities in a classroom or the loss of feeling one's identity is valued.

Education – and more importantly composition pedagogy – must attend substantially to the importance of individuals’ subject positions to be truly progressive. As hooks argues, “progressive education, education as the practice of freedom, enables us to confront feelings of loss and restore our sense of connection” (hooks, xv).¹³ This push and pull between connection and loss is where all identities can be acknowledged, and examining the representation of queer identity in composition reader provides a glimpse into how the field attends to issues of sexual identity.

My project, as well as others that explore representations of queer identity, are important tools for exploring how queer theory can be translated into pedagogy that uses what hooks call a sense of loss and connection to make the exploration of identity issues a practical part of liberatory pedagogy. Steven Seidman claims that Queer theory “wishes to challenge the regime of sexuality itself, that is, the knowledge that constructs the self as sexual and that assumes heterosexuality and homosexuality as master categories marking the truth of sexual selves” (12). As Queer theory hopes to look at sexualities as knowledge and how society organizes sexuality as a power, it would seem that to investigate how an individual learns to sexualize or de-sexualize themselves in settings such as composition classrooms may be a critical tool for helping all students to interpret the constructed nature of identity. Concepts from Queer theory can be used to examine the extent to which composition pedagogy encourages students to negotiate selves and break down the borders/labels that our westernized, constructivist culture has built between communities of people. The practice of overcoming the dynamics of power

¹³ hooks describes in her preface to Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope what the book will discuss and what she values as good educational pedagogy.

can start with publishing queer perspectives/issues in college composition readers benefiting both queer and straight students.

CHAPTER 3: MARGINALIZING AND STEREOTYPING: COUNTING THE OUTSIDERS

“To identify with a sex is to stand in some relation to an imaginary threat, imaginary and forceful, forceful precisely because it is imaginary.”

—Judith Butler (100)

“...culture is a repository of shared ideas, systems, and meanings that find expression in patterns of behavior and custom within a particular social group. It is the ideational component that defines the culture: what the people learn more than what they do...”

—Harriet Malinowitz (12)

Queer erasure takes on many forms both in the composition classroom and westernized culture. Erasure can be done in a purposeful manner or in a more indirect, subconscious manner; however, either purposeful or unintentional it will have a negative impact on the person, object, or idea being erased. In the composition classroom where writing often requires an individual to write from their own community, it is imperative that the queer identified persons be able to express their selves and their identity with other queer perspectives in a positive way. A possible way to promote queer awareness is to publish queer narratives or authors thus creating presence where absence existed before. If instructors are addressing “sexual identity, sexual difference, and oppressive otherings... [they] not only acknowledge that we *do* but also *claim* that we *must* ‘promote homosexuality’ in the classroom” (Haggerty 12).¹⁴ If we promote homosexuality this means we may simply present readings that are for gay rights creating a message that it is okay to be queer identified. Promoting homosexuality (queer identities) is only natural when it is understood that we already openly acknowledge heterosexual identities and relationships to *all* students in the classroom when they may not, in fact, be heterosexual at all. Promoting one without promoting the other seems at the very least biased.

¹⁴ Haggerty makes a claim for addressing sexual identity and queer identity in the classroom if other sexual identities are addressed; especially when homosexuality is not addressed in our culture at large students will only walk away with negative perceptions of what it means to be homosexual or queer identified.

In this thesis I examine queer erasure in composition readers intended to educate incoming college freshmen on the nature and processes of writing. I investigate four types of erasure in this chapter: overt homophobia, presumed heteronormativity, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity. This thesis looks at the degree that each means of erasure happens in twenty composition readers. Presuming heterosexuality assumes that all inhabitants of a culture are by their very nature only heterosexual, thus discriminating against those not identified as heterosexual. This type of assumption sets up an understanding that homophobic actions or ideas are natural to maintaining the heterosexual norm. With overt homophobia, the instance of erasure is negative often in violent, insulting, or derogatory ways. This type of erasure is obvious and overtly established, while heteronormativity is implied in the nature of our society's norms. The next type of erasure, perpetuating tokenism is a limited way of including minorities just to meet the demands of our multi-cultural world. An example would be including an African American character in an all white television show, or an all white novel. These characters often appear to be exotic, strange, or different in some way. The last type of erasure is failing to address pathologizing queer identity. Pathologizing queer identity includes being inclusive of queer identity in only a negative way such as a category that is a problem or an alternative category to all other, normal categories.

Assumptions that all people are heterosexual, white, or whatever the majority may be, creates a divisionary system of classification, black vs. white, queer vs. straight, man vs. woman, that labels individuals as either an insider or an outsider. Insiders are *the normal*, heterosexual majority and outsiders are *the abnormal*, queer identified minority—the othered individuals.

In this chapter, I discuss in more detail the four means of erasure already mentioned. Then, I will discuss the methodology used to examine the extent to which queer people and issues are present or absent in the twenty composition readers analyzed.

Presuming Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity, as used extensively by Judith Butler, can be defined as the presumption that all people in a given culture will be heterosexual; being normal *is* being heterosexual.¹⁵ Heteronormativity prescribes notions upon an individual, culture, or thought to be male or female, homosexual or heterosexual. These prescribed notions create an understanding that a male should be married or physically attracted to only a female and likewise a female should only be married or physically attracted to a male privileging heterosexuality as the preferred and often times the *only* method of sexual identity. Thus, not only people but also actions, values, emotions, educations, careers, families, and languages are defined heterosexually. Heterosexually-defining our culture creates an underlying division of two sexually-identified groups: heterosexual and homosexual.

Heteronormativity presupposes that there are no other normal types of identifications prescribing only heterosexuality as acceptable. Steven Seidman states “in a society based on the assumption that heterosexuality represents all that is sexually normal, children are taught to view [heterosexuality] as natural and inevitable that they in turn will become ‘mummies’ and ‘daddies’ ...” (114). Thus the separatist, binary system of heterosexuality / homosexuality is

¹⁵ Butler uses heteronormativity frequently in *Bodies that Matter: On the discursive limits of sex* among her other publications as well.

reinforced by heteronormativity, but “to assert our innate bisexuality, challenges the bipolar gender system of tyrannically divided system” (Seidman 114).

