Collaborative Pedagogy

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The term *collaborative pedagogy* covers a wide range of practices. In its broadest sense, collaborative pedagogy has no necessary link to the teaching of composition; scholars throughout the disciplines recognize collaboration as an aid to learning. Students who work together learn more and retain more.

Kenneth A. Bruffee, whose scholarship brought collaboration to the conversation of composition studies, dates modern interest in collaborative learning to universities' open-admission policies of the 1970s. Individualistic teaching methods proved ineffective for the new population of nontraditional university students, whereas collaborative pedagogies such as peer tutoring answered their needs. Bruffee, in "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" articulates three principles of collaborative learning that have now become canonical in composition studies:

1. [B]ecause thought is internalized conversation, thought and conversation tend to work largely in the same way. (639)
2. If thought is internalized public and social talk, then writing of all kinds is internalized social talk made public and social again. If thought is internalized conversation, then writing is internalized conversation re-externalized. (641)
3. To learn is to work collaboratively to establish and maintain knowledge among a community of knowledgeable peers through the process that Richard Rorty calls "socially justifying belief." (646)

Because composition studies includes pedagogy as a central concern, collaboration holds a particular fascination for the discipline. As in other disciplines, small-group discussion has become a staple of composition pedagogy. Even more common to composition classrooms is the practice of peer response to writing: students each draft an assigned paper, and then classmates respond to and make suggestions for improving the draft. Less common yet valued in composition studies is the collaborative writing assignment, in which students work together from start to finish, producing a single paper from the group.

Each of these collaborative pedagogies—small-group discussion, peer response, and collaborative writing—can enhance students' experience of writing classes, but the perils are also well documented: many teachers count among their worst disasters the collaborative assignment gone wrong. Among the published descriptions of collaborative composition pedagogy, many focus as much on how to avoid problems as on what can be accomplished in collaborative pedagogy.

Composition studies' embrace of collaboration involves more than exploring pedagogical methods, for the very notion of collaboration contradicts a long cultural tradition that privileges the individual agent and especially the solitary author. Kurt Spellmeyer traces this tradition to the work of John Locke. Elizabeth Ervin and Dana L. Fox trace it to Descartes. More commonly, the figure of the solitary, autonomous genius who produces original works is associated with the Romantic literary theory of Wordsworth and Emerson, and it also figures into copyright legislation today: the solitary author is heroic and deserves sole ownership of the words that he or she produces. Though associated with Romantic theory, these precepts continue to exert a strong hold on our culture's perceptions of writing, and they exert a significant counterforce to collaborative pedagogy. John Clifford writes, "Academics have never existed as autonomous agents outside disciplinary or institutional discourse." To Clifford, the tenacity with which "traditional humanism" clings to the "sanctity of literary ownership" poses a barrier to collaborative pedagogy (174). For that reason, proponents of collaboration—in fields such as computers and composition (Handa); law (Jaszi); cross-cultural rhetoric (Miller & Vander Lei); and literary studies (Stillinger)—contest the notion of the solitary, autonomous author.

Many go so far as to assert that all writing is collaborative. Jeanette Harris offers an authoritative overview of the assumptions and consequences of this assertion. Charlotte Thralls specifies several dimensions in which all writing is collaborative: active readers function as collaborative partners; the writer's sense of anticipated audience constitutes a form of collaboration; the community in which the act of writing takes place or toward which it is aimed contributes constraining (and enabling) conventions such as word choice, tone, organization; and sources that the writer has read exert their influence (67–69). For scholars such as Thralls and Patricia Sullivan, collaborative pedagogy is not so much an alternative pedagogy as it is an accurate mirroring of the true nature of writing.

Yet so firm a grip does the solitary author have on modern representations of writing that collaboration is sometimes perceived as plagiarism—as cheating (see Ervin and Fox; McCabe and Cole). Although this extreme resistance to collaboration is today less frequent than it was when scholars such as Bruffee began their work, it continues as a palpable counterforce to collaborative pedagogy. Rhetorician Susan Miller remarks,

In my teaching and research, "collaboration" has focused a series of semantic fields. At first, if I recognized the term at all, it was as a kind of cheating. It

Collaborative Learning

As attested by Bruffee's "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" writing centers are a primary site for implementing collaborative learning. In fact, the distinction between collaborative learning and collaborative writing has been crucial to legitimating the work of writing centers. Teachers throughout the university, while wanting their students to become better writers, are also concerned that their students not have others "do" their writing for them; they may regard collaboration as plagiarism. Hence writing center staff suffer perennial criticism from colleagues in the university. Hence, too, some of the scholarship of writing centers develops theories and procedures for collaborative learning. (See, for example, Muriel Harris.)

