Theses and Dissertations

2024-06-20

# Recognizing the Role of Rhetoric in Secondary Writing Groups

Catherine Schrecengost
*Brigham Young University*

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/etd

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recognizing the Role of Rhetoric in Secondary Writing Groups

Katie Schrecengost

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Deborah Dean, Chair
Dawan Coombs
Amber Jensen

Department of English

Brigham Young University

ABSTRACT

Recognizing the Role of Rhetoric in Secondary Writing Groups

Katie Schrecengost
Department of English, BYU
Master of Arts

This project seeks to mediate one of the most significant issues with implementing writing groups in the secondary classroom: students do not know how to meaningfully engage in discussions about their writing. Students lack the necessary skills as well as understanding of the rhetorical nature of language to effectively request and provide feedback on pieces of writing. The application of theories of dialogue and collaboration to the research about writing groups suggest that the quality of student writing depends on the quality of their discussions about writing. Thus, my action research study investigates the types of language used between students in writing groups. I audio recorded students' writing group discussions and asked students to reflect on their experience in a written survey. Drawing on recorded small group conversations and student reflections, I consider how secondary students' rhetorical approach to writing groups allows them to collaboratively make meaning and improve their writing. The following research question guided my work: *What rhetorical skills and understanding are necessary for meaningful participation in writing groups?* In this context, meaningful participation is defined as productive discussions wherein comments build on one another as students create meaning and generate new ideas together. This was evaluated by the students themselves in their written reflections as well as my analysis of the recorded group discussions. Thematic analysis revealed that students who have an awareness of the rhetorical situation as well as skills such as responding and questioning are better able to participate meaningfully in writing groups.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Recognizing the Role of Rhetoric in Secondary Writing Groups

"The way [students] talk with each other determines the way they will think and the way they will write."
— Kenneth Bruffee, "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind'"

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This project seeks to mediate one of the most significant issues with implementing writing groups in the secondary classroom: students often struggle to know how to meaningfully engage in discussions about their writing. Students typically lack the necessary skills as well as understanding of the rhetorical nature of language to effectively request and provide feedback on pieces of writing. The application of theories of dialogue and collaboration to the research about writing groups suggest that the quality of student writing depends on the quality of their discussions about writing. Thus, my action research study investigates the types of language used between students in writing groups. I audio recorded students' writing group discussions and asked students to reflect on their experience in a written survey. Analysis of the language used can provide insight into which rhetorical skills and understanding are utilized in effective writing groups.

First, I review the existing literature surrounding writing groups to situate my work within the ongoing conversation. Next, I discuss points of intersection between dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory to establish a theoretical framework for my project. Then, I explain the methodology that I employed in this study.

**Review of Literature**

*Introduction*

On the secondary level, writing groups have appeared in classrooms since the late nineteenth century. From their inception, numerous benefits have been attributed to writing groups such as improved student attitudes towards revision, greater audience awareness, and

reduced burdens on teachers (Gere 17). Borne out of both the process movement of the 1960s and 1970s as well as the collaborative learning movement of the 1980s, writing groups, as defined here, provide opportunities for students to both give and receive immediate feedback in order to collaboratively revise independently drafted texts. Although frequently adopted and widely accepted as a highly effective practice, writing groups have historically lacked a strong theoretical foundation (Gere; Ching; Thralls).

*Theories*

Anne Ruggles Gere's book *Writing Groups* outlines the history of the practice up to 1987, the year it was published. Gere also seeks to reconcile a gap in the field by establishing a theoretical framework to justify the continued implementation of writing groups in the composition classroom. Drawing on collaboration theory, Gere advocates for writing groups as a pedagogical practice that enhances learning and improves student writing. Kory Ching responds to Gere's seminal work by investigating the underlying power dynamics in Gere's history of writing groups. Whereas Gere identifies instructors as authority figures who interfere with the collaboration process, Ching suggests that her work was influenced by the assumption that hierarchical relationships prevent learning (306). Student autonomy was highly prioritized in the field of composition studies in the 1980s, which is clearly reflected in Gere's portrayal of writing groups.

Ching pushes against Gere's tendency to limit teacher agency, suggesting that the emergence of writing groups was a practical strategy to remove some of the burden from teachers rather than an ideological move away from teacher authority. Harkening back to the nineteenth century, Ching identifies multiple instances of teachers using their own students as resources to reduce the grading workload. When the burden of feedback is shared with students,

teachers can assign more writing, providing students with more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Rather than teachers simply dumping the unenjoyable burden of grading on their students, Ching interprets this move as a redistribution of power in the composition classroom wherein students and teachers share the responsibility for feedback. Instead of merely transferring authority from teacher to student, writing groups extend agency across the classroom (Ching 314).

Gere's description of writing groups departs from the current-traditional model of teachers simply transferring knowledge into the minds of students by centering student voices. However, according to Ching, this social-constructivist emphasis on creating communities of peers comes at the expense of any and all teacher authority. Rejecting both the current-traditional and social-constructivist pedagogies, Ching offers a third theoretical approach: dialogism. In this model, students learn from reading and writing alongside both teachers and students (Ching 315).

The various ways in which teachers have incorporated writing groups into the composition classroom reflect the ever-evolving theoretical frameworks around composition theory. In the early 1970s, Peter Elbow and his fellow expressivists advocated for writing groups as a way to enable student writers to find their own unique voices, with the emphasis placed squarely on the writer as an individual. For Elbow, the primary benefit of a writing group is the opportunity to perceive the reception of one's own writing in real time (*Writing Without Teachers* 77). Awareness of how a piece of writing is received empowers the author to then make any necessary adjustments.

In response to Elbow, social constructivists took a different theoretical approach to writing groups. In *Collaborative Learning,* Kenneth Bruffee identified the main goal of collaborative

learning as teaching students to authentically engage in discourse communities. He illustrated the social benefits of writing groups that initiate students into a "community of status equals: peers" and went on to argue that this type of community most closely approximates future writing contexts that students will face (Bruffee 642). In this case, the success of writing instruction depends on a network of individuals working together to create meaning. He also identifies the primacy of dialogue, suggesting that if students are to write better, they must first learn to converse better (Bruffee 640). For Bruffee, the path to improved thinking, and thus writing, starts with improving students' ability to discuss.

While it may seem that Elbow and Bruffee's theoretical approaches are in conflict with one another, Charlotte Thralls asserts that Bakhtin's theories of language present a way to reconcile expressive and social approaches to composition by adopting a collaborative view of authorship as "a blend of individual and social voices" (77). Through collaboration, students can engage in a social context while still retaining power as the author. Thralls directly connects collaboration theory and Bakhtin's dialogism, noting the collaborative partnership that results from every dialogic response to an utterance (68). Thralls argues that composition pedagogy should directly address the inherently collaborative nature of writing because collaborative writing can both help students to see writing as something beyond themselves and allow students to no longer view writing as a "predetermined formula" (76-77).

*Benefits*

Writing groups have many benefits, including helping students to establish positive writer identities, engage in authentic writing contexts, and increase motivation. According to Robert Brooke, "If students become apprentice writers in those roles, they are likely to leave the workshop better able to carry those roles into their lives as members of families and

communities" (139). Additional benefits include the fact that writing groups "(1) understand their rhetorical situation, (2) examine language choice, (3) consider the ethical dimensions of their decisions, and (4) reappraise their group decisions in greater depth" (124). Irene Ward advocates for the implementation of writing groups in classrooms because she emphasizes the value of a timely response (Rogers and Horton 202).

Writing groups can also address many of the difficulties that arise when writing is assigned in schools. School writing not only ignores the social aspect of language, but it also makes the writing task more difficult for students. When they are disconnected from a real audience, students struggle to know what their reader needs to know and therefore fail to find the best ways to articulate that information. Participation in writing groups "ameliorates alienation by reorienting writers toward their readers" (Gere 68). This teaching strategy provides opportunities for students to both respond to others' writing as well as to receive responses to their own writing. There are many types of dialogue at play within writing. Engaging students in these types of dialogue has social benefits, suggesting that this pedagogy is crucial in the development of socially literate citizens (Ward 201).

Loreno et al conducted a three-year study that analyzed secondary students' perceptions of peer review. Although not focused on writing groups specifically, their findings are relevant here. Their findings reveal that the three most beneficial features of their peer review system were (1) anonymity of writers and reviewers, (2) opportunities to review other students' writing, and (3) feedback from multiple readers. Aside from anonymity, these benefits apply to writing groups as well. In writing groups, students have the opportunity to review others' writing and receive feedback from multiple readers, both of which secondary students have identified as beneficial to their improvement as writers.

*Various Approaches*

Peter Elbow claims that writing groups can make writing both easier and better by allowing authors to experience their words through other people (*Writing Without Teachers* 77). In Elbow's model, group members do not provide criticism or suggestions for improvement, but rather narrate their own experiences as a reader for the benefit of the writer. This allows the writers to become aware of the impact of their writing on their audience. Elbow provides a variety of strategies that students might use to respond verbally to writing, but he does not go into detail about how to train students to implement these strategies.

For Bruffee, the main goal of collaborative learning is teaching students to authentically engage in discourse communities. An awareness of the social nature of writing motivates his iteration of writing groups, which actualize sociality in an authentic way, paying special attention to the rhetorical context of their communities. Brooke emphasizes the importance of writing communities in allowing students to have an authentic experience in what they call "a writer's life." Brooke moves beyond Elbow's model of simply reacting to writing and encourages students to respond to their group members by discussing what a writer "could do" as opposed to "should do." Brooke also provides more explanation for teaching students to be successful members of a writing group. He advocates for the teacher both modeling best writing group practices as well as becoming a participant of the writing groups, eventually taking on a peer role, rather than teacher role.

Diana George's research is unique in that it outlines several ways in which writing groups tend to struggle and offers potential solutions to overcome these challenges. George identifies three types of writing groups: task-oriented, leaderless, and dysfunctional. Through careful analysis of successful writing groups, she proposes certain skills and strategies that can be taught

to struggling writing groups, such as requiring students to bring questions to each writing group meeting. Although George presents multiple techniques for overcoming these difficulties, she does not address preventing them in the first place.