Presumed heteronormativity in our culture creates erasure of queer individuals and groups. This is a common means of erasure as most queer identified persons are not depicted in advertisements or news (written or televised forms) and are represented in only a small percentage of classical literature. Lee Lynch remembers what it was like to grow up lesbian without any queer identified characters in literature to identify with, searching for an affirmation of herself as a child, she asks: “Where are the stories of tomboys? Why couldn’t a writer portray puppy love between best girlfriends? Why wouldn’t a librarian order such books?...Did Jill never save Jack? Or Jane, Jill?” (3).¹⁶

Overt Homophobia

Homophobia, the fear of homosexuality, can be an active form of heteronormativity; either violent reactions or subconsciously impacted values that may cause a person to act negatively towards queer identified persons. When discussing the relationship of heteronormativity and homophobia it is apparent in no other obvious way within our culture than from the sheer lack of political protection against hate crimes or other negative reactions against queer identified communities: “lesbians and gays are virtually the only group left facing mass discrimination with no federally mandated civil rights protection, despite such a painfully obvious need for it” (Malinowitz 10). This is an example where there is no protection when any member of the heterosexual majority may act violently and/or negatively towards queer

¹⁶ Lynch refers here to a commentary on the lack of published queer perspective stories in children’s literature and literature in general.

identified persons and their actions are then deemed relevant; thus heteronormative assumptions justify homophobic acts towards queer identified persons because they are reinforced in our culture.

Some people in our society feel “that their negative reactions are justified, in that they target what are generally perceived as extreme cases of sickness and absurdity, [while] others frankly acknowledge their antigay feelings and beliefs, secure that cultural precedent has rendered them understandable and acceptable” (Malinowitz 9).¹⁷ Homophobic persons and heteronormative presumptions in our society are similar to racist notions which only “calls attention [to] the need for critical vigilance when marginalized students of color (or marginalized individuals of any group, that is, a Jew at a Christian school, a gay person in a predominantly heterosexual and heterosexist environment) enter environments that continue to be shaped by the politics of [heterosexist and racist] domination” (hooks 99).

Perpetuating Tokenism

Tokenism is the third means of erasure; it refers to the practice of attempting to be inclusive of minority members in dominant populations but only in a limited way. More generally tokenism may mean strategically placing an African American individual in a mostly white workplace or a queer individual in a mostly heterosexual environment to create a feeling of inclusiveness. This can be seen in affirmative action campaigns in which offices, workplaces, schools, and even television shows include a token individual of a minority group. Often these tokenized characters will appear exotic, different, and strangely unique in books, television

¹⁷ Malinowitz discusses the instances of overt and subconscious homophobia (heteronormativity) in our western culture both in students and in other members of the culture as well. She sites AIDS research, laws targeting queer identified persons, and the sheer absence of laws to protect queer identified persons as a recognized minority group.

shows, or in the workplace. This can create a problem in the form of erasure to minorities, because it is not only stereotyping what a homosexual, an African American, a Hispanic, or a black woman may look, behave, or feel like, but more importantly it further perpetuates the way the general public may view those individuals of the minority. Those individuals' unique, personal identities are only valued when they fit into the expected range of behaviors in our predominantly white, heteronormative culture.

Assuming that queer perspectives are present at all, a specific problem of tokenism is the possible limited range of queer-identities meaning that *queer* may mean a specific age, race, gender, and personality just as African American may mean a specific color, expression, and personality. If and when homosexuals are presented in culture or the composition classroom, students may conjure images of only gay, white, middle class men because our heteronormative, sexist, white culture has prescribed those tokenized representations upon queer identified people. This leaves racial minorities and women out of the classification *queer* altogether.

In addition, to limiting the range of queer people and experiences represented, tokenism can also be trivializing. For example, when queer people are embodied primarily as effeminate, white men (like the character "Jack" on the television sitcom *Will and Grace*) they may seem inconsequential. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick gives examples of stereotyped personalities or behaviors where queer individuals may be marginalized to the extent that they are viewed as unimportant, un-circumstantial, and non-existent. She uses the example of effeminophobia when talking about the gay man, and the representation of gay man as an effeminate character where "the tradition of assuming that anyone, male or female, who desires a man must by definition be feminine and anyone, male or female, who desires a woman must by the same token be

masculine” (157).¹⁸ This gender assignment not only reinforces the values of heterosexist, heteronormative presumptions of what it means by definition to be queer, but “fails to offer [and] seems conceptually incapable of offering, even in the slightest resistance to the wish endemic in the culture surrounding and supporting it: the wish that gay people *not exist*” (Sedgwick 161). This example is particularly intriguing because it uses sexist, genderized norms and values to further limit a queer identified person; equating queer with an inferior view where feminine men or women are less important and viewed as more trivial. This is where queer identified people are allowed to exist marginalizing their space for existence.

In my analysis, tokenism will be identified as presenting queer identified persons in only one subsection or subchapter of the composition reader that deals with only sexual identity or other differences that are already aligned with “outsiders.” For example, race could appear only in the race section, spiritual matters may only appear in a section titled “Religion and Spiritual Influences,” and queer identity might appear in one section called “Identity” and not appear at all in another section called “Writing About Your Selves.” This will also be compared carefully to the degree that other differences are marginalized to only certain sections or subsections of the book.

Pathologizing Queer Identity

The fourth means of erasure important for this study is pathologizing queer identity. Pathologizing queer identity uses heteronormative ideals and values to position the queer individual at a disadvantage leaving the presumption of the queer identified person as only

¹⁸ Sedgwick offers the fear of feminine men as another form of marginalizing queer identified persons. This is particularly interesting theory because it also acknowledges the general fear in western culture of feminine men, but at the same time how most perceptions of gay men are as feminine objects relating to gender theory.

negative. One example would be labeling someone as an *other* in our culture. Labeling someone as an other in our culture has the effect of dismissing that individual or community. Othering often leaves negative presumptions of queer people in culture such as all queer people are pedophiles or all queer people carry out lives that the heteronormative values prescribe as “sin” or “invaluable.” This *othering* is an exercise(s) of the heterosexual – primarily white majority – directly affecting the lives of queer identified persons.

