COM 803-12: Hermeneutics and Communication

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:**

**Comment 1:**

**Quote:** "Experienced researchers first write just to remember what they’ve read. When you arrange and rearrange the results of your research in new ways, you discover new implications, connections, and complications." (Booth, 2016, p. 12)

**Essential Element:** The importance of writing as a means of organizing thoughts and understanding research more deeply.

**Additive:** Moreover, this suggests that writing functions not only as a communicative tool but also as a method for intellectual exploration and discovery. Engaging in the writing process encourages researchers to critically evaluate their materials, often leading to unexpected insights and deeper understanding. This expands the traditional view of writing beyond mere reporting, emphasizing its role in fostering critical thinking and intellectual development.

**Contextualization:** This perspective is in line with contemporary research methods that highlight the iterative process of generating knowledge. It mirrors wider educational movements that prioritize the journey over the outcome, urging students and researchers to view writing as a continuous process of improvement rather than a conclusive task**.**

**Comment 2:**

**Quote:** "You must cast your readers in a complementary role by offering them a social contract: I’ll play my part if you play yours." (Booth, 2016, p. 17)

**Essential Element:** The importance of understanding and addressing the reader’s needs in academic writing.

**Variant Analysis:** Booth’s concept of a "social contract" between writer and reader extends the traditional notion of "knowing your audience" by framing writing as a collaborative relationship, where both parties have distinct roles and responsibilities. This approach emphasizes that academic writing is not a one-sided transmission of information but a dynamic interaction in which readers actively participate in constructing meaning. Booth’s perspective shifts the focus from merely addressing an audience to engaging them as co-creators in the interpretive process, enriching the dialogue between writer and reader.

**Contextualization:** This viewpoint stands as a cornerstone in modern communication theory, a realm that cherishes the dance between audience captivation and interaction. Within scholarly realms, it highlights the importance of lucidity, pertinence, and honoring the reader's wisdom and anticipations, nurturing the seeds of profound scholarly discourse

**Source Two:**

**Comment 3:**

**Paraphrase:** Adler and Van Doren emphasize the importance of “X-raying” a book to understand its structure and main ideas. They suggest that readers should identify the book’s skeleton by discerning its main themes, arguments, and structure. (Adler & Van Doren,1940, p.92)

**Essential Element:** To effectively "X-ray" a book, it is essential to understand its core structure and key ideas. This method allows readers to fully engage with the author's argument and the broader purpose of the text.

**Variant Analysis:** Adler and Van Doren's "X-raying" method for book analysis mirrors contemporary critical reading strategies by emphasizing a thorough examination of a text's core structure. Like modern approaches, it involves dissecting the author's credibility, understanding the context, and evaluating the work's relevance to current societal and intellectual issues. This method encourages readers to go beyond surface-level understanding, instead engaging with the deeper arguments and assumptions within the text. By integrating these aspects, the "X-raying" approach aligns with today’s emphasis on critical thinking and the ability to interrogate sources with a discerning, informed perspective.

**Contextualization:** In the context of Adler and Van Doren’s “How to Read a Book,” the technique of "X-raying" a book is considered a critical step in the process of analytical reading. This approach entails meticulously dissecting the book into its core elements to grasp its underlying structure and primary concepts. By employing this method, readers can effectively delve into the text, uncover key insights, and discern the author's intended message with greater clarity and depth.

**Source Three:**

**Comment 4:**

**Quote:** “Hermeneutics is the art of understanding and of making oneself understood.” (Zimmermann, 2015, p. 10).

**Essential Element**: Hermeneutics is fundamentally about understanding and interpretation, which extends beyond textual analysis to encompass various fields of human experience, such as law, theology, and science.

**Additive:** Zimmermann emphasizes that hermeneutics is active even in simple acts of comprehension, like stopping at a red light. This broadens the concept of interpretation beyond just difficult texts, showing that it plays a role in everyday understanding.

**Contextualization:** Hermeneutics has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy, and its relevance extends to various modern-day disciplines. Zimmermann draws attention to its importance in contemporary thought, particularly its applications in digital communication, law, and ethics.

**Source Four:**

**Comment 5:**

**Paraphrase:** The authors argue that hermeneutics is crucial for understanding how people interpret digital communications, particularly in an era of text-based media.

**Essential Element:** Hermeneutics provides a framework for analyzing digital communication, helping scholars understand how meaning is constructed and interpreted in online interactions.

**Additive:** Smith and Johnson expand on traditional hermeneutic theories by applying them to the digital age, showing how interpretations vary depending on cultural and social contexts in online platforms such as social media.

**Contextualization:** This article situates hermeneutic theory in the modern context, demonstrating its relevance to current communication challenges, such as misinterpretation in digital conversations and the role of algorithmic mediation in shaping meaning.

**Source Five:**

**Comment 6:**

**Quote:** “Our attitude makes a difference in what we read and how we read it; the morning newspaper will never be as compelling as a letter from a lover, nor will it be read and savored—and reread—with the same care or attention to detail” (Haack, 2009, p. 11).

**Essential Element:** The importance of intentionality and attitude when studying scripture or any text. Haack argues that approaching the Bible with reverence and purpose transforms the reading experience and promotes deeper understanding.

**Additive:** Haack draws a parallel between reading the Bible and other forms of communication, emphasizing that the degree of seriousness with which we engage with the text significantly affects its impact on us. He advocates for approaching Bible study with both discipline and intentionality, akin to how one would interact with a personal letter from someone of great importance.

**Contextualization:** In this text, Haack discusses the mindset essential for effective Bible study. He underscores that Bible study transcends mere academic exercise; it is a relational and spiritual discipline that cultivates the reader's relationship with God. This perspective is pertinent to both theological education and spiritual development, significantly shaping how Christians interact with their faith.

**Source Six:**

**Comment 7:**

**Paraphrase:** "The Interpretive Journey starts with a call to careful reading, because this is where we determine what the biblical text meant in its original context" (Duvall & Hays, 2012, pp. 46-60).

**Essential Element:** A crucial part of interpretation is understanding the text within its historical and cultural context.

**Additive**: This principle equips students with the tools necessary to engage with the Bible not merely as a standalone religious text, but as a document shaped by historical and social influences. It enriches their understanding of the socio-political contexts that have shaped its narratives.

**Contextualization:** This approach can be incorporated into assignments that encourage students to compare biblical events with their historical counterparts. By doing so, students can better understand the deeper meanings of the texts, placing them within a real-world context. This method not only enhances comprehension but also fosters critical thinking as students explore the intersections between faith and history. Engaging with the material in this way can lead to richer discussions and insights.

**Source Seven:**

**Comment 8:**

**Quote**: "A basic structural design underlies every kind of writing. Writers will in part follow this design, in part deviate from it, according to their skills, their needs, and the unexpected events that accompany the act of composition." (Strunk, 2000, pp. 15)

**Essential Element**: This quote highlights the importance of having a structure in writing, even though writers may adapt or deviate from it based on their circumstances

**Additive:** While flexibility in writing is certainly acknowledged as an important aspect of the creative process, this approach places significant emphasis on the value of planning and establishing a foundational structure that guides the writer throughout their journey. A well-thought-out outline serves not only as a roadmap, helping to organize ideas and maintain focus, but also allows for a more coherent and cohesive final product. By balancing structure with creative freedom, writers can enhance their work while still allowing for spontaneity and innovation.

**Contextualization:** This principle applies to academic writing, creative work, and even technical compositions. Writers can benefit from understanding structural norms and knowing when it's appropriate to break away from them to best serve their purpose.

**Works Cited**

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