*Recent Developments*

Recently, writing groups have shifted to reflect changes in the field of collaboration, prioritizing such concepts as autonomy, creating space for unique voices, and authority negotiation (Coskie et al; Wilder). Abundant research examines the implementation of writing groups at the graduate and doctoral levels, with particular attention being paid to issues of equity and access as well as modifications to support virtual writing groups and digital collaboration (Cui et al; Kinney et al; Kennedy and Howard). In addition, researchers have investigated the benefits of peer response for language learners (Rodas and Colombo; Trang et al).

Keri Franklin's work reveals a connection between social skills and writing group efficacy. By training students to develop social skills, Franklin found that her students' writing groups were much more effective. Leekeenan and White advocate for student choice in terms of topic selection, teaching the importance of listening and modeling, and building a respectful community. Their study reveals that students are able to identify the teacher's strategies employed during writing conferences and suggests that those strategies can then be implemented by students as they conference with their peers.

Wu and Schunn found that student learning improves by both repeated practice and observation of giving and receiving peer feedback. Jay Simmons identifies five types of student responses to their peers' work and suggests that direct instruction can change student response habits. In particular, students need to be taught how to read like writers if they are to provide meaningful feedback to their peers. Kaufhold and Yencken's study directly investigates the

intersection between collaboration theory and dialogic pedagogy. They successfully identify certain positive dialogic strategies that promote continued conversation, such as hedging and suggesting potential norms. They also identified less effective strategies that close down the dialogue, such as insisting on universal norms. These findings leave room for further research as this study does not suggest any methods for teaching the positive strategies or avoiding the negative ones.

*Room for Future Research*

Despite the abundance of scholarship surrounding the intersection of collaboration theory and dialogical theory, there is a need for more development in both the theory and research of writing groups. Although it is common sense that dialogue is central to the learning process of a writing group, relatively few scholars have studied writing groups directly in conjunction with dialogic pedagogy. Much scholarship revolves around the implementation of dialogic pedagogy between teacher and student, but there is a need for more analysis of dialogue among students in relation to their writing.

In addition, while numerous studies examine the efficacy of interventions during the writing group process, very little has been written about the teacher's role in preparing students to participate meaningfully in this type of pedagogy. Ward does suggest that it is the teacher's responsibility to "[train] peer tutors" and continues on to suggest that "some of the comments need to be directed toward gradually developing appropriate critical vocabulary and ways of writing about language" (78). However, if we are to train students to participate meaningfully in writing groups, they require certain skills and knowledge to do so successfully. My research investigates the difference between successful and unsuccessful writing groups, specifically

seeking to identify the skills and knowledge that students draw on in successful writing group discussions.

**Theoretical Framework**

This section will place the theories of dialogic pedagogy and the literature from the field of collaboration studies in conversation with one another. Despite the fact that dialogic pedagogy and collaboration studies both revolve around the social nature of language and meaning making, they have rarely been studied in conjunction. Although they emerged at similar times, Bakhtin's work was unknown in Western culture until collaboration theory was well established (Fecho, *Writing in the Dialogical Classroom* 18). The theoretical framework that follows proposes that writing groups can serve as the intersection of these two fields.

Some points of intersection that will be explored include the flattening of hierarchies, collaboration leading to meaning making, an anticipated audience, and the importance of context and multiple perspectives. Two implications that will be explored here are first, students must be given the opportunity to respond to writing in order to improve their understanding and second, in order to socially construct meaning, students must learn to negotiate between the roles of speaker and listener. As such, the points of intersection are divided into two major categories: (1) understanding and response and (2) the roles of speaker and listener. Both Bakhtin's work and that of collaboration theory have significant implications for the ways in which we teach students to discuss writing.

My project rests on the assertion that writing groups are inherently rhetorical in nature and explores the function of writing groups as rhetorical revision of expressivist writing. Drawing on Bakhtin's explanation of the relationship between understanding and response and collaboration theory's notion of socially constructed meaning, I suggest that the benefit of

writing groups is providing students the opportunity to improve their writing by giving them practice responding to writing.

*Dialogic Pedagogy*

Mikhail Bakhtin, both a philosopher and scholar in the twentieth century, concluded that language is context-dependent and meaning evolves from dialogue. Bakhtin's theories have been adopted by education researchers to create dialogic pedagogy, which provides students with "greater control over the content and flow of discourse and greater agency in the construction of their knowledge and understanding" (Parr and Wilkinson 217). Dialogic pedagogy allows for meaning to be created through dialogue between learners as they enter into a cycle of speaking, understanding, and responding.

*Collaboration Theory*

Similar to dialogical theories, collaboration theory, a movement that gained momentum in the 1980s, positions understanding as something that happens between individuals and knowledge as something that is socially constructed. Initially led by theorists such as Peter Elbow and Donald Murray, this transition called for a flattening of hierarchies among students and teachers. By recalibrating the power dynamic, teachers can empower students to access and utilize their unique voices to express themselves authentically, rather than conforming to the teacher's prescribed notions of 'good writing.' As social theories of knowledge emerged, so did interest in discourse communities (Ede and Lunsford 108). According to this approach, "writing is socially constructed because it both reflects and shapes thinking" (Clark 14).

Seen as a direct response to the current-traditional approach, which valued correctness and adhering to established rules, this radical shift in the field of composition studies had significant implications for classroom practice, as synthesized by Ward and Gere. Because

social-epistemic learning locates knowledge in conversation, rather than the mind, instruction has shifted "to provide the opportunity for students to talk—to engage in these knowledge-producing and maintaining conversations" (Ward 67). This so-called social turn was seen as a departure from Elbow and his contemporary expressivists' author-centric view of writing that had dominated the field for decades.

While the tendency toward social-constructivism appeared to distance the field of composition studies from its earlier expressivist, author-centric focus, Fishman and McCarthy present a compelling argument that collaborative learning can achieve social-constructivist goals in an expressivist environment. By placing students in conversation with one another, teachers can assist them in engaging in dialogue in order to better understand their own writing. As Bob Fecho notes, "when given time to explore ideas and make meaning through writing, students develop a more grounded and complex understanding of themselves as learners" (*Writing in the Dialogical Classroom* 21). This process allows for improvement of not only the writing, but the student author as well. Collaboration theory prioritizes the development of skills that empower students to successfully interact with one another and the world around them in order to make meaning throughout their lives.

*Rhetoric*

Rhetors draw upon their understanding of the interplay between speaker, audience, and subject to express themselves successfully (Clark 8) From its inception and throughout its various iterations over the centuries, rhetoric has consistently emphasized process over product, prioritizing the development of skills over acquiring knowledge (Corbett 28). One of the most vital skills a student of rhetoric can develop is an awareness of audience and the ability to meet its needs, whether it be an invoked or imagined audience (Corbett 30; Lunsford 21). Viewing

writing as a rhetorical act, students will learn to evaluate a text's effectiveness in terms of its intended audience and purpose (Roozen 18). Experienced writers view revision as "a primary means of developing, elaborating, and shaping the intended meaning of a text" (Bamberg and Clark 88). For James Berlin, rhetoric is not one approach to writing instruction—rather, rhetoric underlies everything. All writers make rhetorical choices, whether they are aware of it or not, but when students are directly instructed on the rhetorical nature of writing, they can become aware of the needs of their audience and make "informed, productive decisions" (Roozen 17-19).

Category 1: Understanding and Response

A key point of intersection for dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory is the relationship between understanding and response. Bakhtin's work describes understanding as an active process that "assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system" and "establishes a series of complex inter-relationships" ("Discourse in the Novel" 282). Bakhtin focuses on one element of understanding that is often overlooked: response. He suggests that response "creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response" ("Discourse in the Novel" 282). Within this framework, understanding is not defined as response, but response is what makes understanding possible.

*Collaboration Leading to Meaning Making*

Collaboration theory would suggest that participation in writing groups is one way that the improvement of student writers can happen. Donald Murray, a process theorist, describes this pattern: "The community of writers instinctively understands that each piece of writing is trying to work its way toward a meaning. The community wants to help the piece of writing find its

own meaning" (15). When students collaborate to discuss their own writing, it is their responses that give life to the meaning of the text. Bakhtin pushes this idea further, however.

If students are to understand writing— that is, to understand how specific rhetorical choices can affect the overall impact of a text, they must be provided opportunities to both seek and provide responses. Bakhtin claims that understanding "comes to fruition only" in the response ("Discourse in the Novel" 282). To Bakhtin, the understanding is not merely connected to, or the result of response —it comes to exist within the response. In the response, understanding is both developed and expressed. In other words, understanding cannot occur without response. Writing groups are a useful strategy in providing students with many opportunities to respond, and therefore, understand.

One possible explanation for failed writing groups is the lack of a genuine response. When students do not respond to a piece of writing, or they do not respond meaningfully, understanding and response are not engaged. If students share their writing but their peers do not respond to what they hear, no one's understanding is improved. Simply assigning students to talk about their writing does not mean that it will be effective. Gere suggests that

> participants in collaborative groups learn when they challenge one another with questions, when they use the evidence and information available to them, when they develop relationships among issues, when they evaluate their own thinking. In other words, they learn when they assume that knowledge is something they can help create rather than something to be received whole from someone else. (69)

Thus, we can see that writing groups can provide learning experiences, but only when students are empowered to participate in higher level thinking such as evaluation or criticism. According to Gere, this happens when they recognize their own role as makers of meaning.

Knowledge as being socially constructed is one of the central tenets of collaboration theory. Writing groups are an example of that process unfolding in an external way. By observing writing groups, one can hear meaning being made as students listen to and respond to

one another. "Understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition one another; one is impossible without the other" ("The Dialogic Imagination" 282). The student writer's understanding of her own work is shaped by her partner's response. As Bakhtin would suggest, students create knowledge together in their responses by articulating their experiences as both author and audience. When students learn to recognize how their writing is received by others and participate in the negotiation of that meaning by engaging in the work of revision, their understanding is developed. This includes an understanding of what their own writing means to others as well as an understanding of how to adapt their writing to better accomplish their writing goals.