Pathologizing queer identity reinforces the negative ideas that our western culture holds against queer identified people by presenting negative images of the queer identified person in different ways than presuming heteronormativity and tokenism in that pathologizing queer identity equates queer identified people as “metaphors for sin, sickness, criminality, bourgeois decadence, and the demise of the family [and that queer persons] transgress virtually all of the institutions of our society: the law, the government, religion, the family, the police, the medical and psychiatric establishments” (Malinowitz, 111-112).¹⁹ Pathologizing queer identity is a more indirect way of adding words, phrases, and values into a text while still manifesting that there are queer identified people; however, they are valued only as deviants, others.

In this study, pathologizing queer identity represents queer identified persons as “others” carrying a negative connotation. For example, queer culture is often associated with pedophiles, psychopaths, or sociopaths—a group that really has no clear boundaries on class, sexuality, race, or gender and cannot be assumed to be only homosexual or heterosexual. Another example is when queer identified people, especially gay men, are solely blamed or associated for the rise of HIV/AIDS infection in the nation. If there are instances of pathologizing queer identity found in

¹⁹ Malinowitz presents these examples given as instances where queer identified persons are harassed and our western culture subconsciously reinforces these violent acts because of the way in which queer peoples and communities are associated with negative values in popular, western culture.

this study, then the composition readers will make claims about queer culture or queer identified persons that seem to be marginalized to the point of absurdity. It may mean placing a reading selection related to something stereotypically associated with queer persons, such as AIDS, in the “Gay and Lesbian” section alone, when in reality it affects straight people as well as queer people.

Composition Readers Analyzed

The goal of this thesis is simply to examine the extent to which queer people and experiences are represented in a selection of twenty composition readers, particularly how the representation of queer people and experiences compares to the representation of other marginalized minorities.

The composition readers used were chosen because they are currently in use at the University of Central Florida. They were not selected randomly, but based upon availability and their use in the composition program at the university. Each of the books examined was published no earlier than 1995 and is marked primarily as a reader and not as a rhetoric. This sample of composition readers includes emphasis on a wide range of topics: ecocomposition, traditional, social-epistemic, libertarian, and other pedagogical approaches as long as they met the above criteria—readers like *Saving Place: An Ecocomposition Reader*; *Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition*; *Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*; *Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions*; and *What’s Language got to do with it?*

The first step in the analysis was to sort the readers into those whose table of contents is organized by rhetorical mode and those organized by topic. This sorting was necessary to

distinguish those readers that were labeled by topic, such as “Gay and Lesbian Studies,” and those readers sorted by mode, such as “Comparison and Contrast.” This means if one composition reader is organized by rhetorical modes it will most likely not have a section titled “Gay and Lesbian Rights,” or “Race;” however, if the composition reader is organized by topics, then it may have separate sections for differences. And further, this level shows whether the composition reader discusses other minority groups and neglects to discuss queer individuals, or if the text fails to address any marginalized groups at all. Figure 1, shows the twenty composition readers and their modes of organization. Those that have asterisks indicate that the table of contents had no synopses available under the reading selection’s title.

Organized by Rhetorical Mode	Organized by Topic
<i>The Brief Prose Reader: Essays for Thinking, Reading, and Writing*</i>	<i>Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions</i>
<i>75 Readings Plus*</i>	<i>Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*</i>
<i>Convergences: Message, Method, Medium*</i>	<i>The Main Event: Readings for Writing and Critical Thinking*</i>
<i>Past to Present: Ideas that Changed our World</i>	<i>The Questioning Reader</i>
<i>Reading Rhetorically: A Reader for Writers</i>	<i>Writing as Reflective Action: A Reader*</i>
<i>Frames of Mind: A Rhetorical Reader with occasions for writing*</i>	<i>Saving Place: An Ecomposition Reader*</i>
<i>Information and Meaning: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing</i>	<i>Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing*</i>
	<i>American Voices: Culture and Community*</i>
	<i>Conversations: Readings for Writing</i>
	<i>What’s Language got to do with it?</i>
	<i>Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition</i>
	<i>Bridges: A Reader for Writers</i>
	<i>Expectations: A Reader for Developing Writers*</i>

Figure 1: Table of Contents Organization Organization of the tables of contents within the twenty composition readers in question.

Methods of Analysis

The analysis of this study is conducted in two different levels: presence analysis and content analysis. Level one, presence analysis, consists of a search for keywords in the tables of contents and abstracts when available in the twenty composition readers. Level two, content analysis, focuses on the two composition readers found to be most inclusive from the presence analysis. The presence analysis is important, because it will show how queer identity is addressed in comparison to other minority identities like race, gender, class, physical ableness, spiritual/religious, and age differences and how often and in what ways queer people, issues, and perspectives are addressed in the table of contents.

To accomplish the first part of the study, the presence analysis, I searched the titles and synopses in the tables of contents of each of the twenty composition readers. After looking first for keywords to queer identity in the tables of contents, I then looked for keywords relating to one of the other six differences. For example, when searching the table of contents I found: “...Kahlo explores her condition as *Mexican*...” where the word “Mexican” places this particular reading as race related (Beedles v). If I had found a reading that was both queer identified and Hispanic (or any other difference), I would have counted that difference as both queer identified and race related; however, double coding was not necessary as no readers presented two differences in one reading. Some examples of the keywords found in the search for the seven differences, gender, race, queer identity, class, spiritual/religious, age, and physical ableness, are listed in Figure 2.

Marginalized Differences	Keywords
Gender	<i>Women's liberation, feminist, motherhood, body envy, gender, girl, husband, wife</i>
Race	<i>Mexican, African American, Hispanic, Latino/Latina, race, Black Power, Habla English?, Black Postmodernists</i>
Class	<i>low wage, high income, income, elite, poverty, economics, finance, consumer, society income</i>
Spiritual/Religious	<i>Christian, Jewish, Kwanza, belief in..., Christ, God, soul(s), Jesus, spirit</i>
Physical Ableness	<i>handicapped, mentally handicapped, physically disabled</i>
Age	<i>Youth, beauty, age</i>
Queer Identity	<i>bisexual, gay, gay identity, homosexual, transsexual, transgender, lesbian, sexual identity</i>

Figure 2: Marginalized Difference Keywords. This figure represents some examples of keywords found in the search for marginalized differences in the composition readers' table of contents.

