**Sample Critical Reflection: Outcome 2**

Outcome 2 deals with using evidence in such a way that it serves the purpose at hand, usually to back up the main claim and to use different types of sources differently and intertextually.

In my SA #4, I meet a lot of the goals in Outcome 2. In this paper, I had to use Susan Bordo’s “The Empire of Images in Our World of Bodies”, Lucy Grealy’s “Mirrors”, and/or Marjane Satrapi’s “The Veil” to support a claim of my choosing. I ended up using Bordo and Grealy’s work, since I felt that I understood their articles the best, to support the idea that we shouldn’t criticize others who get plastic surgery because the reasons behind getting them are ambiguous and not definitive. The way I set up my paper, I used Bordo’s works first to back up my claim, then Grealy’s, and finally, I combined both of their ideas towards the end of the paper to unify their ideas into something more thought-provoking. First, I used Bordo’s ideas to support how she and others are critical of people who get plastic surgery. I demonstrate my strong understanding of Bordo’s ideas by analyzing it immediately after using evidence from her article. From my SA #4, I use her words “‘[She is] 56. The magazines tell [her] that at this age, a woman can still be beautiful. But they don’t mean [her]. They mean Cher, Goldie, Faye, Candace. Women whose jowls have disappeared as they’ve aged, whose eyes have become less droopy, lips grown plumper, foreheads smoother with the passing years’ (Bordo 1)” and then promptly analyze Bordo’s emotions toward these ideas about women looking younger than they actually are: “As readers, we can tell she is on the opposing side of plastic surgery because her tone is bitter at the women who are the same age as her, but look young and beautiful” (Example Student 2). By analyzing, explaining, and setting up the concrete idea that Bordo is aware of her own jealousy and hate toward these beautiful women, I can continue with my claim that she is critical of the media and how it influences her distaste of the increased use plastic surgery. Furthermore, I demonstrate my understanding of Bordo’s ideas when I break down her words. The quote I broke down was, “[Plastic surgery is] cheaper than ever, safer than ever, and increasingly used not for correcting major defects but for ‘contouring’ the face and body” (Bordo 2), and then analyze it further by defining parts of that evidence: “Here, Bordo distinctly separates the two reasons for surgery: ‘correcting major defects’ and ‘contouring the face and body’. The latter is reasonable because women are insecure about their bodies after seeing so many advertisements with perfect women with smooth faces and skinny waistlines; however, this means that getting a surgical enhancement becomes a shallow reason when the woman is easily malleable, influenced by media, and does things that are unnecessary (i.e. ‘contouring the face and body’).” (Example Student 2). By separating the sentence and defining each in my own words, I provide my own input about it and even start transitioning into Grealy’s work.

In the paragraph following Bordo’s ideas, I begin to utilize intertextuality because I start referencing Grealy’s ideas and story, but still refer back to Bordo as well: “In Lucy Grealy’s ‘Mirrors’, we learn about how she grew up having an actual ‘major defect’ – as Bordo calls it…” (Example Student 3). By mentioning Bordo’s words, I’m keeping the two texts connected and the ideas united. I show my understanding of Grealy’s work and use her to show the opposite of Bordo’s ideas by picking out evidence that strikes the reader with pathos, “Grealy explains how ‘walking down the streets I walked down through the forest, my body ready for any opportunity to fight or flee one of the big cats I knew stalked the area. Vietnam and Cambodia were other places I walked through frequently, daily even as I made my way down the school hall, knowing a landmine or a sniper might give themselves away at any moment…’ (Grealy 36). Whether this is simply a metaphor or not, it is still emotionally impactful in that she compares the insults about her face to that of a warzone. These insults deeply wound her mentally and emotionally, which is why she decides to undergo multiple surgeries to fix her ‘major defect’” (Example Student 3). Here, I talk about the impact of Grealy’s words because I want to display her opinions about plastic surgery. Evidently, she is pro-plastic surgery because it would be benefitting someone like her who needs it.

At the end of my SA #4, I demonstrate the use of intertextually in a proficient manner because I take Bordo’s ideas and Grealy’s ideas and place them right next to each other as if they were having a conversation. In doing so, it formed a new idea, and thus supported my goal of supporting my main claim. I used Bordo’s words that “‘[20 year-olds] understand that you can be as cynical as you want about the ads – and many of them are – and still feel powerless to resist their messages’ (Bordo 3).” (Example Student 4) in conjunction with Grealy’s: “‘Society is no help; the images it gives us again and again want us only to believe that we can most be ourselves by looking like someone else, leaving our own faces behind to turn into ghosts that will inevitably resent us and haunt us’. (Grealy 44)” (Example Student 4). In placing these two ideas next to each other, I concluded that we cannot decide whether someone’s choice to get plastic surgery is ethical or not because even though Bordo is on the opposing side and Grealy is for plastic surgery, there are blurred lines and essentially, society (according to both Bordo and Grealy) affect our decisions. By keeping Bordo’s ideas separate from Grealy’s in the first half of my paper, I was able to consider multiple perspectives; at the end though, using intertextuality to blend their ideas together formed my own belief and supported my main claim about plastic surgery.

In addition to being able to use intertextuality and understanding course texts, I was also able to fulfill the aspects of Outcome 2 in utilizing multiple kinds of evidence in my writing and using MLA correctly in my MA #2. In MA #2, I wanted to persuade teens who felt the pressure to watch television because it’s the social or cool thing to do, as opposed to reading books. To support my claim, I found evidence that proved that reading is good for benefitting any adolescent. I used a primary resource from researchers to give concrete proof about the positive outcomes from reading, like the European Journal of Public Health where they state that “reading books was related to less distractibility for academic activities, while media use was positively related to distractibility” (Garcia-Continente n.p.). By using hard facts, I further explained how this type of focus can “build up the practice of constant focus for a stretched amount of time” (Example Student 2). The use of this primary resource and further analysis helped me build upon convincing the audience that reading is better than watching television. I also used personal observations as a source towards the end to wrap up my argument: “I have personally noticed my behavior as a young adult deviate from my sister, who is not a reader” (Example Student 5). I chose to do this because I think it’s important to include a bit of intuitive explanation to persuade a reader; sometimes real-life examples are more believable than statistics or hard facts. I’m careful in using my observation as evidence though because it may seem that I am making a hasty generalization, but I do disclaim that “this varies case by case of course, but because of my personal experience and research done on the effects of reading…” (Example Student 5). Finally, I fulfill the aspect of using MLA correctly by having a Works Cited page at the end of the paper with the list of sources I used in alphabetical order by author’s last name.