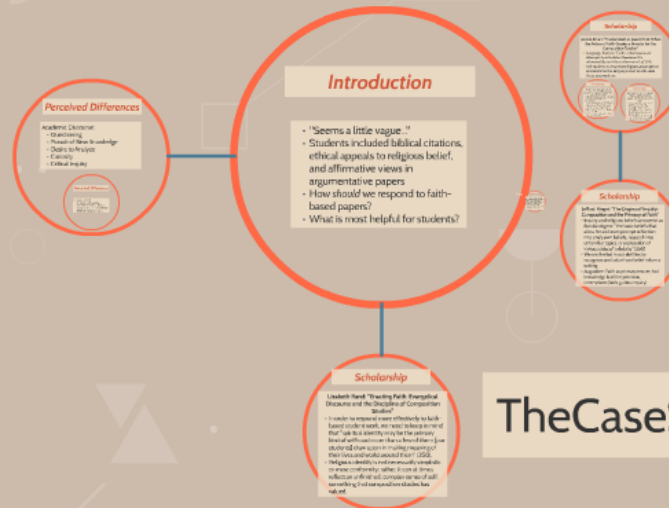


Keeping the Faith: Student Belief as Academic Discourse

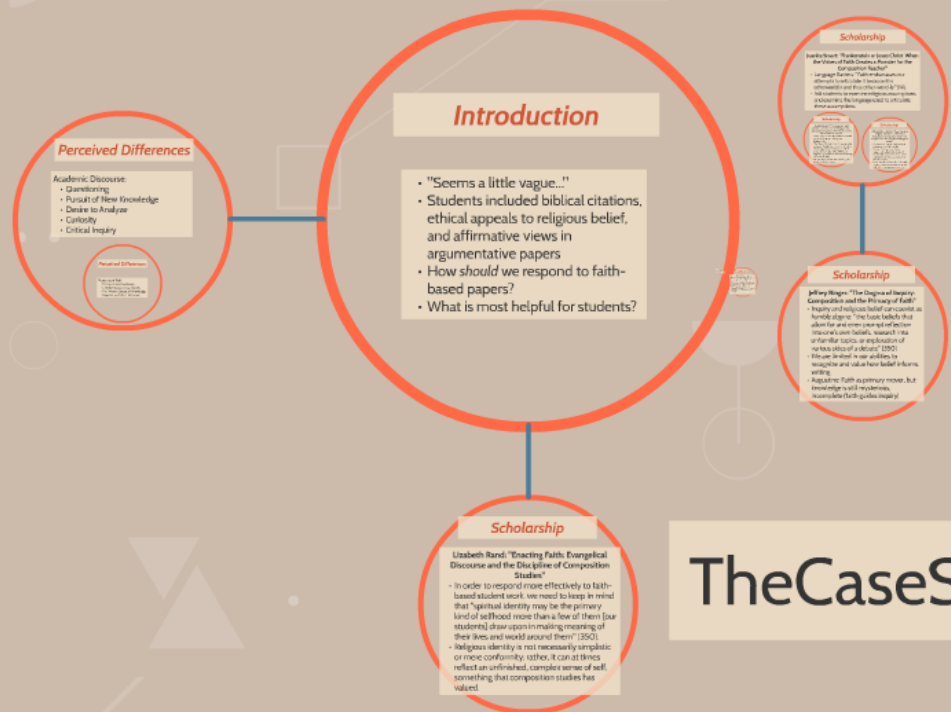
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Keeping the Faith: Student Belief as Academic Discourse

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Introduction

- "Seems a little vague..."
- Students included biblical citations, ethical appeals to religious belief, and affirmative views in argumentative papers
- How *should* we respond to faith-based papers?
- What is most helpful for students?

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Perceived Differences

Academic Discourse:

- Questioning
- Pursuit of New Knowledge
- Desire to Analyze
- Curiosity
- Critical Inquiry

Perceived Differences

Discourses of Faith:

- Affirms Given Knowledge
- Overtly Resists Critical Inquiry
- Pre-Existent Source of Knowledge
- Skeptical of Cultural Influence

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Scholarship

Lizabeth Rand: "Enacting Faith: Evangelical Discourse and the Discipline of Composition Studies"

- In order to respond more effectively to faith-based student work, we need to keep in mind that "spiritual identity may be the primary kind of selfhood more than a few of them [our students] draw upon in making meaning of their lives and world around them" (350).
- Religious identity is not necessarily simplistic or mere conformity; rather, it can at times reflect an unfinished, complex sense of self, something that composition studies has valued.

Scholarship

Juanita Smart: "Frankenstein or Jesus Christ: When the Voices of Faith Creates a Monster for the Composition Teacher"

- Language Barriers: "Faith embarrasses our attempts to articulate it because it is otherworldly and thus other-word-ly" (14).
- Ask students to examine religious assumptions and examine the language used to articulate these assumptions

Scholarship

Douglas Downs: "True Believers, Real Scholars, and Real True Believing Scholars: Discourses of Inquiry and Affirmation in the Composition Classroom"

- Divide between discourses that are enacted: Academic (Inquiry) and Religious (Affirmation)
- "That these Discourses work from opposing sources of knowledge is clear in their labels: Inquiry suggests questioning as a valued source of knowledge, while Affirmation suggests a pre-existent source of knowledge to be valued" (44)
- Call attention to discursive conflict: guide, coach, translate, mentor

Scholarship

Michael-John DePalma: "Re-envisioning Religious Discourse as Rhetorical Resources in Composition Teaching: A Pragmatic Response to the Challenge of Belief"

- Common assumption: students may only view their faith critically
- "We must attend carefully and respectfully to the intellectual and experiential components of students' religious lives in our response to their discourses" (228)
- Work-out religious experience through language (this can be a form of inquiry, for instance, in personal narrative)

Scholarship

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