After locating the keywords for queer identity and all other differences, I inspected all queer identified readings for their relation to any of the four means of erasure discussed in this chapter. To explore the issue of how often the four means of erasure were present in the queer identified readings, I inspected the titles and synopses to determine which means of erasure, if any, were present.

College instructors choose a composition reader for their composition class often by using the same type of preliminary search that the presence analysis uses. Due to the number of published composition readers, this method may be the most time productive given a short period of time. Most instructors may assume that if the issue isn't addressed in the table of contents, then the issue is most likely not addressed in the composition reader, even though this may not be the case.

The content analysis includes reading selected queer identified readings from the two most queer-inclusive composition readers based on the presence analysis. Jack Selzer's

Conversations: Readings for Writing, had 9 queer identified reading selections, and Dolores LaGuardia and Hans P. Guth's *American Voices: Culture and Community*, had 5 queer identified reading selections (the average number of queer identified reading selections was 1.45 out of the twenty composition readers). To explore how queer people and issues are represented within the composition readers in detail, the selected queer identified readings were examined to find the main idea of the reading, determine the overall perception of the readings (positive, negative, or other (neutral)), and whether the readings fit into any the three means of erasure (overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity).

To answer the first question: What is the main idea of the reading selection and what overall impression does it leave for the reader, positive, negative, or other/neutral, I read all selected readings that were queer identified. Positive readings are those that in some way attempt to change perspectives already in place about queer peoples. Readings classified as negative were those that further perpetuated existing perspectives with homophobic or pathologizing statements about queer peoples. Other/neutral readings were classified as such, because primarily they leave the reader to make their own opinions without the writer expressing his/her own opinion in the reading selection.

The next part of the content analysis explores the queer identified readings for means of erasure, overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity. To answer how often each of these appear in the most inclusive composition readers, I read the entire article, decided what the main idea was, and then looked at the way in which the perspective(s) were given.

To answer how often the reading selections print overtly homophobic reading selections, I examined how often the readings used words like *faggot*, *queer*, *dyke* or any other derogative

word for queer people. To answer how often the reading selections tokenize the queer identified community or persons, I examined how often the same selections were published in the two readers. I also inspected how often gay men, lesbians, or bisexuals were represented versus how often transgender and transsexual peoples were represented. To answer how often the selected readings pathologized queer identity, I examined the number of times negative statements or words were used in relation to queer identity as individuals or as a group.

CHAPTER 4: ACTUAL INCLUSION: SPACE FOR QUEER IDENTITY?

“What the books I have been discussing, and the institutions to which they are attached, demonstrate is that the wish for the dignified treatment of already-gay people is necessarily destined to turn into either trivializing apologetics or, much worse, a silkily camouflaged complicity in oppression...”

—Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (164)

“If we have any serious regard for what it means to be human, the teaching of contents cannot be separated from the moral formation of the learners. To educate is essentially to form.”

—Paulo Freire (39)

This chapter presents the results of the presence and content analysis. The presence analysis shows how often queer identity is present in comparison with how often other differences are present. The content analysis looks at the two most inclusive composition readers' reading selections about queer identity for more detailed analysis of queer representation.

Presence Analysis: Absence, Presence, and Inclusion

The presence analysis examines the table of contents and synopses (when available) to construct a rough picture of how often and in what ways queer people, issues, and perspectives are included in the twenty composition readers selected. The following questions are addressed specifically: How often do the composition readers address queer identity in their table of contents? How often are other difference issues, race, gender, class, physical ableness, age, and spiritual/religious differences, addressed within the table of contents in comparison to queer identity? When queer identity is present, how often is it marginalized through overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, or pathologizing queer identity? Are there any other

instances where queer identity is addressed and it doesn't necessarily fall within one of the four means of erasure discussed in Chapter 3?

Presuming Heteronormativity: Presence or absence

I examined the tables of contents of the twenty composition readers for the presence or absence of queer identity to answer the question of how often the twenty composition readers presumed heteronormativity. Almost half of the readers did not mention queer identity in their tables of contents; only five of the eleven readers that included queer readings had more than one reading about queer identity. Four of the remaining eleven composition readers had only two or three queer identified readings, which left only the two most inclusive composition readers with five and nine queer identified readings. Further, the titles and synopses of only 29 readings among the 1,725 total readings in the twenty composition readers indicated significant queer content—only 1.6% of all reading selections.

Marginalizing Comparisons: Counting all outsiders

To discover how often queer identity was present in comparison to other differences, I examined the table of contents and synopses for six other identity issues: race, class, gender, age, physical ableness, and spiritual/religious differences. Of the 1,725 readings, 381 were about difference-related issues—22% of the total. I found that queer identity was addressed less often than race, gender, and class, but more often than age, religion/spiritual, and physical ableness. Among all difference-related readings, race was addressed 32%, gender 26%, class 17%, queer identity 8%, age 7%, spiritual/religious 6%, and physical ableness at only 4%.

Table 1: Marginalized Difference Readings in the Tables of Contents. Number of times each difference is addressed in each of the twenty composition readers' table of contents. The titles of composition readers with asterisks (*) had no synopses. Percentages listed at the bottom are based upon the total number of readings of each difference addressed and the total absence of each difference issue in all twenty readers.

