

# Haas and flower rhetorical reading essay examples

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Christine Haas and Linda Flower set to do a study to evaluate the reading strategies used by students. The researchers were particularly interested in determining whether students use different reading strategies for content retention and for critical thinking. Something interesting from the study is the way the researchers advocate for the use of reading strategies that make students to think deeper about the content presented instead of glossing over the content and paraphrasing it. For this reason, the researchers advocate for rhetorical reading strategies. Simply put, rhetorical reading strategies go beyond paraphrasing the content to include accounting for the author's intention, putting the author's words into context, and determining the effect the author's message on the readers.

The reason why the researchers insist on students going beyond summarizing the content they read is because they come from a school of thought that thinks that reading should be looked at from the perspective of having a discourse with the author. Therefore, students should try and understand the motivation behind the author's words and put the words into perspective. In addition, sometimes instructors expect the students to critique the author's words, comment on critical points highlighted by the author and provide reasons why they agree or disagree with the author. As a result, rhetorical reading strategies would be the most appropriate in this case because the reader can criticize the author's points and connect the author's content with other relevant literature, when required to do so.

Reading through the study, I think I have something in common with Seth, one of the subjects of the study. For example, when reading through a compression, I try and understand the content from my own perspective and

put any complex and new words into context. I also find myself trying to make connections between the issues raised by the author. For this reason I can consider myself an experienced reader. However, this does not happen every time when I am reading; sometimes, I take the easiest route of summarizing the author's words. For this reason, I share some things with Kara, who paraphrased parts of the content given to read. The decision on whether to summarize or make a critical analysis of the content depends on the material that I'm reading. For example, when reading through novels and other materials that would not involve critical thinking, I find the desire to summarize the author's main points irresistible. This is because such situations require the reader to remember the content, without necessarily critiquing the author.

Although giving instructions on how to read is not something new, much of it is done at the elementary levels. However, there are subtle reminders over time meant to guide the learners on the best strategies to use depending on the occasion. For instance, my English course instructors give advice on the most appropriate reading strategies to use when tackling different types of assignments. However, these instructions are not given in a well-structured manner rather the instructions come as an after-thought. The reading instructions given in class also differ slightly from the instructions given in by Haas and Flower. For example, while Haas and Flower prefer students to use rhetorical reading strategies on every occasion, my instructors prefer the use of different reading strategies for different occasions. The idea of using rhetorical reading strategies as the sledge hammer for all types of reading opportunities may not work. This is because sometimes the students are

required to remember the content while on other occasions the students are required to critically analyze the materials that they read.

Consequently, students may sometimes be tested on their ability to remember the content while on other instances the students are tested on their ability to provide an in-depth critique.

In retrospect, rhetorical reading strategies are appropriate in preparing for my major (Mathematics). This is because mathematics requires the student to solve problems in a step-wise manner. In addition, mathematics requires students to think critically and provide well-grounded answers. Students cannot give answers without showing the measures followed to come to that answer. Some of the core skills required in a Mathematics class includes logic and concentration, and these are skills that can be shaped very well through rhetorical reading strategies. On the research methods employed by the researchers, Haas and Flower do well by giving both experienced readers and freshman readers a chance to take part in the study and compare the strategies used by both groups. The researchers also avoid knowledge bias in the research by not telling the subjects the expected results.

Nevertheless, the research method used by the authors is limited in the sense that it does not research the reading methods used by students of different ages. Again, the research method used by the researchers makes the assumption that reading strategies employed by students have a direct impact on the comprehension of the content that the students. Despite these shortcomings, the ideas presented by the authors rekindle the discussion about learning; the big debate seems to be the battle between reading for the purpose of recalling the content and reading for the purpose of making

analysis. Nevertheless, the true measure of any paradigm is time, and time will tell.

## **Works Cited**

Haas, Christina and Linda Flower. " Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning ." College Composition and Communication (1988): 39 (2), 167-183. Print.