*An Anticipated Audience*

In addition to response shaping understanding, dialogic theory also acknowledges that language is shaped by the anticipation of a response. Even in the context of the written word, all language anticipates a response. Bakhtin explains, "The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction" ("The Dialogic Imagination" 280). If all language is situated toward an answer, effective writing pedagogy must incorporate response to aid understanding.

Unfortunately, writing instruction is an area where the significance of response is often diminished. School writing tends to be an isolating experience for students, which may explain why it is dreaded by so many. By placing students in writing groups, teachers can provide opportunities for students to both respond to others' writing as well as to receive responses to their own writing.

This collaboration allows students to overcome the alienation that occurs when school writing blatantly ignores the social nature of language. For Francine Hardaway, this process also "teaches [students] the notion of audience" (578). When students have the immediate experience of an actively engaged audience, they feel "an excitement-plus-support that is exhilarating and leads [them] to find unexpected words and power" (Elbow, *Writing With Power* 184). As Bakhtin suggests, all language is oriented toward a response, and writing groups provide a target toward which students can orient their language and anticipate a response. However, this does not always happen. Collaboration *can* reduce alienation, but only when students actually engage with the texts and with each other.

Category 2: The Roles of Speaker and Listener

In addition to alternating between understanding and response, students must also learn to negotiate between the alternate roles of speaker and listener in order to effectively participate in writing groups. For both Bakhtin and collaboration theorists, meaning is made in the dialogue. As students negotiate between these roles, they leave room for one another to create new meaning. Bakhtin clarifies the role of speaker and listener in making meaning: "The speaker ends his utterance in order to relinquish the floor to the other or to make room for the other's active responsive understanding" ("The Problem of Speech Genres" 71). Thus, for the speaker and listener to effectively communicate, they must make room for each other's roles. This negotiation may not come naturally for students. Those who struggle to participate meaningfully in writing groups may require more scaffolding to understand the different ways in which a listener can become a speaker.

Successful writing groups depend on intentional endings of utterances, as described by Bakhtin. It is not simply happenstance that a response occurs after an utterance has ended:

Bakhtin argues that a speaker ends his utterance "in order to" allow for a response to occur. In the course of normal conversation, individuals shift between speaking and listening subconsciously. However, Bakhtin's description of active understanding demands a more purposeful approach. Rather than passively following the natural ebbs and flows of conversation, in order to engage with understanding and response, one must consciously transition to the role of listener in order to make room for a response. The conscious transition occurs when students expect a response from their peers; they deliberately end their speaking in order to accommodate the voice of another.

Similarly, collaboration theory also acknowledges the significance of expecting a response. Gere explains that in Bruffee's peer criticism model, "the focus of the dialogic interaction now is more clearly on communicating with concrete others, most notably classroom peers who one expects to respond and to whom one will respond" (178). Thus, writing groups can become both an externalization of Bakhtin's understanding and response, as well as provide opportunities to practice shifting between the roles of speaker and listener.

An important point to note is what a writing group participant expects out of his reader's response. To Bakhtin, "He does not expect passive understanding that, so to speak, only duplicates his own idea in someone else's mind. Rather, he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth" ("The Problem of Speech Genres" 69). As such, writing groups must be more than just tools for consensus building or opportunities to give compliments, but they are grounds for knowledge making through a variety of responses. According to dialogic theory, active understanding occurs when an individual expects more than simple affirmations but expects to engage in a negotiation of meaning. Establishing those expectations can shape the types of response received. Collaboration theory supports this notion:

"Only through a process of dialogue, negotiation, and consensus building does knowledge come about. One can also say, then, that all knowledge is dialogic, or at least that it is a product of dialogism" (Ward 51). Because the overall goal is increased understanding, we can see the significance of empowering students to engage in the negotiation of meaning as they discuss in writing groups.

In this sense, it is just as important to train students in identifying and conveying their expectations as it is their responses. When writing groups are ineffective, it may be a result of misaligned expectations. When students do not anticipate a genuine response to their writing, the language falls flat.

*The Importance of Context*

The centrality of context for writing groups is another point of intersection for dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory. Both theories recognize the fact that all language is situated within a context, and that successful communication depends on an accurate understanding of that context.

The various implementations of writing groups throughout recent decades suggests a variety of purposes and contexts for the practice. Each iteration of writing groups reveals the underlying theoretical premise of the practitioner. Elbow, an expressivist, claims that writing groups can make writing both easier and better by allowing authors to experience their words through other people (*Writing Without Teachers* 77). For Bruffee, a social constructivist, the function of a writing group is to provide a social context for student writers. Thus, the procedures of the groups reflect that purpose. He explains, "What students do when working collaboratively on their writing is not write or edit or, least of all, read proof. What they do is converse" (Bruffee 72). Bruffee's writing groups clearly value the role of discourse in a writing classroom. Ward's

analysis of Bruffee's approach identifies that "this pedagogy engages students in multiple and various rhetorical situations, allowing students a great deal of practice attempting to communicate meaning to others as well as providing a great deal of feedback" (178).

*Multiple Perspectives*

Students benefit greatly from collaborating with several peers because they begin to see their own words from multiple unique perspectives. As Bakhtin notes, "there are no 'neutral' words" ("The Dialogic Imagination" 293). The non-neutrality of language can become apparent to students when they engage with a variety of peers in a variety of writing contexts to discuss their writing. They will come to realize that not only do words have their own "taste," as Bakhtin describes it, but that each of their peers may have a different reaction to or interpretation of that taste ("The Dialogic Imagination" 293). Writing group participants benefit greatly from "repeated attention to the effect of their words and topics on other people" (Brooke 12). This suggests that writing groups cannot be a one-time classroom practice. Students need repeated opportunities to learn the language of writing groups in order to obtain the maximum benefit for this pedagogy.

*Flattening of Hierarchies*

My research reveals a stark contrast between those students who recognize the importance of audience and purpose in their writing and those who do not. The students who view writing as a rhetorical endeavor naturally value the social aspect of making meaning through writing group discussions. The role of peers in a writing group is significant to collaboration theorists in flattening the hierarchy in the classroom because it requires more of the students and decentralizes the teacher (Hawkins 637). Peers provide the opportunity for writers to recognize the gap between a text's intended effect and its actual effect. Gere describes what

this might look like: "The peer who says 'I don't understand' establishes—more powerfully than any theory, instructor's exhortation, or written comment can—the 'otherness' of the audience and pushes writers to respond to this otherness by searching for more effective ways to convey ideas" (68). In this example, we see the importance of context. The student writer identifies the weakness of her writing when her partner responds. By seeing her writing in a new context, she approaches the writing in a new way. The social nature of meaning comes more naturally to those students whose classes are rhetorically based. Writing groups can mitigate a common problem in writing instruction: too often, students "abandon their own voices" to write what they imagine their teachers want them to say (Macklin 90). As Fecho and Botzakis note, the authoritative voice does matter, but not more so than the voices of individuals (551).

Collaboration theory also identifies a crucial connection between thought and conversation; when students learn to converse better, they learn to think better (Bruffee 640). Bakhtin also addresses this very notion when he acknowledges the complexity that surrounds language, describing a "Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages" that occurs with all social dialogue ("The Dialogic Imagination" 278). Bakhtin recognizes the complex nature of language and the fact that each utterance is inherently connected with the social context in which it resides. Thus, both dialogic theory and collaboration theory recognize the connection between thought and dialogue. Improved dialogue leads to improved thinking. Therefore, in the context of writing groups, not only do students make meaning about their pieces of writing in their discussions, but this dialogue allows for improved thinking. When students examine their own and others' work and then engage in dialogue about that work, they are empowered to take action to create change (Odell 19; Carnell 36).Writing groups, therefore, benefit both the writing and the student writer. This explains the tendency for expressivist teachers to favor collaborative

practices such as writing groups, because "[f]or expressivist teachers, the education of the writer is the central problem" (Burnham and Powell 113). While the quality of the writing that is produced matters, it is secondary to the development of the writer herself.

To achieve successful writing groups, one must recognize the complexity of communication. Any utterance, spoken or written, draws on previous utterances as well as makes way for future utterances to occur. In this sense, all writing is collaborative (Thralls 64). LeFevre suggests that even when writers invent independently, they do so guided by an imagined audience (34). "Thus, meanings do not reside fully in the words of the text nor in the unarticulated minds but only in the dynamic relation of writer, reader, and text" (Bazerman 22). The complexity of language explains, in part, why writing groups may fail. Bakhtin's work illustrates just how fraught the speaker's task is: "The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener's apperceptive background" ("The Dialogic Imagination" 282). It is not enough to merely construct an utterance; the speaker must do so with the listener's background in mind. When writing groups fail, it is due to a breakdown in this process. When the speaker is unaware of or unwilling to communicate in 'alien territory,' so to speak, she is unable to collaborate with her group. In the writing classroom, students need to dialogue with one another because they "are trying to construct texts which simultaneously express their selves and relate to other selves, within or without" (Mirtz 172).

Flanigan and Menendez argue that student revision requires two concurrent tasks that novice writers need to master: "to discover what and how the text means to a reader and to measure this meaning against their intentions" (257). These tasks are rhetorical in nature. Teachers may need to directly model rhetorical skills, as Leekeenan and White found. White's

students noticed her listening strategies and imitated them in their writing groups by taking notes and responding in the same ways that she did during their individual writing conferences (Leekeenan and White 97). George warns that one of the most common barriers in writing groups is that participants tend to read in the wrong way. Rather than reading a text to analyze how it was written, the group members are distracted by the ideas presented and discuss those instead (George 322). This suggests that in order for peers to provide helpful feedback on writing, they must first be taught how to read the writing. Those students who have been inducted into writing communities have also acquired a particular language for talking about writing and have a "repertoire of responding techniques" (David et al 70; Mirtz 86). My research investigates what rhetorical skills and understanding are necessary to achieve successful writing groups.