Composition Readers (Number and Title)	Race	Gender	Class	Queer-Identity	Age	Spiritual/ Religious	Physical Ableness
<i>1. Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions</i>	1	5	2	3	1	1	1
<i>2. Readings on the Rhetoric of Social Protest*</i>	3	3	1	1	0	0	0
<i>3. The Main Event: Readings for Writing and Critical Thinking*</i>	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
<i>4. The Brief Prose Reader: Essays for Thinking and Writing*</i>	6	5	2	0	2	0	0
<i>5. The Questioning Reader*</i>	7	4	3	3	1	1	1
<i>6. Writing as Reflective Action*</i>	3	2	2	1	0	0	0
<i>7. 75 Readings Plus*</i>	4	3	4	0	2	0	1
<i>8. Saving Place: An Ecocomposition Reader*</i>	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
<i>9. Convergences: Method, Message, Medium*</i>	1	1	1	0	1	0	0
<i>10. Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing*</i>	7	4	5	0	0	0	0
<i>11. American Voices: Culture and Community*</i>	13	11	5	5	2	5	2
<i>12. Conversations: Readings for Writing</i>	18	18	7	9	3	3	0
<i>13. What's Language got to do with it?</i>	20	12	5	1	1	3	2
<i>14. Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition</i>	23	13	12	2	2	7	2
<i>15. Past to Present: Ideas that Changed our World</i>	4	2	3	1	3	4	0
<i>16. Bridges: A Reader for Writers</i>	1	4	2	0	2	0	0
<i>17. Expectations: A Reader for Developing Writers*</i>	1	0	1	0	1	0	0

Composition Readers (Number and Title)	Race	Gender	Class	Queer-Identity	Age	Spiritual/Religious	Physical Ableness
<i>18. Reading Rhetorically: A Reader for Writers</i>	4	5	6	2	0	0	0
<i>19. Frames of Mind: A Rhetorical Reader*</i>	3	1	2	1	1	0	0
<i>20. Information and Meaning: Connecting Thinking, Reading, and Writing</i>	4	5	3	0	2	0	1
Total difference-related readings in 20 composition readers	124	99	68	29	26	24	11
Percentage of readings among all marginalized differences	32%	26%	17%	8%	7%	6%	4%
Percentage of composition readers with total absence of each marginalized difference	5%	10%	0%	45%	20%	55%	60%

Total absence measures how often the editors published composition readers with no examples of some difference issue. Class was present in all forms in the readers, race had 5% total absence in all the readers, gender had 10% total absence, spiritual/religious had 55%, and physical ableness (the lowest instances of total absence) had an astounding 60%. Queer identity had only three more total readings than age, which had only 20% total absence, while queer identity had 45% total absence.

A particularly disturbing case of the under emphasis of queer identity, age, and physical ableness is in *Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition*, (reader number 14) which has 23 readings for race, 13 for gender, 12 for class, and 7 for religious/spiritual, but it only has 2 readings each for queer identity, age, and physical ableness.

A similar discrepancy can be seen in *What's Language got to do with it?* (reader number 13), where the number of readings devoted to race (20) gender (12), and class (5), far out

numbers the total for all other differences (7). In fact, in this reader there was only one queer identified reading and age related reading.²⁰ Overall, the titles and synopses in the tables of contents of these readers indicate a lack of clear representation of queer identity (as well as a lack of attention to age, spiritual /religious, and physical ableness) that sends a message to instructors or students that this composition reader that sexual identity is not as important as race, gender, and class.

Overt Homophobia: Fear of fags, dykes, and trannys?

To explore the issue of how often overt homophobia is present in the twenty composition readers, I examined the titles and synopses in the tables of contents. There were no instances of overt homophobia in the table of contents of the twenty composition readers. This was not surprising, because overt homophobia is increasingly rare in formal academic settings such as textbooks.

Perpetuating Tokenism: Setting the borders

To explore how often the twenty composition readers tokenized queer identity, I inspected the tables of contents for separate sections, chapters, or special topics inside the tables of contents. For example, one section of the tables of contents may have contained a section called “Gay Rights,” “Gay in America,” or another section titled “Race;” both race and queer identity would be labeled as tokenized, because both differences are being separated into special categories instead of being included in the mainstream, “insider” categories. Tokenism was

²⁰ This reader has synopses after the readings’ titles, so the likelihood that any other readings would be about queer identity if the synopses didn’t reference it is possible, but unlikely.

found in more abundance than any of the other means of erasure. Eighteen of the twenty-nine readings that referenced queer identity in their titles and/or synopses were separated into specific sections. In fact, queer identity was separated into special sections more often than other differences such as race and gender.

For example, in *Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions* (reader number 1), a reading entitled “Capitalism and Gay Identity” occurs in a section titled: “Unit 2: Lesbian and Gay Studies—Hidden Histories.” Not only is this reading placed in this separate section instead of the section called “Philosophy,” but it is the only reading in the entire “Lesbian and Gay Studies—Hidden Histories” section. In comparison, this reader has three readings about gender, all of which fall under “Gender and Sexuality,” but only one falls under “Lesbian and Gay Studies—Hidden Histories.” Furthermore, this reader also places race-related readings and class-related readings in various categories instead of the special, separate categories specifically for race, class, or gender.

Pathologizing Queer Identity: Negative impressions

To explore how often the composition readers pathologized queer identity in the table of contents, I looked for the keywords and phrases that alluded to some negative perception of the queer community. For example, I counted those times that queer identity only was addressed in relation to AIDS echoing how queer peoples are associated with AIDS as a whole entity. Of the 29 readings about queer identity, I found only 2 (7%) to be pathologizing queer identity.

This reading was found in, *Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions*, (reader number 1), had three references to queer identity which fell under two sections: [1] the first subunit in this section called “Film Studies—Real Wild Women/Wild Real Men” and [2]

“Zoology—Animal Anomalies,” all of which fell under “Chapter 3: Gender and Sexuality.” The second entry here is the one that was suspect. The title of the reading was “The Gay Side of Nature” with the brief synopsis as: “Animal sexuality is more complex than we imagined...that diversity is part of human heritage” (viii). This reading selection seems to imply that being queer identified may be equated with being animals and not having quite the same sexual privileges and identity as heterosexual people.

Pathologizing queer identity also appears in *Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition* (number 14). This reader had two references to queer identity within “Chapter 8: Outcasts, Scapegoats, and Exiles.” One of the two synopses reads: “The author’s reflections, after being diagnosed HIV positive, parallel the change in public attitudes toward homosexuals after the advent of AIDS” (Hirschberg). The other queer identified reading also deals with AIDS and the homosexual community. Both readings seem to portray an image that only queer identified people are affected by HIV/AIDS. Within the same section, chapter 8, there are also references to race, physical ableness, and class. One synopsis related to race reads: “...author evokes the shock of a young girl whose customary walk through the woods is cut short when she discovers the remains of a black man who had been lynched” (Hirschberg). Other differences are also included in this particular section; however, there are readings about other differences woven throughout different chapters of this particular reader except queer identity, which falls only in this *special* section.