Irene Clark and Dave Healy charge the writing center itself with some of the blame for the conflation of collaboration with plagiarism:

> The writing center's response to such suspicions has been to embrace a pedagogy of noninterventionism that precludes both the appropriation of student texts and any challenge to teachers' authority occasioned by questioning their judgment of a writer's work. (32)

The policy of noninterventionism is, however, "ethically suspect," for it constrains the potential learning experience. Clark and Healy would have the writing center involved not only in collaborative learning but also in collaborative writing.

Advocating a writing center that would "place control, power, and authority not in the tutor or staff, not in the individual student, but in the negotiating group" (8), Lunsford, too, challenges the boundaries that have traditionally constrained the nature of writing center collaboration. Such a writing center (although Lunsford does not explicitly say so) would not only forestall the common charge that tutors are writing students' papers for them, but it would also (and about this Lunsford is specific) enable a community meaning-making that far exceeds what any single individual could accomplish.

Often overlooked as a vehicle of collaborative pedagogy is whole-class discussion (Howard and Jamieson 166–68). When the teacher asks questions to which he or she already knows the "right" answers, class discussion is hardly collaborative; instead, students are performers. But when the teacher gets conversation started and then acts as secretary and synthesizer (see Wiener 59), class discussion can be very collaborative, indeed. The teacher asks a question that can have a variety of "correct" interpretive answers: the question can be as general as, "How did this text make you feel?" ("Why?" is an essential follow-up question, if the teacher wants to move conversation beyond affective response and toward analysis and synthesis.) A crucial technique for collaborative class discussion is to ask students to listen to each other. When one student makes a statement, the teacher turns to another and asks to what extent he or she agrees or disagrees. (Again, "Why?" is a necessary follow-up

question.) If the student was not listening to the classmate, the teacher can cheerfully ask the classmate to repeat. This time, of course, the whole class is listening to the statement, and waiting for the response. Another useful technique is to call upon students rather than to ask for raised hands, a situation in which a few students will reliably respond and others will reliably sit silent. If a student is stumped for a response, the teacher can look for raised hands or turn to another and invite "rescue." But once a student has been called upon, the teacher should ask that student's permission before giving the floor to another: "Miles has his hand up. Do you want to give the floor to him, or do you want to talk first?" Once Miles has spoken, the teacher may want to turn again to the stumped student and ask if he or she now has something to say. Often students' reluctance to answer a question signals not actually being stumped but rather needing to think before responding. Avoiding summative remarks like "good answer" constitutes yet another important technique for facilitating whole-class collaborative discussion by casting the teacher's role as that of facilitator rather than judge. When students make errors or introduce potentially fruitful avenues of thought, the teacher should point these out to the class. At the same time, though, the teacher must avoid remarks that suggest the too-familiar performance model of class discussion.

To employ small-group pedagogy is to decenter the classroom, opening it up to difference and dissent, and teachers must welcome rather than squelch such responses (Roskelly). One of the guiding principles of small-group pedagogy is the effort to relinquish teacher control. Students can teach each other; more important, together they can discover things that individually they might not. And in small groups, students are necessarily more involved than they are in the potentially passive whole-class context.

Dividing large classes into smaller groups offers all students the opportunity to talk. These groups can be formulated for discussion, problem-solving, or accomplishment of certain tasks. In any case, though, the teacher should make sure that each group knows its charge. The teacher may want to tell the groups how to accomplish that charge or may want to have the groups figure out their own methods.