In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks of dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory intersect when composition teachers provide students with the opportunity to both request and receive meaningful feedback in writing groups. When students participate in understanding and response, they are empowered to improve their own writing. When students learn to negotiate between the roles of speaker and listener, they make room for one another and allow for socially constructed meaning to further enhance their understanding. This type of interaction matters because it can provide students with much more than improved writing. In this process, "people come to know themselves, other people, and something about the concrete world" (Ward 202). By empowering students to not merely evaluate writing, but create meaning together, we arm them with an understanding of their role as meaning-makers in society.

**Methodology**

This study utilized action research which seeks to improve pedagogy and student development by examining one's own practice (Admiraal et al.). Action research is useful in improving learning outcomes because it allows researchers to examine the different student experiences across various learning contexts. I designed and carried out an IRB approved research study with my own students at a suburban high school in central Utah. All of my students participated in the writing group discussion and reflection, as this was part of established classroom practice and additional consent was not required. In this article, I report on data collected from my own secondary students in May 2023.

Participants and Instructional Context

The students included in the research study were 11th and 12th grade students in a predominantly white, suburban/rural community. The students involved were enrolled in either AP Language and Composition or English 12 (the general education course offered to 12th grade students). Both student populations had worked in writing groups periodically over the course of the school year, participating in roughly 5-6 discussions. I designed each writing group to have 4-5 members of varying abilities. While the intent was to maintain the same writing groups throughout the year, the realities of class changes and frequent absences meant that groups were rearranged often. Because the participating students were in different classes and working on different writing assignments, the context of each will be explained below.

*AP Language and Composition*

I studied 38 students' experiences with writing groups from two sections of AP Language and Composition. In this setting, students were tasked with working in writing groups to revise a piece of personal writing to practice a variety of revision techniques. Near the end of the school

year, I assigned students to choose any previous journal entry from the entire school year to revise. The journal entries were on a wide variety of topics in various genres.

Because the purpose of this assignment was to practice various revision strategies, I required students to make specific types of revisions and make comments explaining what revisions were made and why. Students were acutely aware of their audience for this assignment because they were required to attach a letter directed to me, the teacher. This "Dear Reader" letter detailed the students' writing experience and what they hoped I, the reader, would pay attention to as I read. Students worked in their writing groups while at various points in the drafting and revising stages of the writing process. Some students had already made significant revisions to their writing, while others were still adding more content to meet the length requirement.

I instructed students to come prepared with questions for their group about their piece of writing. Because the content of an AP Language and Composition class is so rhetorically focused, students had a firm grasp on the idea of writing for a rhetorical purpose. They had been taught that writers make intentional choices to appeal to specific audiences in order to accomplish a specific purpose. These students had worked in writing groups periodically throughout the school year and knew that they could use their writing groups to evaluate whether their writing accomplished its intended purpose by listening to their peers discuss the writing's impact on them as readers. Students prepared 2-3 questions for their peers about their revision choices in order to understand if those choices were effective in accomplishing their intended purpose.

*English 12*

I studied 58 students' experiences with writing groups from three sections of English 12. These students had the choice to revise one of two previously written short stories. At the time, students had recently written a story about a significant school memory as well as a story about an experience that was challenging but helped them to grow. In the audio recordings, students refer to these as "school stories" and "growth stories." Each story had been written in a timed setting during class and was not considered a polished piece of writing. Students were required to choose one to revise and resubmit. Audience also played a key role in this assignment because students knew that they would ultimately share these stories with the class; therefore, they were motivated to write stories that would be engaging for their peers.

The purpose of this assignment was to practice conveying emotion, so students were encouraged to add more sensory details to their stories. They were given about 20 minutes in class to revise on their own before meeting in writing groups to help one another. Students were required to write down 3-4 questions to ask their writing groups. Because English 12 students often struggle generating meaningful questions, I provided categories of questions that they might want to ask. These included:

- Your goal (what do you want the reader to feel/understand?)
- Level of detail (where could I add more description?)
- Overall tone/mood
- Powerful first and last lines
- Voice (does it sound like me?)

Data Collection

I recruited student participants for the audio recording portion of this study by providing a verbal and written explanation of the study. Audio recordings of students were limited to writing groups whose participants had parental consent. I collected survey results from all 96 students and recorded group discussions from 5 writing groups, with a total of 21 students being

audio recorded. Data included transcripts of the audio recordings of each group's discussions during the activity totaling 73 typed pages from 1:40:24 hours of audio recording and all 96 students' survey answers.

One group from each class period was selected to be audio recorded. This group was selected because its participants had acquired the necessary parental permissions to participate. All groups followed the same discussion protocol whether they were audio recorded or not. Both the English 12 and AP students were instructed to follow the same writing groups protocol as seen in Figure 1. I developed this protocol based on Peter Elbow's description of writing groups in *Writing Without Teachers*. After the writing group discussions were finished, all students completed a digital survey that asked them to reflect on their experience. The surveys consisted of ten questions listed in Figure 2.

| Table 1 |
| --- |
|       1.  Author reads his/her writing aloud to the group<br>2.      Group members discuss their reactions to the piece of writing while the author does not speak but takes notes. Things to discuss:<br>              a.  What stood out to you?<br>              b.  What did you think/feel during the different sections?<br>              c.  What are the piece's strengths and weaknesses?<br>3.      After the group has all shared their reading experiences, the author asks his/her questions<br>4.      Author asks for any final comments/suggestions.<br>5.      Switch to a new author and repeat |

| Table 2 |
| --- |
|       1.  Did working in a writing group today benefit you as a writer? Why or why not? Be specific.<br>2.      What did your peers help you understand about your writing? How did they help you understand this? |

> 3. Did your perspective about your piece of writing change after hearing from your peers? Why or why not?
> 4. How did you help your group members today? What kinds of feedback did you provide?
> 5. Would you say that your group worked well together? How do you know?
> 6. Can you describe a specific instance when someone else's comment gave you a new idea or helped you think differently?
> 7. In your experience, what is the difference between an effective writing group and an ineffective writing group? Why?
> 8. Finish this sentence: In the past, working with other students to improve my writing has been....
> 9. Finish this sentence: Working in writing groups today was different from previous experiences because....
> 10. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience today?

Data Analysis

The methodological approach that I adopted to analyze data I collected as part of this study was thematic analysis. I drew my methodology from Braun and Clark's "Using thematic analysis in psychology." Braun and Clark identify six phases of thematic analysis, each of which I followed in my research. The phases are as follows:

- Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data
- Phase 2: Generating initial codes
- Phase 3: Searching for themes
- Phase 4: Reviewing themes
- Phase 5: Defining and naming themes
- Phase 6: Producing the report

Each of these phases is explained below.

For Phase 1, I read all of the 96 survey responses and transcribed the 5 audio recordings. I paid attention to repeated ideas but did not generate any codes at this stage. After reading through all the data carefully, I moved onto Phase 2. In this phase I brainstormed as many codes as possible. I initially came up with 77 potential codes for my data set. I knew that this was an unrealistic amount, so I narrowed my focus to 17 codes that seemed most prevalent and

significant to my topic. I finished Phase 2 by coding all the survey results as well as the audio transcripts for the 17 codes. A codebook is provided as an appendix.

In Phase 3, I reviewed the coded data and identified themes. I saw how different codes overlapped and informed one another. Based on the patterns that I saw, I identified six overall themes across the data set. In Phase 4, I narrowed my focus to four themes that most clearly resonated within the theoretical framework previously established. Once I had identified the four themes to focus on, I was ready to define and name those themes in Phase 5. These themes are:

1. Ideas for revising writing come from hearing multiple perspectives.
2. Added understanding of one's writing can come from hearing peers articulate how the writing affected them.
3. Listening attentively is crucial for engaging in meaningful dialogue.
4. Switching roles between listener and speaker allows writers to perceive the gap between intended and actual effect of their writing.

Each of these themes is inherently connected to the Bakhtinian and collaboration theory principles outlined above. Themes 1 and 2 reveal the importance of understanding and response, while themes 3 and 4 suggest the necessity of switching between speaker and listener.

The last phase will be included in the next chapter, which is an academic article length report of my research study. I provide a brief introduction and theoretical framework before reviewing the methodology and context of my study. Then, I analyze the findings and implications of my research.

**CHAPTER 2: ARTICLE**
**The Role of Rhetoric in Writing Groups**

*"In a normal English class, [writing groups are] not as helpful, because a lot of students don't really care about improving theirs or their peers' writing."* This observation, written in a survey response by Brock, a twelfth grade ELA student, occurred after participating in writing groups over the course of two years: first as a junior in AP Language and Composition, and second as a senior in English 12, the general education class offered to seniors. Brock's reflection reveals a disparity in his writing group experiences, illustrating the fact that when it comes to this pedagogy, class context matters.

Writing groups situate student authors in groups of peers, in which they practice responding to and revising writing together, participating in meaning making communities, and flattening the student-instructor hierarchy (Elbow; Gere). These groups offer students the opportunity to receive feedback from an immediate, real audience (Gere). This activates understanding and response, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin, which allows for both improved thinking and improved writing (Bruffee). As such, writing groups are a powerful tool to not only improve writing skills, but to improve writers themselves. As introduced in Peter Elbow's "Writing Without Teachers," writing groups are a pedagogical approach for expressivist writing. However, little research has been done on the rhetorical approach that students utilize with this strategy.

Rhetors draw upon their understanding of the interplay between speaker, audience, and subject to express themselves successfully (Clark 8) From its inception and throughout its various iterations over the centuries, rhetoric has consistently emphasized process over product, prioritizing the development of skills over acquiring knowledge (Corbett 28). One of the most vital skills a student of rhetoric can develop is an awareness of audience and the ability to meet

its needs, whether it be an invoked or imagined audience (Corbett 30; Lunsford 21). Viewing writing as a rhetorical act, students will learn to evaluate a text's effectiveness in terms of its intended audience and purpose (Roozen 18). Experienced writers view revision as "a primary means of developing, elaborating, and shaping the intended meaning of a text" (Bamberg and Clark 88). All writers make rhetorical choices, whether they are aware of it or not, but when students are directly instructed on the rhetorical nature of writing, they can become aware of the needs of their audience and make "informed, productive decisions" (Roozen 17-19).