Left-overs: Positive perceptions of queer identity?

The final part of the presence analysis examines the remaining queer identified readings titles and synopses to determine whether they were positive examples of queer identity or just

extra readings that do not fit into any of the three means of erasure: overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity.

Ten of the twenty-nine (34%) readings did not fit easily into any of the three means of erasure categories. One example of a somewhat positive perception is in *The Questioning Reader* (reader number 5). This particular reader presents two queer identified readings that are fairly positive. Under the heading “Chapter 6: How does language define us?” there is a narration titled: “Queer.” This reading presents one person’s view of being queer, with a story about coming out. The synopsis reads: “...examines the sad truths we learn when we discover that others often do not see us as we see ourselves” (Eisenberg, viii). This reading is unique, because it presents the queer individual as an individual first and not coupled with deviant others or other stereotypes.

Another left-over perception of queer identity would be in, *Past to Present: Ideas that Changed Our World* (reader number 15), in a reading titled: “Becoming a Man.” The synopsis reads: “The author’s struggle to come to terms with his homosexuality while a student at Yale is drawn from his award-winning 1992 autobiography” (Hirschberg, iii). This reading is under “Chapter 1: The Individual Experience” emphasizing the importance of personal experiences over generalized readings that often carry stereotypes. Within this same section of the reader there are other narratives or essays about coming to terms with other differences such as race and gender; however, this reading presents only “a man” not a bisexual, lesbian, transgender, or transsexual. In this sense the reading is very limited because in the entire composition reader’s table of contents, this article is the only queer identified selection.

Content Analysis: How inclusive are the most inclusive?

The content analysis examines the readings for the two most queer inclusive composition readers identified in the presence analysis to construct a better understanding of how queer peoples, issues, and perspectives are represented in composition readers. This section addresses the following questions: What is the main idea of the reading and what overall impression does it leave for the reader of non-normative sexual identities, positive, negative, or other (neutral)? Do any of the readings exhibit any of the three types of erasure: overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, or pathologizing queer identity? How often gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals are represented versus how often are transgender and transsexual peoples represented?

I searched the rest of these two readers for any other queer identity reading selections and found only one additional possible reading. I did not include this poem in the content analysis because even though the author is gay, the poem is not about being gay. This selection was in *American Voices: Culture and Community* and it was a poem by Walt Whitman. The editors of the composition reader included this, because it segues into the “Gay in America” section where all 5 of the queer identified readings are located.

Main Ideas: Positive, negative, or other

I found that the main topics of all the readings fell into one of four categories: same sex marriage debate, gay rights, coming out stories, and AIDS/HIV. Same sex marriage was the most popular main idea topic with 43% of the total readings, 36% were about Gay Rights, and the remaining two categories, coming out stories and HIV/AIDS at 14% and 7% respectively (see Table 2). These categories do not portray individual characteristics, traits, or ideas, but

instead seem to be only about the stereotypical debate within and about the queer community.

In each main idea topic there were some negative, positive, and some neutral representations of queer people and the queer community.

Table 2: Main Ideas Distribution of main ideas of the queer identified readings in the two most inclusive composition readers.

Positive, negative, or other/neutral	Same Sex Marriage Debate	Gay Rights	Coming Out	HIV/AIDS
Positive	3	4	2	0
Negative	1	0	0	1
Other/Neutral	2	1	0	0
Totals	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	2 (14%)	1(7%)

Overall, 9 of the 14 reading selections were positive, 2 were negative, and 3 were neutral.

One of the two negative reading selections comes from *American Voices: Culture and Community* and is titled “Love, Marriage, and the Law.” Its author, William J. Bennett, addresses the issue of same sex marriage and is very profoundly against it. His argument pathologizes homosexuals by questioning the normality of our sexual practices: “In insisting that marriage accommodate the less restrained sexual practices of homosexuals, Sullivan [proponent of same sex marriage] and his allies destroy the very thing that supposedly has drawn them to marriage in the first place” (laGuardia, 366). Although Bennett says, “I am not a bigot...” he clearly demeans homosexual people.

This reading was most likely selected in order to promote students’ thinking about ways to take a stance and defend that stance in writing. In fact, the questions before and after this particular reading invite students see that the author as homophobic and makes false claims. Questions like: “Do you think Bennett is a bigot? What kind of people use the words *faggot* and

queer?” and “What does the term family values bring to mind? Where do you hear or see it used, and by whom?” (laGuardia, 364). What is troubling about this reading selection is that it only further perpetuates some of the claims that students may already harbor about queer people, and certainly re-enforces claims that some homophobic students have. It does not break down stereotypes and it does not confront heteronormativity. I can see how this piece would be beneficial when instructing students on how to organize an argumentative paper; however, if this piece is not used wisely in the classroom (coupled with at least one positive perception of queer people or discussed at *length* with all students) then negative perceptions may be fostered and perhaps even encouraged. This piece is coupled in the same section with other pieces about gay marriage and gay rights so that students can compare the views. It would appear then that the editors intend for the teachers of composition to tackle both essays with care.

The other negative reading comes from *Conversations: Readings for Writing* and is titled “Drugs, AIDS, and the Threat to Privacy.” This reading selection is about random HIV/AIDS testing and drug testing in relation to 4th amendment rights. It is not necessarily about gay rights, although the editors place it in the section with the subheading “Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Rights.” This is troubling as it pathologizes the queer community by categorizing HIV/AIDS as only a queer identified problem. The article addresses U.S. citizens’ rights under the 4th amendment to the Constitution, which is actually a right that *all* citizens have, not just gay and lesbian citizens (since *all* citizens – straight or queer – can contract the virus HIV which leads to AIDS).