The teacher's role in small-group pedagogy is again that of facilitator. Part of this facilitation may involve teaching students effective pragmatics: if they sit close to each other and make eye contact, they will talk more freely and sincerely (Bell-Metereau). Monitoring pragmatics, the teacher may want to encourage students who push their chairs out of the circle or who sprawl out, preventing proximity, to join the group. The teacher's lighthearted remarks about the need to violate American notions of personal space can alleviate students' anxieties about an unfamiliar classroom activity, one very different from the lecture method in which the teacher dispenses knowledge.

Collaborative Contributions to Solo-authored Texts

Although small-group pedagogy lends itself well to collaborative learning, it is most often used in writing classes for collaborative response to individually

would have involved plagiarizing other people's ideas instead of relying on my own work, and would have meant abandoning my emerging teacherly responsibility to be an "expert," universalized reader. (283)

Then Miller developed a second definition, in which she "imagined collaboration at its best as a 'workshop' where students could get all the help possible by tinkering with one another's writing" (283). The intellectual movement that Miller describes is mirrored in the discipline of composition in general, but that movement—away from a normative solitary writer and toward an appreciation for collaboration—must continue if collaboration is to establish an enduring place in composition pedagogy.

⊶ BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE PEDAGOGY

Bruffee offers a broad view of the benefits of collaboration: collaborative learning, he says, is "a way of engaging students more deeply with the text" ("Collaborative Learning" 635); collaborative pedagogy provides a social context in which students can experience and practice the kinds of conversation valued by college teachers" (642). Collaborative pedagogy traces its philosophical roots to the social constructivist philosophy of Richard Rorty. Knowledge for Rorty and his followers is not something "out there" that can be discovered by the persistent, gifted learner; rather, it is socially justified belief, constructed in the community and acquired in interaction with that community. Andrea Lunsford describes composition's embrace of collaboration as an epistemological shift in the field:

> The shift involves a move from viewing knowledge and reality as things exterior to or outside of us, as immediately accessible, individually knowable, measurable, and shareable—to viewing knowledge and reality as mediated by or constructed through language in social use, as socially constructed, contextualized, as, in short, the product of *collaboration*. (4)

Anne Ruggles Gere specifies the implications of this theory for composition pedagogy:

> Knowledge conceived as socially constructed or generated validates the "learning" part of collaborative learning because it assumes that the interactions of collaboration can lead to new knowledge or learning. A fixed and hierarchical view of knowledge, in contrast, assumes that learning can occur only when a designated "knower" imparts wisdom to those less well informed. (72–73)

Among those who further explore the epistemological foundations of collaborative learning are Kris Bosworth and Sharon Hamilton; Bruffee, *Collaborative Learning*; Marilyn Cooper, Diana George, and Susan Sanders; Chet Meyers

and Thomas Jones; and Donna Qualley and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. Their arguments are not, however, universally accepted. Invoking other critics' objections, Bruce Horner says that the collaborative pedagogies described in the theories of Bruffee equate collaboration with democracy and assume that if peer work is taking place in the classroom, so is democracy and social change. Collaborative pedagogy, Horner charges, does not necessarily offer students anything of use outside the classroom, notwithstanding that it claims to model how knowledge is really made (514–16).

The social constructionist premises on which early work in collaboration was based have been criticized for an inattention to the unequal distribution of power in any given community. Too often social constructionist theory assumes a community of like-minded peers, a community in which every member is free to contribute to and participate in the making of knowledge. A Foucaudian approach to education, on the other hand, focuses on how power and difference are defined and distributed in community activities. For composition pedagogy, this can mean an attention to the relation between collaboration and hierarchy. Ann Hill Duin notes that collaborative pedagogy reduces competition between students. Much more frequently, scholars note ways in which collaborative pedagogy levels the teacher-student hierarchy. When teachers are no longer dispensing knowledge in lectures but are guiding students in the collaborative process of discovering and constructing knowledge, students are empowered. Social constructionist approaches to collaboration recognize this dynamic; see, for example, Bruffee ("Collaborative Learning") and Gere. Later scholarship, informed by New Historicist principles, advocates a collaborative pedagogy in which students' empowerment becomes explicit. Clifford, for example, recommends that students become reflexive learners, "learn[ing] firsthand how domination and resistance work" (173). Other scholars (e.g., Lunsford and Ede, "Rhetoric") draw on feminist theory to describe the counterhierarchical possibilities of collaboration.