The application of dialogical and collaborative theories offers numerous potential benefits to the practice of writing groups. Because all language anticipates a response, writing groups provide students with the opportunity to externalize a process that otherwise occurs internally: assessing a rhetorical situation, making intentional choices to accomplish an intended purpose, and evaluating the effectiveness of those choices. When students participate in writing groups, the theories of dialogism and collaboration intersect as students use language to socially construct meaning.

In this article, I report findings from an action research study in which I explored how secondary students employ both rhetorical understanding and skills during participation in writing groups in five sections of two different ELA courses. Rhetorical understanding is defined here as an awareness of the rhetorical situation each student is writing in, including concepts such as audience, purpose, and occasion. Rhetorical skills are the specific writing techniques or strategies that students use to accomplish intended purposes, such as organization, tone, and figurative language.

Drawing on recorded small group conversations and student reflections, I consider how secondary students' rhetorical approach to writing groups allows them to collaboratively make

meaning and improve their writing. The following research question guided my work: *What rhetorical skills and understanding are necessary for meaningful participation in writing groups?* In this context, meaningful participation is defined as productive discussions wherein comments build on one another as students create meaning and generate new ideas together. This was evaluated by the students themselves in their written reflections as well as my analysis of the recorded group discussions. This study revealed that students who have an awareness of the rhetorical situation as well as skills such as responding and questioning are better able to participate meaningfully in writing groups.

**Theoretical Framework**

My project rests on the assertion that writing groups are inherently rhetorical in nature and explores the function of writing groups as rhetorical revision of expressivist writing. Drawing on Bakhtin's explanation of the relationship between understanding and response and collaboration theory's notion of socially constructed meaning, I suggest that the benefit of writing groups is providing students the opportunity to improve their writing by giving them practice responding to writing.

A key point of intersection for dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory is the relationship between understanding and response. Bakhtin suggests that response "creates the ground for understanding, it prepares the ground for an active and engaged understanding. Understanding comes to fruition only in the response" ("Discourse in the Novel" 282). Within this framework, understanding is not defined as response, but response is what makes understanding possible.

In a writing group, the student writer's understanding of her own work is shaped by her peers' response. As Bakhtin would suggest, students create knowledge together in their

responses by articulating their experiences as both author and audience. When students learn to recognize how their writing is received by others and participate in the negotiation of that meaning by engaging in the work of revision, their understanding is developed (Bruffee; Gere). This includes an understanding of what their own writing means to others as well as an understanding of how to adapt their writing to better accomplish their writing goals. However, collaboration in itself does not guarantee learning (Gere 69). Not all responses lead to meaningful understanding. One possible explanation for failed writing groups is the lack of a genuine response.

According to dialogic theory, active understanding occurs when an individual expects more than simple affirmations but expects to engage in a negotiation of meaning (Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres" 69). Establishing those expectations can shape the types of response received. In this sense, it is just as important to train students in identifying and conveying their expectations as it is their responses. When writing groups are ineffective, it may be a result of misaligned expectations. When students do not anticipate a genuine response to their writing, the language falls flat.

The centrality of context for writing groups is another point of intersection for dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory. Both theories recognize the fact that all language is situated within a context, and that successful communication depends on an accurate understanding of that context. Students benefit greatly from collaborating with several peers because they begin to see their own words from multiple unique perspectives. As Bakhtin notes, "there are no 'neutral' words" ("The Dialogic Imagination" 293). The non-neutrality of language can become apparent to students when they engage with a variety of peers in a variety of writing contexts to discuss their writing. They will come to realize that not only do words have their own "taste," as Bakhtin

describes it, but that each of their peers may have a different reaction to or interpretation of that taste ("The Dialogic Imagination" 293). Writing group participants benefit greatly from "repeated attention to the effect of their words and topics on other people" (Brooke 12). This suggests that writing groups cannot be a one-time classroom practice. Students need repeated opportunities to learn the language of writing groups in order to obtain the maximum benefit for this pedagogy.

The theoretical frameworks of dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory intersect when composition teachers provide students with the opportunity to both request and receive meaningful feedback in writing groups. When students participate in understanding and response, they are empowered to improve their own writing. This type of interaction matters because it can provide students with much more than improved writing. In this process, "people come to know themselves, other people, and something about the concrete world" (Ward 202). By empowering students to not merely evaluate writing, but create meaning together, we arm them with an understanding of their role as meaning-makers in society.

**Methodology**

This study utilized action research which seeks to improve pedagogy and student development by examining one's own practice (Admiraal et al.). Action research is useful in improving learning outcomes because it allows researchers to examine the different student experiences across various learning contexts. This study took place in May 2023. In this article, I report on data collected from my own secondary students.

Participants and Instructional Context

Participants were 96 students enrolled in an ELA class at a high school in central Utah. All of the 96 students who participated completed written surveys, while 21 of those students

were audio recorded. The students included in the research study were 11th and 12th grade students in a predominantly white, suburban/rural community. Demographically, these students are representative of the population of a school as a whole. The students involved were enrolled in either AP Language and Composition or English 12, the general education course offered to 12th grade students. Because the participating students were in different classes and working on different writing assignments, the context of each will be explained below.

*AP Language and Composition*

I studied 38 students' experiences with writing groups from two sections of AP Language and Composition. In this setting, students were tasked with working in writing groups to revise a piece of personal writing for the purpose of practicing a variety of revision techniques. This research took place near the end of the school year, and students were asked to choose any previous journal entry from the entire school year to revise. The journal entries were on a wide variety of topics in various genres. Because the purpose of this assignment was to practice various revision strategies, students had specific requirements about types of revisions to make and were expected to make comments explaining what revisions were made and why.

My hope was for students to collaboratively make meaning through dialogue in their writing groups to identify ways to strengthen their own writing and better achieve their rhetorical goals. Students were at various points in the drafting and revising stages of the writing process when they worked with their writing groups. Some students had already made significant revisions to their writing, while others were still adding more content to meet the length requirement. Students were instructed to come prepared with questions for their group about their piece of writing. Because of their significant experience with peer review and requesting feedback throughout the year, I did not provide any scaffolding or specific requirements for the

questions that they would produce. By this point in the school year, these students were naturally curious about their writing and capable of identifying what they wanted their peers to help with. Students prepared 2-3 questions for their peers about their revision choices in order to understand if those choices were effective in accomplishing their intended purpose.

*English 12*

I studied 58 students' experiences with writing groups from three sections of English 12. These students had the choice to revise one of two previously written short stories. Each story had been written in a timed setting during class and was not considered a polished piece of writing. Students were required to choose one to revise and resubmit. The purpose of this assignment was to practice conveying emotion, so students were encouraged to add more sensory details to their stories. They were given about 20 minutes in class to revise on their own before meeting in writing groups to help one another. Students were required to write down 3-4 questions to ask their writing groups. Because English 12 students often struggle generating meaningful questions, I provided categories of questions that they might want to ask as a form of scaffolding. As students were brainstorming questions, I projected on the screen categories of questions such as global, local, organization, tone, etc. For each category, I provided an example of a strong question. As students worked, I walked around the room and checked their work. I helped students change their closed questions to more open-ended questions as needed.

Data Collection

One group from each class period was selected to be audio recorded for the duration of their writing group discussion, totaling 5 writing groups and 21 individual students. The selected groups were comprised of those students who received parental consent to be recorded. Each discussion lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. All groups followed the same discussion protocol

whether they were audio recorded or not. After the writing group discussions were finished, all students completed a survey that asked them to reflect on their experience. Data included transcripts of the audio recordings of each group's discussions during the activity totaling 73 typed pages from 1:40:24 hours of audio recording and all 96 students' survey answers.

All students followed the same writing group protocol (see Table 1) and answered the same survey questions (see Table 2). I developed these procedures based on Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers*, in which he suggests that the most useful role of a peer is to narrate his or her experience as an audience, a process he calls "giving movies of your mind" (85).

| Table 1: Writing Group Protocol |
| --- |
| 1. Author reads his/her writing aloud to the group<br>2. Group members discuss their reactions to the piece of writing while the author does not speak but takes notes. Things to discuss:<br> a. What stood out to you?<br> b. What did you think/feel during the different sections?<br> c. What are the piece's strengths and weaknesses?<br>3. After the group has all shared their reading experiences, the author asks his/her questions.<br>4. Author asks for any final comments/suggestions.<br>5. Switch to a new author and repeat |

| Table 2: Survey Questions |
| --- |
| 1. Did working in a writing group today benefit you as a writer? Why or why not? Be specific.<br>2. What did your peers help you understand about your writing? How did they help you understand this?<br>3. Did your perspective about your piece of writing change after hearing from your peers? Why or why not?<br>4. How did you help your group members today? What kinds of feedback did you provide?<br>5. Would you say that your group worked well together? How do you know?<br>6. Can you describe a specific instance when someone else's comment gave you a new idea or helped you think differently?<br>7. In your experience, what is the difference between an effective writing group and an ineffective writing group? Why? |

8. Finish this sentence: In the past, working with other students to improve my writing has been....
9. Finish this sentence: Working in writing groups today was different from previous experiences because....
10. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience today?

Data Analysis

I employed thematic analysis to identify patterns across the data (Braun and Clark). I first completed a holistic reading of all data. After reading the survey responses and transcribing the audio recordings, I coded the data thematically. Because my work is grounded in dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory, I was particularly interested in themes relating to the use of dialogue. I searched the data for references to talking, responding, asking questions, and generating ideas. I discussed my initial findings with my advisor, and we refined 8 codes included in Appendix A and identified two themes before completing a thematic analysis. The two themes identified were personal reactions and rhetorical understanding.

Once themes were identified for both groups, I compared similarities and differences between the classes and grouped them thematically based on the different outcomes of the writing groups. I examined the different ways that students defined their experiences as successful or meaningful, and noted the references to rhetorical skills and understanding in each group. Upon comparison of the two student populations, I noticed a pattern specific to questioning. So I returned to the audio transcripts and tagged each question as productive or unproductive, based on the amount of responses each question generated.