Positive perceptions of queer identity come from readings about gay rights, same sex marriage debate, and coming out. One of these coming out stories published in *Conversations: Readings for Writing*, “Transformations,” is a great example. It is written by the brother of a

queer identified person who recently came out to his immediate family. The reading selection deals with the writer's reactions towards his brother coming out. The writer feels as though his brother was now someone he did not know or understand; however, in the end the brother confronts the writer about his feelings. It shows the complex nature of sexuality, coming out, and in a very general sense a small portion of queer identity.

Other positive readings about queer identity and gay rights tackle the same types of stereotypes identified with mostly gay, white men. One talks about the Stonewall riot and how queer identified persons need to move beyond Stonewall. There is another written by a conservative, gay man that discusses how queer identified and gay rights activism needs to change and curtail some of the "present practices" (Selzer, 787). Reading this piece might be informative for first-year students who may have stereotypical, heteronormative notions of who a "queer identified" person is. It shows the diversity of queer identified persons, instead of the cookie-cutter design most perceptions paint.

The four readings identified as other/neutral are labeled this way for various reasons. In three cases, the readings are identified as neutral, because the writers do not take a stance on gay rights, or same sex marriage. Instead they often leave the reader to decide which perspective they believe simply reporting the facts. Some of the topics of those neutral readings are a newspaper report on the Matthew Shephard murder, another from a writer speaking about same sex marriage but never takes a position (however she comes very close to being against it), and the last from a newspaper reporting the same sex marriage debate that never takes a stance, positive or negative.

Continuing the Erasure Search: Overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity

In the 14 readings there were no instances of overt homophobia. The most nearly homophobic instance was the article by Bennett discussed earlier.

Taken together, the 14 readings must be seen as tokenizing in that only two (14%) that discuss transgender or transsexual people or issues at all. One of two readings that mention transgender and transsexual people does so only in a passing reference. This misrepresents the queer identified community to be only gay and lesbian (including only one mention of bisexual). The other reading selection discusses how the Stonewall riot was actually transsexuals reacting against oppression violently, it had very little to do with actual gay men or women at the time; however, still today it is celebrated as a victory for all queer identified people. The main idea of the article is about changing our tactics and moving past Stonewall, not the transsexual involvement in the Stonewall riot.

There were two cases of pathologizing queer identity. As discussed above these cases had negative perceptions, label queer identified people and the queer community with HIV/AIDS respectively and make statements about the “less restrained sexual practices of homosexuals” (Bennett 366). Both of these examples pair queer identity with deviant practices, one a disease presumed to be only a “gay disease” and the other to be labeling the sexual practices of an entire group as deviant and outside the normal, accepted range of behavior. Two cases may not sound like a significant number at first, but when understood that there were only 14 readings about queer identified people, this means that 14% of the readings pathologized queer identity.

CHAPTER 5: SILENT DISPLACEMENT: FINAL CONCLUSIONS

“Silencing enforced by bourgeois values is sanctioned in the classroom by everyone.”
—bell hooks (180)

“Literacy can be a tool of liberation, but, equally, it can be a means of control: if the presses are controlled by the adversaries of a community, then reading can serve as a tool of indoctrination.” —Lisa Delpit (94)

Until this study, in my twenty plus years of education, I had read a total of four queer identified texts. The first queer text I read, I remember well: it was the first year of my undergraduate career, a mere two buildings away from my dorm room (which felt like an eternity at eight o'clock on a Monday); it was English 101. And unlike 45% of the readers I examined in this study, this textbook was a composition reader with at least one queer identified reading. I cannot remember the title or author of the composition reader, nor can I remember the title or author of the reading. I do remember, however, that it was the first reading assigned to the class upon our first class period. It was an autobiographical narrative about being a gay man. At the time I was deep inside the closet—afraid and confused. I knew that I was different, but was not sure why, and I would not realize it fully until about two years later. As far as I knew, I was semi-normal, but definitely not gay. The only queer culture I was exposed to was “hear-say,” all of which was negative with varying degrees of homophobia, hatred, and ignorance. Much of this “hear-say” was based upon pathologized, tokenizing, or heteronormative values like several of the readings found in this study.

One student in the classroom was openly gay. He was adamant about making us all understand that we judge people too much, we do not attempt to fully understand all identity groups, and, on top of that, we label them in regard to what we have learned instead of thinking for ourselves. What he was saying was true. Until I conducted this study I could not have heard

the tokenizing and heteronormativity that he was talking about. I had never been exposed to an openly gay person before, and I could not imagine anyone being openly gay.

I remember the intense discussion we had the next time our class met. There were so many strong opinions about the subject; you were either strongly for gay rights or strongly opposed to gay rights. There were very few arguments in the middle of the road, and those that were seemed to be moderate were only in an “acceptable” way—not too far outside of the “insiders.” I refused to respond, careful not to move, or draw the slightest attention to myself, but still listening, absorbing, and shielding. As time progressed, the English 101 class felt at more ease with each other, even though it was obvious that we were all very different with very different opinions, we generally respected each other’s views.

I remember reactions to the reading from others in the composition class who graduated from the same high school I did. They were particularly negative and attempted to push the issue under the carpet as sinful, deviant, or just plain unimportant. Whenever the issue would come up in conversation with my high school peers, I would be too afraid to say what I really thought: it was an excellent reading selection and that I respected that other student in our class for coming out to the whole class and sharing his experience with us. Toward the end of the semester, I finally worked up the nerve to state my opinion when it came up in conversation. My high school peers were confused. They could not understand why I was siding with the gay guy. And it became painfully clear, very quickly, that I would no longer be the same person in their eyes; I had become something else, an outsider. I started welcoming the feeling, even though I was not sure who I could connect with after this point—I simply endured.

Being exposed to this one reading so early in my undergraduate career pushed me to think hard about myself, other people, and the way in which our people interact with one

another. Unfortunately, the twenty composition readers in this study were highly heteronormatively, because they still re-enforce what it means to be queer identified or in their terms “gay, lesbian, or bisexual.” There were some positive readings that strive to show how diverse the queer community is, but the majority tokenized what it means to be queer.