Scholars recommend the pedagogy of collaborative learning and writing not only because of its epistemological felicities but also because it offers students practice in common forms of work-place writing. Geoffrey Cross, Kitty Locker, and Lunsford and Ede (*Singular Texts*) describe collaborative writing in the world of business. For scientists, too, collaborative writing is a familiar method; see, for example, Ronald Schliefer and John Trimbur and Lundy Braun. Even preachers engage in collaborative writing. Rex Veeder explains, "The authorship of a sermon is indeed thought to be an act of collaboration between the writer/speaker and the spirit" (306). Miller and Vander Lei, moreover, describe ways in which African American folk preachers collaborate, unattributed, with each other's sermons and with sacred texts.

When collaborative pedagogy aims to prepare students for work-place tasks, it should be designed not just on general precepts but also with a well-developed conception of work-place writing. Lunsford offers a taxonomy of work-place tasks "that seem to call consistently for collaboration: high-order problem defining and solving; division of labor tasks, in which the job is simply too big for any one person; and division of expertise tasks" (6).

drafted texts. Many scholars using the term *collaborative writing* are actually talking about collaborative response to individually drafted texts. Others call the pedagogy *response groups;* Gere prefers *writing groups* (56) and describes their benefits: "[T]hey bring writers and readers closer together, thereby providing writers a direct experience with audiences" (66). Muriel Harris, though, cautions that the peer respondents are minimally trained, if at all: writers gain a greater sense of audience but are not tutored in peer response groups. Peer response, she says, works differently from tutoring, in part because tutors "are trained to use methods that lead to results very different from the outcome of response groups" (369). Peer response focuses on general skills; tutoring, on the skills of one individual (373). Writing groups usually focus on revision; tutoring can address any stage of the writing process (375). Tutorials strive for the tutee's discovery, whereas peer response groups, Harris says, often provide information in a directive way (376–77).

Yet in the expressivist rhetoric on which much of peer response theory is based, pedagogy is more facilitative than directive in its effort to elicit a student's best work. Peter Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers,* a flagship document for this approach, describes techniques for a pedagogy in which writers not only work in small groups without teachers but also do not themselves model traditional teacherly methods. Instead of talking about whether a paper is "good" or "bad," and instead of playing what Elbow calls the "doubting game," group members respond to a paper by describing how it makes them feel. Playing the "believing game," they point to the features of the paper that elicited positive responses (Elbow 147–91). One of the values of expressivist peer-response pedagogy is that it not only removes the teacher from directive instruction, but it also prevents students from assuming that role in their responses. Instead of offering each other untrained and often incorrect instruction, peer respondents assume the role of reader and give the writer a heightened sense of audience.

Connie Hale and Susan Wyche-Smith's 1988 video, intended to be shown to composition classes, models small-group composition pedagogy in which the writer reads aloud and then the group members offer their responses. Because the students in the video were advanced writers, in 1991 Hale, Tim Mallon, and Wyche-Smith offered a second video, one that depicted beginning composition students. An underlying principle of both videos is crucial to the pedagogy: if group members silently read the paper themselves, marking on it, they inevitably assume teacherly roles, becoming doubters and critics. If, however, they listen while the writer reads aloud, they more readily assume audience roles and can better focus on their responses rather than their judgments.

As Duin notes in her list of teachers' responsibilities in small-group pedagogy (317), students may benefit from the teacher's specifying objectives and tasks. Many teachers go so far as to pose questions or tasks for the group, questions such as, "How did you *feel* about this paper? Where were you excited? Confused? Bored? Angry? Happy? Intrigued? And why?" (See, for example, Booher.) As a result of questions such as these, writers learn how their work

affects readers—and that is one of the main benefits of small-group pedagogy. To allow students to assume teacherly roles is to offer writers inexpert teaching, but to encourage students to articulate their readerly responses is to offer writers an understanding of the effects of their work. Equipped with this understanding, the writer can then better anticipate and provide for readers' needs and expectations. For additional advice on facilitating peer-response groups, see Jeffrey Copeland and Earl Lomax, Marie Foley, and Edgar Thompson.