**Findings**

I found that students who self-identified their writing groups as effective demonstrated both rhetorical skills and understanding that less effective groups lacked. As evaluated by my students' self-assessments in their survey responses as well as my own evaluation of the audio

recordings, I found that the most successful writing groups were those whose members (1) reacted personally to one another's work through both comments and questions and (2) viewed writing as a rhetorical practice.

<u>Personal Reactions: Understanding and Response</u>

Because of the structure of the writing groups, the authors were not allowed to speak immediately after sharing their writing. The peers were instructed to describe their experience hearing the piece of writing and ask any questions that they had before the author was allowed to ask his/her questions to the group. The difference in quality of peer responses was striking. Analysis of the audio recordings revealed that in the AP classes, the writing group members had multiple specific comments and questions after hearing their peers' work. While English 12 students typically responded with brief compliments such as "I liked it" or "Good job," the AP group members genuinely conversed with one another about their personal reactions to the writing. For example, before student author Ian asked any questions about his own writing, this was part of the discussion amongst his peers:

> **Paige:** I would change in conclusion to therefore.
> **Amy:** Yeah, in conclusion just sounds—
> **Cassie:** It's too formal.
> **Dylan:** It sounds like a fifth grader wrote it cuz I wrote that a lot in fifth grade.
> **Cassie:** Yeah so maybe say therefore and then also after you do your example of marching band stuff…maybe between those sentences explain what your expectation of marching band was and stuff…Does that make sense?
> **Ian:** Yeah.
> **Dylan:** What are you trying to accomplish with your band anecdote?
> **Ian:** Oh, just like my parents pushed me into it. That's what I said and then I was too tired to do this. So the expectations that my parents had for me didn't allow me to be happier then—
> **Cassie:** Say that!
> **Dylan:** Then say that!
> **Paige:** Yeah.
> **Ian:** Okay, yeah.

In this exchange it was not just one peer who helped Ian to improve, but it was the social nature of the group that allowed this furthered understanding, thus illustrating the socially constructed nature of this type of learning. As both dialogic pedagogy and collaboration theory would suggest, the dialogue between students is what allowed Ian to develop his thinking and improve his writing. First, Ian's group members reacted to his story. Through their reactions, Ian realized that his anecdote about marching band was not as clear as he had hoped. As his peers questioned him about the purpose of this anecdote, Ian's ideas became more clear. He moved from the idea of being 'pushed' into something to realizing that it was impeding his ability to be happy. This is an example of Bakhtin's understanding and response at work. Because of his groups' response, Ian's understanding was developed, thus enabling him to communicate his message more effectively.

Due to his group's questioning, Ian was able to develop his thinking about his own writing and realize what he actually wanted to say. In his written reflection, Ian noted that with his group's encouragement, he revised his writing to more directly accomplish his intended purpose. This pattern continued across the AP classes. By the time the group members had exhausted their reactions to the piece of writing, often the student authors had no remaining questions about their own work.

In fact, when asked to describe how a group member's comments helped her to think differently, Georgia actually cited questions, rather than comments. She explained, "The questions my teammates asked helped me to understand what I needed to make clear to the reader." Rather than her peers correcting her writing for errors or complimenting what she did well, they asked her questions that helped her to understand what areas needed revision. Collaboration theorists such as Gere note the effectiveness of peer questioning in helping student

writers identify areas for improvement and "more effective ways to convey ideas" (68). The use of questioning as a response to writing positively impacted the quality of the writing group discussion.

When writing groups are not meaningful, it is often because the understanding/response is never activated. The concept that some questions led to more effective discussions than others emerged while coding my data. As demonstrated in Tables 3 and 4, I realized that some questions led to multiple students interacting with one another to respond to each other's comments and collaboratively build new meaning, while other questions led to one word answers only. The audio transcripts revealed that the two populations of students demonstrated a marked difference in the effectiveness of the questions posed in the recorded writing groups. Here I define productive questions as those that generated comments from more than one student and unproductive questions as those that generated comments from only one student. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the difference in questions generated by the two student populations.

Despite the fact that the English 12 students were given more scaffolding while developing questions to ask their writing groups, their questions were most often met with one-word answers, or short answers from just one peer. For example, "Did that like flow?" was answered with a simple "Yes" and then the group moved on. Although the sample size of recorded discussions is small, very rarely did a question from an English 12 student elicit a conversation amongst group members in which multiple students responded to each other, making meaning as they discussed. This pattern appears in the survey results as well. In their survey responses, particularly their answers to questions #1 and #7 in Table 2, the English 12 students frequently identified their experience as not very effective, most often citing a lack of response or short comments as the reason for its ineffectiveness. When students do not respond

to peers' writing, none of the group members benefit. In comparison with the AP writing groups, it is apparent that these students lack the prerequisite rhetorical skills and understanding to activate the understanding and response.

In contrast, the AP Language students asked productive questions—the kinds of questions that initiate understanding and response. Amy, for example, wrote, "They helped me understand finding a purpose to my writing and to better explain the order of ideas. They did this by asking questions about what my thoughts were and by helping me come up with ideas," while Sarah said, "we all were open to the ideas and accepted them and had follow up questions when ideas were brought up to get a little deeper." Both of these survey responses highlight the idea of not just receiving one idea from a peer, but using questioning to activate understanding and response in order to build ideas collaboratively.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the stark contrast in the efficacy of peer questioning between the two different class types. Table 3 reveals that none of the questions asked by AP group members were unproductive, while Table 4 shows just the opposite for English 12. All of the questions posed by peers were unproductive in the senior classes. Also of note is the fact that the seniors asked close-ended questions, rather than the open-ended questions that were modeled for them in the scaffolding, suggesting that they were still unable or unwilling to generate open-ended questions about their own writing. While the AP students did generally ask more productive questions than the English 12 students, it is crucial to note that those productive questions more often came from the peers, not the authors.

| Table 3: Questions from AP Language Students | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Posed by author** | **Posed by peer** |

| **Productive Questions** (generate responses from more than one student) | • Well, were there any like weak spots other than that sentence in the beginning? • I don't know how to end it because like should I just have her walk around forever or? • Any suggestions? • What else? • How do you guys think I can make it more like professional? • I don't know, do you guys have anything? | • What was your like goal, in writing this? • What's the name of your character? How'd you come up with it? • How long is it? • Was there anything else you were looking for? • Can I read it again? • What are you trying to accomplish with your band anecdote? • Can I look at the transition? • Anything else? Any questions, I mean? |
|---|---|---|
| **Unproductive Questions** (generate responses from only one student) | • I was mostly just like, does it make sense? Does it flow? • So mine's just 100% good? • So literally it was just my punctuation and my grammar? | NONE |

| Table 4: Questions from English 12 Students | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Posed by author** | **Posed by peer** |
| **Productive Questions** (generate responses from more than one student) | • Was it too long? • Are there any experiences that should be given? Like from the story that should be giving more given more sensory descriptions? Like, what it felt like? right? • So one of my questions is did you get like a funny tone? • What did the court look like? • What do you think? | NONE |
| **Unproductive Questions** (generate responses from only one student) | • Did that like flow? • Did I like repeat anything too much? • Does it like make sense? • Does that flow good? • Would you guys change anything from it? • Was there a certain mood you felt from the story? • Did it sound like I was talking? | • Where was it? • Did that really happen? • You played volleyball? |

Rhetorical Situation: Context

An understanding of the rhetorical situation was another distinguishing factor between the two student populations. If all writing is rhetorical, as Berlin suggests, then those students who are aware of their writing situation have an advantage over those who do not. The data clearly indicates that my AP students took a decidedly rhetorical approach to writing groups, while my English 12 students did not. In response to survey question 6, Skylar, an AP student, recalled that a member in his group requested more background information at the start of his piece. Skylar realized that this was useful feedback because he had not considered this topic from an outsider's view: "It is something that I understand very well and if my audience doesn't understand it my writing will be very confusing so it is better to include some introductory sentences to give context to what I am saying." Skylar's response demonstrates a complex understanding of the rhetorical nature of writing. He not only recognizes that his writing has an intended purpose and audience, but also that his writing group can help him to identify revision techniques that will enable him to better accomplish that intended purpose.

In real time, Skylar's writing group helped him to recognize that his words fell in 'alien territory,' as Bakhtin would put it. Hearing from multiple perspectives, Skylar understood that his audience required more background information for his piece to be successful. Armed with this understanding, Skylar was then able to respond by revising his writing to include more background information for his reader. The understanding provided by his audience is a crucial prerequisite for effective revision. When Skylar understands why he is writing and whom he is writing for, he is empowered to make intentional changes to best accomplish his purpose.

The benefits of writing groups were more readily apparent to the students who understood the rhetorical nature of writing as evidenced by the survey responses from my AP students. Sadie answered survey question 3 as follows, "Yes, they helped me understand what

my writing was acutlaly [sic] saying, and not what I wanted it to say. It helped me understand and know what I needed to improve to give the message I wanted to give." In response to the same question, Jasmine noted, "At first I didn't really know what the purpose of the story was or anything, but after hearing from them they helped me come up with a title and main theme for my writing, so now I feel like it really says something." This pattern continued across the AP students. They frequently referred to rhetorical concepts of audience, purpose, and situation when citing the benefits of writing groups.

Because the content of an AP Language and Composition class is so rhetorically focused, students had a firm grasp on the idea of writing for a rhetorical purpose. They had been taught that writers make intentional choices to appeal to specific audiences in order to accomplish a specific purpose. These students had worked in writing groups periodically throughout the school year and knew that they could use their writing groups to evaluate whether their writing accomplished its intended purpose by listening to their peers discuss the writing's impact on them as readers.