Conducting this study made me reflect on the way I wrote essays, the way I read books, and the way in which I was perceived as well as the way I perceived others. I was discovering for myself what Nietzsche wrote over a century ago about truth and naming:

if each of us had a different sense of perception—if we could only perceive things now as a bird, now as a worm, now as a plant, or if one of us saw a stimulus as red, another as blue, while a third even heard the same stimulus as a sound—then no one would speak of such regularity of nature, rather, nature would be grasped only as a creation which is subjective in the highest degree (1177).²¹

Without personal identification, writing effectively is something of great difficulty to do.

Owning my queer identity has been the most arduous task of my life. Not only was it painful then, it is painful now, as it will always be painful. The sense that I had to find my own way, the lack of someone to identify with, and the sheer absence of care in the normal, heterosexual world have been damaging to me, as they are to all queer identified people. Knowledge is power, determined and controlled by those who own it: those who make the names which we all use. In a sense, this study explores how composition textbook publishers have named queer people and results are discouraging. Even the queer identified readings that showed presence did not show a redeeming kind of presence. In short queer people were present,

²¹ Nietzsche discusses the issue of truth in nature and the regarding of names in our culture to signify things in nature when we cannot really name an un-namable object.

but subdued, and the practices I saw continue to enable queer identified persons to be labeled as deviant. Until *all* queer people, issues, and communities are represented as part of the whole group of our culture (that is the same as heterosexual persons) and not demeaned in the slum borders of culture, there will always be classifications and separatist divisions to overcome in all classrooms, workplaces, restaurants, houses, and sidewalks across our oppressive, separatist nation.

What I want people to gather from this study is that there is very little about queer people and queer culture published in composition readers today. And what little there is seems to portray stereotypes, give misleading information, and perpetuate some of the same phobias about queer identified people common in our culture today. As my own experience suggests, one of the most preventative strategies against assumption of heteronormativity, overt homophobia, perpetuating tokenism, and pathologizing queer identity is exposure to queer identified people and issues at an early age in education. The presence analysis of this study has shown that it is important for queer identity to be included in “community” discussions alongside race, gender, class, age, and any other minority difference without separating the differences or inadequately glossing over each. Clearly that has not been accomplished for all differences in these twenty readers. In the end, even the two most queer inclusive readers did not adequately represent the queer identified community. There were no representations of the gay man as also a black man or a Hispanic man, or the lesbian woman as also a Latina or Japanese- American, or a white woman from the working class who is also bisexual or transgendered. Non-exposure and incorrect exposure de-values queer people and issues: silencing equals death, and connection is vital for life. For queer identified people, connection is difficult to accomplish, because we are

isolated and placed so far outside of the understanding of human conditions, understanding of normal, insiders—we are neglected, scanned over, ignored.

In order to break down the heteronormativity engrained in our western culture, we need, as teachers, students, and writers, to actively deconstruct the negative values associated with gay men, lesbians, and transgendered, transsexual and bisexual people. It is not enough to “see [queer identified] readings as valid, but we also must question criteria for validity of interpretation when they are heterosexist, just as feminist critics have challenged sexist and masculinist criteria” (Reese, 144). As educators “we cannot pretend that students’ consciousness, indeed their identities, will be unaffected by a pedagogy that challenges them to understand the ways in which difference issues are bound up not only in the culture at large but also in the literacy practices we teach” (Wallace, 525). Presenting students with examples of queer texts helps them to understand these identities and where they all intersect. This helps them to become more tolerant and open to new concepts.

Because of the information in studies like this, I hope that textbook publishers will publish fully inclusive texts that include queer identified text and that teachers and program administrators will design courses and programs that represent *all* students. What I hope does not happen is nothing—no change. If all textbooks keep publishing similar perspectives and readings as those found in this study, then we are missing an opportunity to challenge stereotypes, misconceptions, and ignorance. I would also propose that this type of education, publishing, and learning start at an earlier age than college. College should be the arena that students already believe they will find themselves, but high school and middle school should be the new frontier for introspection into queer issues and people, as well as all other difference issues.

I know that after completing this study I will try to incorporate queer issues and people into my own classroom and acknowledge that queer people are people as well, and we have accomplished things as people. Also, I will be unlikely to use a composition reader in my classroom if it does not contain at least two queer readings (in this study that would only be 55% of the readers, most of which had only one reading pertaining to queer identity). In the future, I am hopeful that when I go to the library shelves, online search engines, and card catalogs that I find more selections about queer theory, than I have found when I originally started this study.

APPENDIX:
LIST OF COMPOSITION READERS ANALYZED

1. Beedles, Bonnie and Petracca, Michael. Academic Communities/Disciplinary Conventions. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001.
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3. Hoffman, Catherine A. and Hoffman, Andrew J. The Main Event: Readings for Writing and Critical Thinking. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005.
4. Flachmann, Kim; Flachmann, Michael; Benander, Kathryn and Smith, Cheryl. The Brief Prose Reader: Essays for Thinking, Reading, and Writing. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003.
5. Eisenberg, Nora and Wiener, Harvey S. The Questioning Reader. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.
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7. Buscemi, Santi V. and Smith, Charlotte. 75 Readings Plus. 6th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002.
8. Dobrin, Sydney I. Saving Place: An Ecocomposition Reader. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2005.
9. Atwan, Robert. Convergences: Message, Method, Medium. 2nd ed. Boston: Bedford St. Martin's, 2005.
10. George, Diana, and Trimbur, John. Reading Culture: Contexts for Critical Reading and Writing. 3rd ed. New York: Longman, Inc., 1999.
11. laGuardia, Dolores and Guth, Hans P. American Voices: Culture and Community. 5th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003.
12. Selzer, Jack. Conversations: Readings for Writing. 3rd ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1997.
13. Walters, Keith and Brody, Michal. What's Language got to do with it? New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2005.
14. Hirschberg, Stuart and Hirschberg, Terry. Discovering the Many Worlds of Literature: Literature for Composition. New York: Pearson Education, 2004.

15. Hirschberg, Stuart and Hirschberg, Terry. Past to Present: Ideas that Changed our World. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003.
16. Holladay, Sylvia A. Bridges: A Reader for Writers. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2006.
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20. Ivers, Jennifer M. Information and Meaning: Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2004.

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