"[W]riting groups highlight the social dimension of writing. They provide tangible evidence that writing involves human interaction as well as solitary inscription" (Gere 3). Supporting this statement is the assumption that solitary writing is possible; that assumption, in turn, supports the pedagogy of peer-*response* groups and gives it the name *collaborative writing.* David Bleich's model of collaboration, for example, is one in which "the work of each student change[s] in response to the analytical commentaries of the other students" (*Double Perspective* 295). The initial work, in other words, is not collaborative. Lunsford and Ede point out that scholars like Elbow who are most associated with collaborative learning "hold implicitly to traditional concepts of autonomous individualism, authorship, and authority for texts" ("Collaborative Authorship" 426). The early scholarship of Bruffee, the foremost proponent of collaborative learning, posits the solitary, autonomous author. In fact, say Lunsford and Ede, "collaborative learning theory has from its inception failed to challenge traditional concepts of radical individualism and ownership of ideas and has operated primarily in a traditional and largely hierarchical way" (431).

Karen Burke LeFevre offers a corrective to this limitation. In a book whose challenge has yet to be fully explored in composition scholarship, she describes not just revision but also invention as a collaborative act. LeFevre offers four models of invention: Platonic, internal dialogic, collaborative, and collective. The Platonic model (in which invention is an individual act) and the internal dialogic (in which invention is accomplished by an individual who is in mental conversation with the anticipated audience) have dominated composition studies, including the work of Elbow (51–61). In their place LeFevre offers collaborative invention (in which people work together to generate ideas) and collective invention ("invention is influenced by a social collective, a supra-individual entity whose rules and conventions may enable or inhibit the invention of certain ideas") (62, 80).

Subsequent scholarship has not taken up LeFevre's proposals with the enthusiasm that heralded peer-response pedagogy. The most likely explanation for the difference is that peer-response pedagogy does not challenge the long-accepted model of the individual author, whereas collective or collaborative invention does. No potpourri of pedagogical suggestions is therefore available to the interested teacher. Viewed another way: an entire strand of collaborative pedagogy awaits further scholarship. Those wishing to employ collaborative invention in their writing classes might start with collaborative invention on writing assignments. Instead of (or in preparation for) peer-response groups for drafts in progress, the teacher can distribute a writing assignment and then immediately convene small groups to brainstorm ideas for how the assignment

might be approached. At the end of the class period, the groups share their ideas with the class, and everyone discusses the potentials and pitfalls of the various possibilities.

Collaborative Writing

Of all the collaborative pedagogies, the one that has proven most difficult is collaborative writing. When students are assigned to *write together*, a variety of problems can arise, most of them deriving from the dominant cultural model of individual authorship. Because not only students but also teachers are accustomed to thinking of authorship in terms of the individual—and because the entire educational institution predicates its judgments on individual performance—collaborative writing pedagogies seem foreign and fraught with peril. Yet collaborative writing dominates the corporate work place and many academic disciplines, and critical theory increasingly insists that all writing is collaborative. Thus, despite the perils, some teachers persevere in assigning and teaching collaborative writing.

And when the perils can be averted or overcome, the benefits are impressive. In spring 1998, I assigned five papers in my sophomore composition class. The first four were individually authored, with collaborative invention and revision. The fifth paper was collaboratively written, with random constitution of groups. I assigned tasks and suggested methods, and the groups decided on topic, thesis, and method. For the last month of the term, they conducted collaborative research; divided up the work; met regularly; reported to me regularly; consulted me about questions and problems (the most prominent problem being one group member who did not do her share); argued energetically about style, structure, and content; handed in astonishingly good papers; and expressed pride in and enthusiasm for the process and its product. Fresh from that gratifyingly successful collaborative writing pedagogy, I offer the following suggestions for assigning collaborative writing:

1. Although the collaborative writing assignment may be announced and distributed on the very first day of class, it should not be begun until a substantial portion of the term has elapsed. In the interim, pedagogy should be sufficiently collaborative (e.g., collaborative class discussion, small-group work, collaborative invention, collaborative revision) that the students get to know each other, resolve some of the small interpersonal tensions that inevitably arise, and anticipate each other's collaborative assets and shortcomings.

