Introduction

Audience is key in writing almost anything. Without knowing whom your audience is, it’s hard to know what to write about. Your genre depends on your audience, your rhetorical situation is unable to be composed without knowing your audience, and your purpose should be based on who your audience is. When given only a rhetorical situation, you can pick and choose your audience based on what genre you’d like to use. Although you can compose something without knowing who your audience is, it is better to know your audience to be able to capture readers in the right way.

You wouldn’t write about “The Little Engine That Could” when you’re writing an essay to help you get into Graduate school, and you most definitely wouldn’t write about your “Wildest Weekend Ever” in the essay for the SAT. The audience is key in picking a topic, because you want your readers to be interested in what they’re reading. Even when texting, you don’t use slang like “Lol” when texting a parent, and you don’t send a text to a friend with proper capitalization, and spelling. It mostly known that there are certain ways to speak to adults and there are certain ways you speak to your peers. There is also a difference in speaking to someone you know, and someone you don’t know.

If your purpose is to spread awareness about an animal going extinct, you aren’t exactly trying to relate to children or teens. You want to relate to people who will be able to make a difference; adults, people of power, animal lovers, and zoo owners. You wouldn’t want to appeal to them in a way they don’t find interesting, because then you’ll be unable to grab their full attention. It’s all about audience!

Audience is imperative. When writing the wrong thing to the wrong audience, you fail to grab their attention, the audiences probably won’t even finish reading, and your purpose will never be noticed.

Dirk, Kerry. "Navigating Genres." *Wac.colostate.edu*. N.p., n.d.

Web. 16 Jan. 2014. <<http://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces1/dirk--navigating-genres.pdf>>.

Dirk starts off his essay with a joke about country music, after telling the joke he emphasizes how important it is for you to understand country music in order to get the joke. If country music was his genre, his would want his audience to be avid country music listeners. Although his essay is about genre, it also shows how important the relationship between genre and audience is. Choosing a genre that wouldn’t interest your target audience can cause you to have no audience at all. If your essay is titled “The Craziest Party of My High-School Career”, you aren’t going to interest your audience being your professor. The genre is chosen based on what your audience would be interested in reading.

He spends a paragraph explaining how he went about choosing his genre knowing that his audiences were college students. He did research, found out what would be interesting in their eyes to read about, how they learn, and how the tone of most essays written for college students was “primarily conversational.” He notes that most authors spoke in the essays not as authoritative figures but as peers.

Dirk goes into how different genre is today. He explains how one person must think up their own way to do something, and therefore everyone after them just uses the previous thing as a reference. “Think about George Washington giving the first State of the Union Address. Because this genre was completely new, he had complete freedom to pick its form and content. All presidents following him now have these former addresses to help guide their response because the situation is now a reoccurring one” (Dirk 252). This is exactly what Dirk did when writing this essay, it was his first time writing to college students, and he researched and read prior essays, and then pulled from them what he should write about. Creating a new genre. However, Dirk creates a new drama after researching how to appeal to his audience. When a president gives his State of the union address, he is appealing to his audience of educated interested voters. Not high school freshman, or unregistered voters, they wont care what he has to say and it doesn’t matter if they hear it or not, because they can’t vote. Dirk makes sure that he is going to be able to relate to his audience (college students) even if the genre he’s chosen may not be of his audiences highest interest.

He explains how his audience (college students) should be realizing that they have written many different genres, depending on their audiences. He explains that, you would not “text” your professor saying “Hey Buddy”, and that you would not tell an inappropriate joke to your mom. If your purpose is to get money for lunch, you’re going to text your parents being nice and sweet. You wouldn’t text your friends asking for money, and normal friends usually convey friendship by being jokingly mean. If your purpose is to enforce stronger supervision in public schools, you want to read about how to relate to teachers and administration, and convey it in your letter. Purpose is an important component to genre, and genre depends on audience.

Collins, BIlly. "Commencement - Choate Rosemary 2001."

Choate Rosemary Graduation. Choate

Rosemary High School. Wallingford, Conneticut . 3 Jun 2001. Speech.

In his commencement address to the graduating class at Choate Rosemary High School, Billy Collins first addresses his audience as a “group of relative strangers and some of their strange relatives.” Collins then discusses the fact that the group of individuals that asked him to be a speaker should have been nervous at first because of their understanding of the speeches professors usually give. Then Billy Collins goes on to explaining how a conventional commencement speech is usually given, and how he doesn’t think it’s best for him to follow such conventions. Collins the goes on to discuss the misconception that people need to speed up to keep up with the flow of information. He provides a solution in that people should slow down and provide some gratitude where it is due. The last point the Billy Collins makes in his commencement address is a comment about memorization and how current technologies deaden the need for memory because everything can be accessed within seconds.

