

## Analysis of Rhetorical Knowledge

### CDA of Evidence of Rhetorical Knowledge:

Jen reflected on her struggle with how to break into the flow of Student A's reading to point out an issue she saw:

There was one point during her paper that I felt a little confused, almost like a connection between her points was missing, and I thought about it for a moment and then didn't pause her to bring it up, so I just waited until the end of the paper to go back to it and tell her why I felt like one sentence seemed like it did not fit in the paper. I asked her if there was any way for her to bring in [a specific idea] to make it connected to the purpose of her paper, and I believe this made sense to her. I'm not sure if I didn't bring up my problem of confusion at first because I myself wasn't quite sure why it didn't seem like it was fitting, so I felt like I had to think about it more. It might have been because she was reading through the sentences pretty quickly without much of a pause, so by the time I realized what was missing to me, we were passed [sic] it and I didn't want to interrupt her because we were no longer on the same paragraph. I do feel like I should have paused her the second I felt something was off and then asked her to read it out loud to me again so I could think about what is missing and even ask her what is missing. One danger with waiting until the end of the paper to go back to this point was I did forget exactly where in the paper the issue was. I also could have forgotten what the issue I had with the sentence was.

This description illustrates how Jen is struggling with the challenges of sharing her rhetorical knowledge in a very transactional way, trying to figure how to enact it within the dynamics of a session. Part of Jen's concern is whether her question about missing information is justified:

"I'm not sure if I didn't bring up my problem of confusion at first because I myself wasn't quite

sure why it didn't seem like was fitting, so I felt like I had to think about it more." And partly it is a matter of logistics: the student was reading very quickly. From my perspective as a viewer of the interaction, it was perfectly reasonable to take a few minutes to think over a question like this, and if Jen felt more comfortable in how to express her rhetorical knowledge, viewing it as a process that encouraged such noticing and thinking aloud, she might have been more confident in asking Student A to pause so that they could mull over this question together, thus co-constructing a rhetorical response to the possible problem Jen identified.

Lori also described how she handled this process in her first reflection: "I notice that when I am confused by something, I tell the student that I am having a hard time understanding what she is saying and I ask her how she can change the sentence." And again in stanza 3 of her second reflection, Lori described a similarly successful rhetorical interaction, but then she questioned whether she used the right approach:

After reading the first paragraph, the student said that she was not sure if it worked. I asked her what she thought the issue was and we were able to talk it out together. Again, I think that I handled this well, but I am still not confident that there aren't other approaches. I think that asking the student questions about what she is trying to say is helpful, and this student was a very capable student who seemed to need someone to bounce her ideas off of.

Lori clearly has rhetorical knowledge and is able to share it with students, but her reflection also indicates that she needs reassurance that responding to students in this way is appropriate and helpful to them. Looking at this successful interaction together would be a good way to reinforce that she did indeed use a helpful strategy. Additionally, her response raises the interesting question of how she would respond to a student who she did not see as "very capable."

In stanza 4 of her first reflection, Kate also described a situation that illustrated that while she herself has rhetorical knowledge, she struggled to share that knowledge with this student in a helpful way:

For the second reflection paper, the student would have to base her work on her experiences. We also looked at the assignment sheet together and compared what she had to what the professor was looking for. Since this assignment is more subjective than a research paper in that she had to analyze the test subject for herself (whereas the research paper required her to report others' findings, documents, and other research materials), I felt that it was more important that we discuss how she was fulfilling the requirements of the assignment as well as how she was thinking about her test subject. Since only she is familiar with the student about whom she is writing, it is especially important that she convey her ideas clearly so that her professor is not misled or confused about the student's progress. Perhaps this would have been helpful to reiterate during this session (although we have discussed this in prior sessions together).

Kate describes her understanding of the rhetorical needs of the assignment in quite a lot of detail in this stanza but indicates in the last sentence that she realized she did not convey that understanding clearly to the student, or ask the student to consider it: "Perhaps this would have been helpful to reiterate during this session...". And then, in a parenthetical aside: "(although we have discussed this in prior sessions together)." Instead of discussing the rhetorical situation of the assignment with the student in the session, Kate took a rule-following stance that inhibited her ability to discuss the assignment in a more helpfully rhetorical way. Affirming her acknowledgement that such a discussion would have been a more collaborative way to address the issue, even if she and the student had had similar conversations in the past, would be a way to support her ability to share this knowledge.