2. The collaborative writing assignment should be one that is best accomplished by a group rather than an individual; otherwise, the task is artificial, leading to students' frustration and irritation. Lunsford and Ede describe

   > . . . three types of tasks which invite . . . collaboration: "labor-intensive" tasks that need to be divided into smaller subtasks in order to be accomplished effectively and efficiently; "specialization" tasks that call for multi-

> ple areas of expertise; and "synthesis" tasks that demand that divergent perspectives be brought together into a solution acceptable to the whole group or an outside group. (*Singular Texts* 123)

In my sophomore composition class, the collaborative groups were assigned to write a new chapter for a style textbook used in the course. Because the students had criticized its shortcomings, I directed each group to write a new chapter for the book. One group wrote on wired style; another, on the ways style varies in different discourse communities. These were not topics that solitary sophomores could have treated authoritatively, for they demanded intensive labor and high-level synthesis.

3. Provide for student-initiated collaboration. While planning the course, consider whether any of the assignments designated for individual authorship might lend themselves to collaborative authorship. Alert the class to these possibilities and introduce them to methods and rationales for collaboration. If some of the students opt to write collaboratively, work with the groups to ensure that they are accomplishing something other than dividing up an individual paper among several writers.

4. Discuss methods and problems of collaborative writing before the project begins. If online collaboration is a possibility, explore available methods (see Forbes; Selfe). Alert students to the ways in which stereotyped role expectations (based on factors such as gender and race) can affect the distribution of power within the group; encourage students to use the collaborative experience as an opportunity for greater attention to each other's ideas and for delegating responsibility according to the actual characteristics of the individuals in the group, rather than their stereotyped role expectations (see Fox; Morgan; Villanueva). Two additional observations are especially important to share:

   a. Collaborative writing can take many forms. Lunsford and Ede describe *dialogic* and *hierarchical* collaboration: in dialogic collaboration, the group works together on all aspects of the project, whereas in hierarchical collaboration, the group divides the task into component parts and assigns certain components to each group member. Lunsford and Ede point out that these are not mutually exclusive categories; many collaborative writing projects involve both dialogic and hierarchical collaboration (*Singular Texts* 133–34). Dialogic collaboration offers the benefit of discovery: students learn more by working together. In my class, the group working on wired style collaborated dialogically to define and expand the unfamiliar topic. Hierarchical collaboration offers the benefit of efficiency: that same group worked dialogically to develop a preliminary bibliography and then worked hierarchically to read the sources. Each member reported his or her findings to the group, and then they again worked dialogically to construct an argument and hierarchically to draft sections of that argument.

   b. Certain problems regularly arise in collaborative writing. One is that some students are better prepared to accomplish their tasks than are

others—hence a variation in quality. Writing groups need to be prepared for each person's contributions to be revised and even deleted. The group must be ready to exert critical judgment, and the members must be braced for the sobering prospect of having their work changed or eliminated. The group must dedicate itself to the best possible written product, and its members must be ready to help each other through potentially ego-deflating moments.

   c. Another common problem in collaborative writing is the student who does not carry his or her load. The group should deliberate this possibility at the beginning of the project and report to the teacher its decision for how such a phenomenon should be handled if it arises. Generally, this involves the group's deciding whether one grade will be assigned to the paper regardless of the balance of effort; whether a shirking member will receive a lesser grade than the others; or whether a shirking member will be ejected from the group and either given a zero or required to write his or her own paper.

5. Anticipate and prepare for student resistance to collaboration. In part because Western literary theory has, for the past century and more, so firmly endorsed a model of solitary authorship, some students have difficulty accepting collaborative writing assignments. They may be uncertain as to whether their classmates will accept them as coauthors, or they may have a much higher opinion of their own writing "ability" than their classmates have. Whatever the cause of their resistance, most of these students will nevertheless benefit from the collaborative assignment, if they are given to understand how prevalent collaboration is in work-place writing, how much their "individual" writing will benefit from having worked in a group and having seen firsthand how others articulate and solve writing problems, and how much more they can accomplish than if they were working alone—what Linda Hughes and Michael Lund call "a union that is greater than the . . . parts that composed it" (49). (Priscilla Rogers and Marjorie Horton detail the benefits of collaborative writing, especially in the dialogic mode.) But some students are implacably opposed to collaboration, and the teacher must decide whether to require them to participate or to offer the option of individual writing. The decision rests on the pedagogical motivation for assigning collaboration. If it is to improve the students' skill in writing collaboratively, they must all participate. If, however, the class is designed to enhance individual writing skills (as is the case in most required introductory composition classes) and a student persists in objecting to collaboration, the teacher may want to allow solitary composition, reasoning that the student's writing skills will not benefit from an activity that he or she so firmly resists.

