First-Year Writing as the Critical Thinking Course: An Interactionist Approach

Matthew Overstreet
Khalifa University

This article introduces the field of rhetoric and composition to the interactionist approach to reason and examines how it might change writing pedagogy. Interactionists believe that reason is a social rather than an individual competency. I argue that from this perspective, critical thinking involves the ability to construct and maintain the socio-material structures that allow for productive reasoning. First-year writing is an ideal site to hone such construction skills. To help students do so, I propose a writing pedagogy which emphasizes three elements: problem-posing, mutuality and dissensus.