In contrast, the majority of English 12 students did not demonstrate a rhetorical approach to writing groups. There was virtually no mention of audience in their survey responses, and far fewer students evaluated their experience as being beneficial. In their survey responses, the English 12 students did not position themselves as entering a conversation or recognize that their writing could be perceived differently by others. When asked if participation in writing groups benefited her as a writer, one English 12 student responded, "Not really, their feedback wasn't very helpful and wouldn't have made my story any better." In a later question, she admitted, "We didn't really try that hard to help each other." Based on my research findings, it is clear that those

with an understanding of rhetoric have both increased motivation and capacity to participate in writing groups.

Discussion and Implications

This study examined how students drew on rhetorical skills and knowledge when participating in writing groups. During the discussions, students personally reacted to one another's writing through comments and questions. They also directly referred to the rhetorical situation when evaluating a text's efficacy. Those students who demonstrated greater understanding and skills relating to rhetoric were the same students who saw the benefit of working in writing groups. The students who did not view their writing group experience as beneficial were those who demonstrated a lack of rhetorical understanding or skills. I do not mean to position those students as incapable of meaningful participation. Rather, I argue that rhetorical awareness and skills are crucial for empowering students to succeed in writing groups.

My findings suggest that the task of preparing students for meaningful writing group discussions is more complicated than previously thought. My findings align with a large body of scholarship that illustrates the complex nature of socially constructed meaning. While numerous studies investigate the efficacy of writing groups, such as both Leekeenan and White, and Kaufhold and Yencken's 2021 studies, my research is unique in its identification of rhetorical understanding and skills as the key to successfully achieving social-constructivist goals in an expressivist environment.

In hindsight, it is clear that the difference in the design of the courses themselves played an enormous role in my students' abilities to participate. The AP Language students had significantly more experience with responding to writing, both that of their peers and experts. The audio recordings revealed that the AP students had a mental bank of vocabulary terms to

describe the choices that writers make. They not only asked each other questions about the rhetorical situation, using terms like audience and purpose, but they also discussed rhetorical choices such as organization, tone, diction, and context. In short, these students were able to talk about writing because they knew what to talk about.

Clearly, the rhetorical bent in this course positions these AP students to not only recognize the value in writing groups, but also to participate meaningfully in them. It appears that their experience with analyzing rhetorical choices of professional writers impacts the way that they view their own writing. As evidenced by their survey responses, AP Language and Composition students view their own writing as entering a conversation. They understand that the words they write may be perceived differently than what they had imagined. They have a purpose for what they write and are invested in learning whether or not their writing accomplishes that intended purpose. My English 12 students struggled to engage in genuine conversation because they did not know what to discuss. Without consistent, repeated practice in responding to writing, students will not develop the vocabulary or the skills necessary to participate in writing groups meaningfully.

The findings of this study offer numerous implications for using writing groups in secondary classrooms. It is clear that students will only see the value in writing groups if they have an intended purpose for their piece of writing. Despite the fact that rhetoric has historically been reserved for high achieving students, its basic precepts are accessible and useful to students performing at any level (Roozen 19). Without an understanding of rhetorical context, writing loses its purpose and value. I argue that offering direct instruction on rhetoric as well as implementing scaffolding to help students respond to writing will empower students of any level to engage meaningfully in writing groups.

*Scaffolding the Right Step*

The findings of this study suggest that scaffolding the question generation stage before writing group discussions is not an effective approach. Rather than helping the authors learn how to ask meaningful questions about their own writing, my English 12 students clearly need help knowing how to ask questions of others' writing. This reveals a larger issue: these students struggle to respond to pieces of writing. When a group of seniors listens to their peer read a piece of writing, they do not know how to discuss what they have heard. In contrast, my AP Language students have no problem responding to writing. They often have so many things to say that I have to cut their discussions short in order to move on.

For those who do not know how to respond to what they read, we can provide modeling and a gradual release of responsibility until students are prepared to do so on their own. This practice could be done on any assigned reading for the class before it is applied to student writing. First, a read-aloud strategy from the teacher can provide students with ideas of different ways to respond to what they read. Then, participating in whole class responses followed by small group responses will prepare students to eventually do so on their own.

We can scaffold the writing group process by providing practice and incentives for students to generate more commentary in the response phase. Some ideas from my own practice include: requiring group members to discuss the piece of writing for a certain amount of time before the author is allowed to comment, creating a contest across groups based on the number of productive comments a group makes over the course of a discussion, having the author track the discussion by drawing arrows from one speaker to the next like in a spiderweb discussion, or requiring each student to ask a certain number of questions about the text. Each of these

approaches will elongate the response period, which unlocks the Bakhtinian understanding and response that is so crucial for improvement.

*Writing with Purpose, on Purpose*

We can also help our students to have a clear purpose for their writing. Through direct instruction, we can teach the basics of rhetoric. When students have a grasp of concepts such as situation, purpose, and audience, they are equipped with vocabulary to discuss writing. Not only that, but they will also begin to see the value in writing as they come to recognize its true potential. When we ask students to identify a specific purpose for their writing, they will be forced to care about the piece of writing beyond its point-earning potential in the class.

What might this look like in a secondary ELA classroom? First, it likely necessitates teaching writing genres with actual audiences. When students are tasked with writing for a real audience, it becomes far easier to identify a purpose for the piece of writing. If students were required to name their intended audience and purpose with each piece of writing that they produce, they would be far more likely to view themselves as writers entering a conversation rather than students fulfilling a task.

When students have a sincere desire for their writing to do something, suddenly the process of seeking feedback in a writing group matters. Students will want to know how their writing is received by their peers and will come to view revision as a way to mediate any gaps between intention and reality. Eventually, this process will lead students to not merely improve individual pieces of writing, but to improve themselves as writers. They will begin to make intentional choices as they compose, making considerations of audience and purpose thanks to the feedback they have received in the past. With enough consistent practice, these students can become writers who are sensitive to the rhetorical situation.

*Complications*

There are several limiting factors to this study. First, this project relied on students' self-assessment of their writing groups' effectiveness. It is impossible to ascertain the validity of these student responses. Surely some students were overly positive in their survey responses in an attempt to please the teacher, while others may have been unfairly harsh. There are any number of reasons that students may have had a negative attitude while participating in writing groups on the day of the survey, many of which have nothing to do with the class itself.

Second, student's many years of prior experience with peer review were a confounding variable in this study. Despite direct instruction on the ways that students were supposed to respond in these specific writing groups, many students still expected their peers to correct their writing. Those students who did not identify their experience as effective were disappointed in the nature of their peers' responses. I hypothesize that these students were drawing on previous peer review experiences in which correctness was emphasized over reader experience.

Lastly, my own inclinations toward evaluation complicated this writing group protocol. As seen in Table 1, Step 2c requires students to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their peers' writing. Even though I was consciously constructing an expressivist writing group protocol, I inadvertently moved my students beyond narrating their experiences and required them to assess one another. This tension between response and analysis can explain confusion from the students about what kind of participation was expected in this setting. Clearly for this protocol to work, both students and teacher need to successfully resist the inclination to evaluate and truly engage in an expressivist response wherein audience members simply narrate their experiences.

Conclusion

By helping our students understand the rhetorical nature of writing, we can enable our students' writing to "come alive" as my student Georgia described it. When she realized that her story was going to be heard by real people, her perception of her own writing changed. She wrote in her survey response, "You put your words out into the air and realize that they're going to be heard and noticed by others….that was really incredible." Many struggling students have never had this experience. They do not know that their words can really impact other human beings. With the right scaffolding and preparation, even the most hesitant writers can experience the joy of utilizing words to connect with one another.

| Appendix A: Code Book | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Data that inspired code | Code name | Code definition | Code abbreviation |
| "The questions my teammates asked helped me to understand what I needed to make clear to the reader." | Personal Reactions: Asking Questions | Any reference to questions generating discussion or ideas | PR: AQ |
| "Yes, we all provided ideas and thoughts throughout everyone's piece of writing, that either helped of encourage each other." | Personal Reactions: Making Comments | Words that describe a group member commenting on a peer's work | PR: MC |
| "It could have been a bit better with the feedback because a lot of the time they all just said it was good." | Personal Reactions: Lack of Comments | References to a quiet or shy group where comments are sparse or surface level | PR: LC |
| "I think it did! I really loved my group. Sharing your story with an audience helps you realize it's impact and I think that is really cool. You put your words out into the air and realize that they're going to be heard and noticed by others." | Rhetorical Situation: Effect on Audience | Words or phrases that describe a writer's awareness of his or her audience | RS: EA |
| "It's easier for someone from the outside to see things from a new perspective than someone who wrote it, so I think it just | Rhetorical Situation: | References to the benefit of hearing from multiple peers | RS: MP |

| helped that we were listening to it for the first time." | Multiple Perspectives | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| "In one of my sentences I said that 'We did anything but sleep' and then in the next I said 'and we finally went to sleep.' These sentences don't go good together and someones comment helped me figure out a new idea that sounded good and worked together instead of against each other." | Rhetorical Situation: New Ideas | Any time that new ideas are generated in the group discussion | RS: NI |
| "Yes, I think that when one person had a new idea, the other group members elaborated and grew on that idea to make it something they could work into their writing. We all had different ideas that all helped to writer." | Rhetorical Situation: Building | Description of multiple students making comments that build off of one another to create new ideas | RS: B |
| "it helped me get other people's perspectives and tell me what they picture so then I know if I am portraying the image I want the reader to see" | Rhetorical Situation: Gap Between Intention and Reality | Recognition of students that an intended outcome has not been met yet | RS: GBIR |

Works Cited

Admiraal, Wilfried & Smit, Ben & Zwart, R.. (2014). Models and design principles for teacher

  research. IB Journal of Teaching Practice. 2. 1-6.

Bakhtin, Mikahil M.. *Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, edited by Michael Holquist,

  University of Texas Press, 1981. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

  https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=3443524.

——.. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, edited by Caryl Emerson, and Michael Holquist,

  University of Texas Press, 1987. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,

  https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=3443526.

Bamberg, Betty, and Irene L. Clark. "Revision: Issues and Strategies." *Concepts in Composition:*

  *Theory and Practices in the Teaching of Writing*, by Irene L. Clark, 3 ed., Routledge,

  Taylor & Francis Group, 2019, pp. 87-109.