6. Let the class decide how the groups will be constituted, and discuss the pros and cons of each possibility. I told my class that choosing their own groups would allow them maximum comfort but would leave some students feeling unloved, and I also told them that the comfort of self-chosen groups could sometimes result in poor decision-making, with too much

consideration for established relations and not enough for the collaborative project. Our alternatives were my designating the groups, trying to fix each group with a range of writing skills—e.g., a good researcher, a good editor, etc., in each group. The class decided on random selection, and they also chose the size of groups. I recommended against too-small groups (in which one person's absence might be devastating) or too-large groups (in which leadership issues could too easily arise and in which one person could too easily disappear). They decided on six-person writing groups.

7. Give the groups autonomy in deciding their methods and timetables (my class even decided how often, when, and why class would meet during the month of the project), but also require that they commit their timetable to writing. Give students maximum guidance to help them make sound decisions. The sophomores were sobered, for example, when they realized that once the paper was constructed, they would have to allow not a few hours but a week for editing, since they were all required to read and sign off on the final product. And indeed, for one group, editing was the most lively and protracted passage of the project. One student was determined that the paper be well edited and was certain he knew what good editing was. The other members were less enthusiastic but more knowledgeable about editing. The result was fights, dictionaries, handbooks, delegations to my office for grammar arbitration, a great deal of learning, and a beautifully edited paper.

8. Prepare for dissent within the groups, and prepare to manage it in two dimensions: the teacher and the students. Neither should attempt to suppress dissent or enforce consensus (see Clark and Ede; Flower; Janangelo; Spellmeyer; Trimbur; Villanueva; and Wolf). Successful collaboration, say Lunsford and Ede, allows not only for "group cohesion" but also for "creative conflict" and the protection of "minority views" (*Singular Texts* 123). Linda Flower recommends that the teacher welcome rather than dread dissent: "Conflict, embedded in a spirit of stubborn generosity, is not only generative but necessary because it acknowledges the undeniable—the social and economic substructures of power, of racism, of identity that will not be erased by goodwill" (51). From such conflict can emerge "a joint inquiry into thorny problems, opening up live options that let us construct a language of possibility and a more complicated ground for action" (50–52). It is important for students to anticipate in advance that dissent and conflict will arise and to be ready to respond to it productively rather than wasting time trying to suppress, reform, or eject dissenters. Two textual presentations of dissent that my students have found useful are counterevidence and minority opinions. The presentation of counterevidence draws on established models of academic persuasion, in which a thesis (the opinion of the majority) is advanced but in which counterevidence as well as evidence is presented. In employing this option, students must avoid the approach to counterevidence that traditional argument offers. Counterevidence must not be discounted or "refuted":

rather, it should serve to enrich the thesis, showing its complexities and ambiguities. The presentation of minority opinions draws on Supreme Court practice. Collaborative writing groups employing this tactic present a final paper, to which is attached one or more statements of dissenting opinion. Nor are these statements individually authored; the entire group works dialogically not only on the majority paper but also on the minority opinion(s).

9. Explain in advance how the project will be graded, preferably involving the students in the decision. I told my sophomore composition class that each collaborative group would receive a single grade but that the groups would decide in advance how a shirker would be graded. I provided my criteria for grading, telling them that I expected a better product than I would of a single individual but that I expected sophomore- and not professional-level work. Some teachers try to assign individual grades for a collaborative project—a method that I cannot recommend, since it undermines the purposes of collaboration. Such quandaries can arise from the gatekeeping responsibility for judging and ranking individuals that is endemic to many writing programs (see Holdstein). Before assigning collaborative writing projects, the teacher should ascertain that the institutional purposes for the course and the teacher's own purposes in assigning collaboration are sufficiently harmonious that the institutional agenda will not undermine the collaborative pedagogy—or vice versa.

