

Collaborative Pedagogy: The Sum is Greater Than Its Parts

Overview

Collaborative pedagogy first gained momentum in comp studies during the 1970s when peer-tutoring emerged as an aid for the influx of non-traditional university students (Bruffee).

Every act of writing can be seen as a collaborative act, whether we directly collaborate with peers, with our intended audience, with a text, or with our own inner voice (Howard).

Collaboration empowers students and gives them ownership of their writing (Elbow), it helps students to create a work that is better than any individual could produce, and it teaches them a real skill that is valued in many work and academic settings.

Instructors should be aware of potential problems regarding plagiarism, equal division of work, group dynamics (including minorities), and differing skill levels within groups.

Major Terms & Scholars

- **Collaborative invention** is essentially group brainstorming and topic selection.
- **Response groups** are collections of individuals who provide feedback for individual writing.
- **Dialogic collaboration** (every member of the group is involved in every aspect of producing the final written product) versus **hierarchical collaboration** (division of labor).
- **Kenneth A. Bruffee** was one of the first scholars start a serious academic conversation about collaborative pedagogy and define its basic principles.
- **Rebecca Moore Howard** researches the issue of plagiarism and collaboration.
- **Lisa Ede** and **Andrea Lunsford** have made contributions to collaborative pedagogy terminology and ideas of authorship/intellectual property.

Class Activity

- 1) Select task: an argument
- 2) Divide groups: between 3-6 members per group
- 3) Collaborative invention: choose specific topic
- 4) Written timetable for project: deadlines, rules, assignment of workload
- 5) Progress reports for instructor: what members are contributing to group
- 6) Intra- and inter-group revision

Bleich, David. "Collaboration and the Pedagogy of Disclosure." *College English* 57.1 (January 1995): 43-61. This article provides support for the practice of self-disclosure in collaborative writing situations. Like Bruffee, Bleich agrees that disclosure should not be used as pure emotional release, but then expands this opinion to allow disclosure as a means to understand the context of students' beliefs and attitudes.

Bruffee, Kenneth. "Collaborative Learning." *College English* 43.7 (November, 1981): 745-747. In part a reply to Gebhardt, Bruffee argues that emotional development is not the role of collaborative pedagogy. Instead, instructors should focus on their understanding of group dynamics to make collaboration a positive learning experience for students.

Ede, Lisa, and Andrea A. Lunsford. "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship." *PMLA* 116.2 (March 2001): 354-369. Ede and Lunsford examine some of the battles collaborative writing has had to fight in the university setting. For instance, institutional tenure-based demands for individual contribution have limited active collaboration between faculty and between disciplines.

Harris, Muriel. "Collaboration Is Not Collaboration Is Not Collaboration: Writing Center Tutorials vs. Peer-Response Groups." *College Composition and Communication* 43. 3 (October 1992): 369-383. Harris discusses the difference between two types of collaboration, writing center aid versus in-class response groups, in terms of power inequalities, time frame, ability/skill level, and responsibility for the finished product. This is a useful reminder that novice peer-response groups do not always have the tools and ability to critique papers. Howard agrees that students should first understand basic writing standards before peer-response should be used in the classroom.

Howard, Rebecca M. "Collaborative Pedagogy." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Ed. Gary Tate, Amy Rupiper and Kurt Schick. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Knox-Quinn, Carolyn. "Collaboration in the Writing Classroom: An Interview with Ken Kesey." *College Composition and Communication* 41. 3 (October 1990): 309-317. Ken Kesey explains in detail how he and his entire class collaborated to produce a full length novel. He offers valuable tips for instructors on starting on a project, setting rules and boundaries, and overcoming pitfalls. This is a helpful article for instructors who want to launch a large collaborative project in an advanced class.

Reither, James, and Douglas Vipond. "Writing as Collaboration." *College English* 51.8 (December 1989): 855-867. Reither and Vipond propose three types of collaboration (coauthoring, workshopping, and knowledge making) in the context of an academic paper that Vipond et al produced. They offer suggestions to instructors for implementing these types of collaboration in a classroom setting, emphasize the value of organization, and define the role the instructor plays in this process.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake, and Michael Spooner. "A Single Good Mind: Collaboration, Cooperation, and the Writing Self." *College Composition and Communication* 49.1 (February 1998): 45-62. This is an interesting and creative text in that the authors demonstrate one method of collaboration by talking back and forth to each other about issues in collaborative writing. The authors' voices are distinguished by changes in type font. This idea could be easily applied to class blogs or to other group work in which individual contributions are monitored.