In the opening of his speech Billy Collins goes over the way a conventional commencement address is given and how there is usually an elaborate metaphor of this Road that has been leading up to life and how the past is behind you and only the future lies ahead. Finally he closes that part of his speech by saying he is going to avoid most of these conventions as possible. I think Collins put this information into his speech to elicit a sigh of relief from his respective audience of which many had presumed he would follow such conventions. Collins might have also included this information to grab the attention of such an audience as they might be intrigued by what he could possibly do instead. Collins does not explicitly say how he will get his audience to go along with him but by asking questions like “Why would I ask you to slow down?” Simple questions like these will keep his audience of students intrigued to his speech the whole time. Collins speech is mostly focused around the idea that everything is at your fingertips and how human beings are in a constant blur of speed and information that no one takes anytime to just enjoy the life on this earth that we have been given. To really connect with his audience and appeal to their lives he includes real word examples of this acceleration, such as “cursing at your computer for taking four seconds instead of half a second to fetch a little stick of information for you,” This should appeal to any person sitting in his audience because everyone had experienced that sort of anger before when things take longer then needed. When Collins talks about paying attention, but not just to what goes on inside a classroom, he is appealing to the logic of the audience, that it is logical once in a while to stop and take a break from all this constant speed and just enjoy what is surrounding us.

In conclusions Billy Collins has widen my perspective on my idea of audience. I think when considering an audience one should consider the emotions and actions they want to elicit from an audience. I think appealing to emotions plays a big part in the commencement address as well as most rhetorical situations because every audience has emotions and a way to get them to really connect with what you’re writing is to get them angry, happy, or sad. The best writing comes when you create the emotional connection with your audience.

Kelley, Brian, writ. "Here's to The Good Times." Writ. Tyler Hubbard. *Stay*. 99.1 WKYK: Florida, Jacksonville, 19 Jan 2014. Radio.

The song *Stay* by Florida Georgia line has become one of the United States favorite country singles. The song is written in the view of the male character and he is losing time he has to get the love of his life back. The song goes on in the second verse saying “without your touch I'm not gonna last. (I know you know that I need ya just to carry on) It feels like my walls are caving in.” The narrator of the song is seems to believe that without this one person nothing is worth it anymore and he feels claustrophobic. The narrator also has a revelation in the song, he now knows he was treating his love wrong and that it was not her fault it was his. At the end of the song when the chorus repeats it’s much quieter because it has really hit him now that he is losing the one person that means the most to him.

The song *Stay* is in the country genre and that might help in the understanding of the song when analyzing its audience. According to Dirk “Country songs tend to tell stories, they often have characters that develop throughout the song, country songs are often depressing, people losing jobs, lovers and friends.” The song Stay by Florida Georgia Line is a primary example of this and it uses these objectives to appeal to the audiences emotions. Audience is all about appeal, who or what you are trying to appeal to. The lyrics in the song by Florida Georgia Line appeal to every emotion possible. The audience can relate to their heartbreak because the people have had the heartbreak as well. In the opening lines of the song “I’d sell my soul just to see your face, and I’d break my bones just to heal your pain” Is appealing to the emotions of its listeners by describing painful situations in correlation with the pain you feel when you lose someone you care deeply about. “The days are cold the nights are long, I can’t stand to be alone, and please know this is not your fault,” These lyrics help the audience understand and compare the own situations with losing someone and how those first nights of being alone actually feel.

In conclusion, the song Stay by Florida Georgia Line has helped me grasp a better understanding of audience because it taught me that audience is not only just about the people you are reaching out to its about keeping them reading or in this case listening. To do that you need to appeal to them. Whether you are appealing to their emotions or their logic or even the values it’s appealing to the audience that makes songs, books and even essays great.

Trujillo, A. (2012, December 11). You Aren't Born to Please. Facebook.

Trujillo portrays how the modern has been able to facilitate the way he expresses his feelings and ideas instantly through Social media sites such as Facebook. For example, Alejandro Trujillo posted a thought that may lead to personal insight about one’s life and purpose. It typically puts into question what one’s solid purpose is in life, what is their ultimate mission. He stated “You aren’t born to please and satisfy others. Be yourself and make yourself happy, because at the end of the day when the time comes will you be able to say, was I happy? Or did I make others happy? You are the owner of your own happiness.” It connects to past experiences and memories one has collected over time and all the emotions that have been kept inside that must come out. When he says, “you aren’t born to please and satisfy others,” he is clearly stating that one’s mission should not be to complete another’s dream nor live a life that someone planned for you, or live a lie to protect those that you love but to become and be yourself which will result in your own satisfaction; which is much more fulfilling. With that said, he creates this idea that the birth of an individual means more than the past and present of those who surround the new born it is a new chance for someone to hopefully write history but not rewrite it. It is the single opportunity to let a being be and live to the expectation and standards that it creates for itself and not the traditional ones that limit and bound one to societal norms.

He then continues to express his thought by symbolizing the essential questions “Was I happy or did I make others happy?” Which is another way of determining whether what one did throughout their lives actually pleased others at the cost of one’s personal happiness or if one took a path as unusual as it may seem and live a life of choice a life of freedom. At the end of the day the person who is in every scene of your life is you, so that is the person that should call the shots, make the decisions, take action and own up to the most important role. That is taking responsibilities for the ups, the downs, the mist of confusion and doubt because the certainty that one exhibits reflects whether one is the owner of one’s happiness or not.