Writer/Text Collaboration

Of all collaborative pedagogies, the one least acknowledged in writing classes is writer/text collaboration, in which a writer overtly collaborates with a written text. The received models of collaboration acknowledge that which takes place between writer and anticipated audience (LeFevre's internal dialogic model); between writers and readers, face to face (peer response pedagogy); or between several writers (collaborative authorship). In contrast, writers' work with texts has traditionally been characterized not as collaboration but as quotation, paraphrase, summary, synthesis, research—or plagiarism. Increasingly, however, composition scholars describe writers' work with texts as a form of collaboration, as Lunsford and Ede demonstrate when referring to their own conversation with texts (*Singular Texts* 138). And Thralls uses the category of collaboration to describe sources that the writer has read and that influenced him or her (69).

When I say, "writers' work with texts has traditionally been characterized," I use the term *traditionally* to refer to mainstream representations of authorship, those that do not typically tend to acknowledge difference. In American culture, though, many other representations of the solitary-collaborative continuum can be found. Gere's research reveals that in nineteenth-century women's literary groups, collaborative reading and writing were the norm. And Keith Miller's research asserts collaborative writing and shared language as the norm in American preaching, especially African American preaching.

Asserting that all writing is collaborative, I have used the term *(re)formative composition* to describe a pedagogy of writer/text collaboration that would facilitate "the *jouissance* of unfettered authorship, of exercises in which [students] play freely with language, without regard for ownership"[1] Such pedagogy is first described by Glynda Hull and Mike Rose and then developed by Mary Minock. It is not, however, widely employed in composition studies. Not only does it inescapably violate the notion of the solitary author, but it also brings collaborative pedagogy back into contact with plagiarism, an association that scholars of collaboration have for years striven to undo. The teacher employing such pedagogy has the task of making sure it does not lead students into textual activities that would be interpreted as academic dishonesty. Perhaps equally important, the teacher also has to ensure that colleagues do not conclude from the pedagogy of writer/text collaboration that the teacher is indifferent to textual ethics. Despite these perils, the pedagogy of writer/text collaboration has the potential for expanding students' linguistic repertoires and increasing the authority of their academic prose voices. And because Hull and Rose, Minock, and I are almost alone in publishing descriptions of such pedagogy, writer/text collaboration is a topic ripe for further research.

Note

1. The term originates in as-yet-unpublished work by a scholarly collaborative, the (In)Citers.

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Cultural Studies and Composition

D I A N A   G E O R G E
J O H N   T R I M B U R

The idea that cultural studies was about to become the "next thing" in composition theory and practice appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s, in the depths of the Reagan-Bush era of conservative restoration and American triumphalism. In the intervening decade, cultural studies has insinuated itself into the mainstream of composition—as a category to check on CCCC (Conference on College Composition and Communication) proposals, a type of textbook, a curricular organizing principle, a set of questions about literacy practices, the thematic focus of essay collections and monographs, in its most general sense an orientation toward the study and teaching of writing and a milieu of loosely affiliated theorists and practitioners. To say that cultural studies has arrived, however, only poses a series of questions we will be concerned with in this bibliographical essay: namely, (to borrow the title of Richard Johnson's seminal essay) what is cultural studies anyway, where does it come from, what does it want, what does it do, and why has it become, virtually overnight, a distinct current in composition studies—and a source of anxiety and contention?

A simple answer to the latter question, and one that possesses a certain though sharply limited truth, is that cultural studies is the latest import of theory into composition: a moment in the global circulation of intellectual commodities marked by the transmission of British cultural studies from the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) to replace the depleted exchange value of continental high theory in its various guises (structuralism, poststructuralism, hermeneutics, deconstruction, and so on) with the more worldly goods of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall.

At any rate, this is the view one often finds in the establishment press, whether the *New York Times* or the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, in reporting that typically styles figures such as Stanley Aronowitz, Lawrence Grossberg, Andrew Ross, and Janice Radway as hip purveyors of the latest academic fad. Such a view turns up as well in Richard Rorty's and others' majoritarian critique of the "cultural left" as an academic coterie and in commentaries from