Bazerman, Charles. "Writing Expresses and Shares Meaning to Be Reconstructed by the

  Reader." *Naming What We Know, Classroom Edition: Threshold Concepts of Writing*

  *Studies*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, Classroom Edition ed.,

  Utah State University Press, 2016, pp. 21-22.

Berlin, James. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class." *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*,

  edited by Edward P. J. Corbett, et al., 4 ed., Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 9-25.

Brooke, Robert. "Invitations to a Writer's Life: Guidelines for Designing Small-Group Writing

  Classes." *Small Groups in Writing Workshops: Invitations to a Writer's Life*, by Robert

  Brooke, et al., National Council of Teachers of English, 1994, pp. 7-30.

Bruffee, Kenneth A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *College English*, vol. 46, no. 7, National Council of Teachers of English, 1984, pp. 635–52, https://doi.org/10.2307/376924.

Burnham, Chris, and Rebecca Powell. "Expressive Pedagogy: Practice/Theory, Theory/Practice." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, edited by Gary Tate, et al., 2 ed., Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 111-127.

Carnell, Eileen. "Dialogue, discussion and feedback – views of secondary school students on how others help their learning." *Feedback For Learning,* edited by Susan Askew, Routledge, 2000, pp. 36-44. *EBSCOhost,* https://search-ebscohost-com.erl.lib.byu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=122654&site=eds-live&scope=site.

Ching, Kory Lawson. "Peer Response in the Composition Classroom: An Alternative Genealogy." *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2007, pp. 303–19. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20176793. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Clark, Irene L. "Invention: Issues and Strategies." *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practices in the Teaching of Writing*, by Irene L. Clark, Third ed., Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019, pp. 52-75.

Clark, Irene L. "Processes: Approaches and Issues." *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practices in the Teaching of Writing*, by Irene L. Clark, 3 ed., Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019, pp. 1-31.

Clark, Irene L., and Betty Bamberg. "Revision: Issues and Strategies." *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practices in the Teaching of Writing*, by Irene L. Clark, Third ed., Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019, pp. 87-109.

Corbett, Edward P.J. "Rhetoric, the Enabling Discipline." *The Writing Teacher's Sourcebook*,

    edited by Edward P. J. Corbett, et al., Fourth ed., Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 26-

    35.

Coskie, Tracy L., et al. "'Why Can't It Be More Like a Book Club?' Re-Visioning Writing

    Groups in the Classroom." *Language Arts*, vol. 99, no. 5, May 2022, pp. 339+. *Gale*

    *Academic*

    *OneFile*,link.gale.com/apps/doc/A748680823/AONE?u=byuprovo&sid=bookmark-

    AONE&xid=75f4550c. Accessed 7 May 2024.

Cui, Wenqi, et al. "Graduate Writing Groups: Evidence-Based Practices for Advanced Graduate

    Writing Support." Writing Center Journal, vol. 40, no. 2, fall 2022, pp. 85+. Gale

    Academic OneFile, dx.doi.org.byu.idm.oclc.org/10.7771/2832-9414.1017. Accessed 7

    May 2024.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing with Power : Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*, Oxford

    University Press, Incorporated, 1998. ProQuest Ebook Central,

    https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/byu/detail.action?docID=241397.

———. *Writing Without Teachers*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Fecho, Bob. *Writing in the Dialogical Classroom: Students and Teachers Responding to the*

    *Texts of Their Lives*. National Council of Teachers of English, 2011.

Fecho, Bob, and Stergios Botzakis. "Feasts of Becoming: Imagining a Literacy Classroom Based

    on Dialogic Beliefs." *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, vol. 50, no. 7, [Wiley,

    International Reading Association], 2007, pp. 548–58,

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/40012339.

Fleming, David. "Rhetoric and Argumentation." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, by Gary

 Tate, et al., edited by Gary Tate, et al., Second ed., Oxford University Press, 2014, pp.

 248-265.

Franklin, Keri. "Thank You for Sharing: Developing Students' Social Skills to Improve Peer

 Writing Conferences." *The English Journal*, vol. 99, no. 5, 2010, pp. 79–84. *JSTOR*,

 http://www.jstor.org/stable/27807198. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Gere, Anne Ruggles. *Writing Groups : History, Theory, and Implications*. Southern Illinois

 University Press, 1987. *EBSCOhost*, https://search-ebscohost-

 com.erl.lib.byu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=960320&site=ehost-

 live&scope=site.

George, Diana. "Working with Peer Groups in the Composition Classroom." *College*

 *Composition and Communication*, vol. 35, no. 3, National Council of Teachers of

 English, 1984, pp. 320–26, https://doi.org/10.2307/357460.

Hardaway, Francine. "What Students Can Do to Take the Burden off You." *College English*, vol.

 36, no. 5, 1975, pp. 577–80. *JSTOR*, https://doi.org/10.2307/374822. Accessed 2 Apr.

 2024.

Kaufhold, K., and D.E. Yencken. "Writing Groups as Dialogic Spaces: Negotiating Multiple

 Normative Perspectives." *Journal of Academic Writing*, vol. 11, no. 1, July 2021, pp. 1-

 15, doi:10.18552/joaw.v11il.748.

Kennedy, Krista, and Rebecca M. Howard. "Collaborative Writing, Print to Digital." *A Guide to*

 *Composition Pedagogies*, by Gary Tate, et al., edited by Gary Tate, et al., Second ed.,

 Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 37-54.

Kinney, Tiffany, et al. "Cultivating Graduate Writing Groups as Communities of Practice: A Call

    to Action for the Writing Center." *Praxis*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2019, pp. 16-24. *Praxis*,

    praxisuwc.com. Accessed 7 May 2024.

Leekeenan, Kira, and Holland White. "Recognition and Respect: Centering Students' Voices

    through Writing Groups." *English Journal*, vol. 110, no. 4, 2021, pp. 92-99. *ProQuest*,

    http://erl.lib.byu.edu/login/?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-

    journals/recognition-respect-centering-students-voices/docview/2501512685/se-

    2?accountid=4488.

LeFevre, Karen Burke. *Invention as a Social Act*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1987.

Lunsford, Andrea A. "1.2 Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences." *Naming What*

    *We Know, Classroom Edition: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, edited by Linda

    Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, Classroom ed., Utah State University Press, 2016,

    pp. 20-21.

Loretto, Adam, et al. "Secondary Students' Perceptions of Peer Review of Writing." *Research in*

    *the Teaching of English*, vol. 51, no. 2, 2016, pp. 134–61. *JSTOR*,

    http://www.jstor.org/stable/24889912. Accessed 18 May 2024.

Macklin, Tialitha. "Compassionate Writing Response: Using Dialogic Feedback to Encourage

    Student Voice in the First-Year Composition Classroom." *Journal of Response to*

    *Writing*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2016.

Mirtz, Ruth. "A Conversation about Small Groups." *Small Groups in Writing Workshops:*

    *Invitations to a Writer's Life*, by Robert Brooke, et al., National Council of Teachers of

    English, 1994, pp. 172-184.

——. "Model Groups and Un-Model Writers: Introducing First- and Second-Year College Students to a Writer's Life." *Small Groups in Writing Workshops: Invitations to a Writer's Life*, by Robert Brooke, et al., National Council of Teachers of English, 1994, pp. 85-111.

Murray, Donald M. "Writing as Process: How Writing Finds Its Own Meaning." *Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition*, edited by Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland, National Council of Teachers of English, 1980, pp. 3-20.

Odell, Lee. "Assessing Thinking: Glimpsing a Mind at Work." *Evaluating Writing: The Role of Teachers' Knowledge about Text, Learning, and Culture*, edited by Charles R. Cooper and Lee Odell, National Council of Teachers of English, 1999, pp. 7-22.

Rodas, Elisabeth L. "Self-managed Peer Writing Groups for the Development of EFL Literacy Practices." *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2021, pp. 1-22. *ERIC*, https://files-eric-ed-gov.byu.idm.oclc.org/fulltext/EJ1288655.pdf. Accessed 7 May 2024.

Rogers, Priscilla S. and Marjorie S. Horton. "Exploring the Value of Face-to-Face Collaborative Writing." *New Visions of Collaborative Writing*, edited by Janis Forman, Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1992, pp. 120-146.

Roozen, Kevin. "1.0 Writing Is a Social and Rhetorical Activity." *Naming What We Know, Classroom Edition: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, Classroom ed., Utah State University Press, 2016, pp. 17-19.

Simmons, Jay. "Responders Are Taught, Not Born." Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy,

vol. 46, no. 8, 2003, pp. 684–93. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40017173.

Accessed 18 May 2024.

Thralls, Charlotte. "Bakhtin, Collaborative Partners, and Published Discourse: A Collaborative

View of Composing." *New Visions of Collaborative Writing*, edited by Janis Forman,

Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1992, pp. 63-81.

Trang Thi Doan Dang, et al. "Vietnamese Secondary Students' Engagement in Correcting Their

EFL Writing: Using Peer Group and Teacher Feedback." Issues in Educational Research,

vol. 32, no. 2, Apr. 2022, pp. 453–72. EBSCOhost,

search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip&db=eft&AN=158506215&s

ite=ehost-live&scope=site.

Ward, Irene. *Literacy, Ideology, and Dialogue: Towards a Dialogic Pedagogy*. SUNY Press,

1994. *EBSCOhost*, https://search-ebscohost-

com.erl.lib.byu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e025xna&AN=6078&site=ehost-

live&scope=site.

Wilder, Sarah. "Another Voice in the Room: Negotiating Authority in Multidisciplinary Writing

Groups." *Written Communication*, vol. 38, no. 2, 2021, pp. 247-277. https://doi-

org.byu.idm.oclc.org/10.1177/0741088320986540. Accessed 7 May 2024.

Wu, Yong and Schunn, Christian D. "The Effects of Providing and Receiving Peer Feedback on

Writing Performance and Learning of Secondary School Students." *American

Educational Research Journal*, vol. 58, no. 3, 2021, pp. 492-526.

https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831220945266