This post was meant for every friend of Alejandro’s to see and hopefully reflect upon, the audience are people that he is at least acquainted with yet this post is realistically for any one person that can relate to this feeling he had of potential ownership over himself. The audience is anyone who is his friend on Facebook and is intrigued by his remark enough to read it and make sense of it. Those who are interested may be those who have questioned themselves, to find out if the life they have been living is a life with the single purpose to show others that they can dictate what you do or say or to prove that you will not let that happen. If you are determined as a person to not fit into conformity and to stand out by becoming the ruler of your life, your happiness, and your dreams this post was meant for you. It was meant for you to analyze your personal situation and realize what you needed to better your emotional and mental state and figure out what steps you must take to get there.

The audience can take this either as a relief signal, as if it were a sign of words that came together to indicate the reshaping and molding of one’s life or the perpetuating truth that one can continue to ignore for as long as one can until one reaches that breaking point that is explainable by all the continuing trash that you may have placed on your own shoulders. His friends vary in age groups and gender. Younger folks can interpret the purpose of his post as inspiration to follow your own dreams not your parents, or to not let your friends influence the way you live your life. Whereas, older folks can understand it as reevaluating their lives and thinking about whether they made the right choices or not. Women may have a negative connotation to a post like this because women generally dedicate themselves to making others happy, whereas, men are generally known to prioritize themselves; men more or so may agree with this post. Ultimately it is used as an optional tool to get out of the predicament you may find yourself in or to hide from the truth which some fear in a further web of lies, only to find yourself sinking deeper and deeper in the hole you made yourself. This can also be interpreted as a path that leads to a retreat that one uses to live a life full of standards they create which can be considered selfish.

Anzaldua, G. (n.d.). How to Tame a Wild Tongue.

In *How to Tame a Wild Tongue*, Anzaldua generally states that those who have attempted to control her tongue or punished her in any way have insulted the language by which she expresses herself. In a sense it has demoralized the greatness of different tongues and has brought to attention the question of how the societal norms are not open minded about accepting change, and that is due to human behavior and habits; people are used to and prefer a regular routine. She speaks about her life and what it was like to grow up in her shoes, not only did she feel as if her culture in essence was denied but also her gender; in the usage of her language they often rob women of their presence by ending words and phrases in a masculine plural. Throughout the entire writing there is this feeling as if she is trying to break away from this tradition that has held her prisoner for so long. To finally acknowledge the wrong doings that have been done and to no longer continue it. She explains how in school she was not allowed to speak Spanish and if so she was penalized, also that whether she saw the English language as valuable or not was of no importance considering that those closest to her for example, her mother pushed it upon her to speak English fluently to the point where no accent could be detected.

Anzaldua saw it as important to state that those whom are distinct identify with a language in which they can communicate; representing the importance of this value to those people. Then she states eight different languages that Chicanos use which shows the variation and significant differences within one language that has branched out into the Spanish they speak. She goes on by describing the difference of the vowels and how the variation has causes different ways to pronounce them, also how her specific language has borrowed English words, this describes the development in Spanish. She states that ‘Chicanas’ have this fear of speaking to ‘Latinas’ because of their disapproval, which inevitably may lead to the disapproval of them as just people or if women are in a party with other Chicanos they will speak English to avoid being made fun of for not speaking proper Chicano Spanish. This piece by Anzaldua talks about how the tradition of silence needs to be broken and that the fear shall no longer exist, she thinks of audience as the essential piece to stop the continuing tradition. Anzaldua thinks of language as a definitive factor in a person’s life, because it is a form of identification. The relationship these two factor share is that without them this writing would have no purpose no moral, therefore, no audience to adhere a message to.

Anzaldua audience is clearly stated when she says “Yet the struggle of identities continue, the struggle of borders is our reality still. One day the inner struggle will cease and a true integration take place.” She speaks to Chicanos who hide in the shadows because they fear to show their identities due to disapproval, she states the borders as the limitation the restrictions by which they live by day by day. Yet she reveals the hope that remains that one situation will lead to the next and that they will finally be accepted and able to live in a society that does not discourage their identity. Anzaldua audience are those who like her have experience societal boundaries pushed against them forcing them to conform and adapt to others standards whether that is what they wanted or not. It demonstrated the lack of choice as well as lack of those whom are distinct to rise above and overcome. She speaks to them by showing the resentment she held, the stories, and the expression to finally speak up and say that this is no longer acceptable, that in order to see change one must seek it by standing up and doing what has not been done, breaking the traditional silence in order to allow this integration to take place. I feel she is accomplishing her goal of inciting change in social norms by being someone who is strong enough to speak out and be the voice for those who want to step up but have not, she is a symbol of an idea that use to hide in the dark.