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Locating controversia in collaboration in the composition classroom

Irene P. Faass
Iowa State University

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Locating *controversia* in collaboration in the composition classroom

by

Irene Poesia Faass

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Irene Poesia Faass

has met the requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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LOCATING CONTROVERSY IN COLLABORATION IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

"Once we agree to argue, and to go on arguing, we enter a process whose outcome we cannot determine ahead of time, one in which our purposes are never completely secure."

James Crosswhite

CHAPTER ONE: ARGUMENTATION AND CONTROVERSY

The composition classroom is most often the place where critical thinking skills are discussed and taught, especially in a university setting where these classes are mandatory. The importance of critical thinking skills to the rest of the academic curriculum is not lost on teachers of composition, who must be inventive when coming up with ways to teach these skills amid the myriad basic writing issues that they must also address. Collaboration has recently come to the forefront as a means by which an instructor can encourage critical thinking skills while maintaining an emphasis on the process of composition. Collaboration itself is controversial not only because it seemingly goes against the grain of traditional lecture-style classes, but also because instructors are often concerned with the potential lack of authority and the possibility of conflict inherent in group dynamics. Feminist theories of pedagogy and collaboration provide a useful means of combining negotiation and the social construction of meaning with problem solving to promote collaboration as a useful activity in the composition classroom. All of these theories can be more fully explored by looking at background theories of argumentation and by examining how they reflect current trends in
the composition classroom. A review of classical and modern theories of argumentation, specifically theories of dialogic argument, in tandem with feminist theories of pedagogy, provide a useful framework for locating effective collaboration in the composition classroom.

Recent theories of argumentation have carefully examined the roles of the speaker and the listener and how this interaction leads to decision making. Argumentation, with an emphasis on dialogic, collaborative interaction, necessarily involves more than one person; for this reason the dynamics inherent in the dialogue become significant. Though roles are often defined bilaterally as speaker and hearer, these roles are not necessarily treated as equals in terms of their contribution to the argument itself. Except for the Sophists, whose theory of antilogical argumentation allowed more than one opposing argument, many theorists in argumentation have historically privileged the speaker.

Because feminist theories of argumentation advocate a web-like manner of reasoning (Fulkerson, 203) rather than a traditional linear model, I will attempt to model this holistic style of argument in this paper by taking into account a wide variety of resources dealing with collaboration, the role of the audience in argumentation, feminist pedagogies, and feminist theories of argumentation. In the first chapter of this paper, I will discuss the ways formal argument differs from dialogic argument and the roles that controversia and antilogic play in dialogic argument. In chapter two, I will examine how several theorists have positioned the listener in dialogic argument, how that positioning impacts the outcome of the argument, and how that positioning has changed over time. Following that, I will explore

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1 In written discourse these roles are known as the writer and the reader. The scope of this paper is not broad enough to consider the different implications of written and oral discourse and instead will concentrate on a more generic discourse which incorporates both.
research by several contemporary feminist theorists who have used conflict as a productive aspect of collaboration in composition classrooms in chapter three. Finally, in chapter four, I will look at the pedagogical role *controversia* can play in the collaboration that takes place in a composition classroom.

**Formal argument and dialogic argument**

Modern rhetorical theory has placed the audience in a more significant position than many classical rhetorical theories, and has even anticipated a more collaborative approach to argument. In 1959, with Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s breakthrough *The New Rhetoric*, the audience (or listener) began to receive more attention but was still not considered a major contributor to the outcome of the argument. The feminist rhetoric of the last few decades however, has introduced collaboration and negotiation to modern argumentation theory and made a place for the contribution of the listener. Looking at argumentation as a collaborative enterprise encourages a more antilogical approach using the methodologies of dialogic argument. In order to begin to consider argument as collaborative and fully examine the way that the focus on the contribution of the listener has changed, we must (1) consider the significance of dialogic argument and (2) look at the way that various theorists have historically positioned the listener in this enterprise.

Dialogic argument is distinct from formal argument primarily in the way that the process of argument is conducted. Formal Deductive Logic (FDL) deals primarily with the
traditional notions of argument which, using Toulmin’s terminology, involve making a claim and backing it up with a support and a backing, while Dialogic Argument (DA) refers to a dialogue between two or more people in order to determine the best possible solution. In classical argumentation, the emphasis on Formal Deductive Logic makes it difficult to consider the role of the audience in argumentation. Gorgias’ oratory was celebrated for its persuasiveness and, while it was effective rhetoric, it was not argumentation in its dialogic sense because, while the audience’s response was often favorable, Gorgias did not take this response into consideration when formulating his argument. FDL can be conducted by a single person who has the goal of persuading an audience, while the dynamic, interactive nature of DA requires more than one interlocutor, all of whom must be prepared to change their position to one that more fully considers all positions on the situation.

The goal of dialogic argument is also more fluid than that of Formal (or monological) argument. Traditional models of argumentation often rely on the metaphor of "argument-as-war" when referring to more than one person involved in argumentation. The image of argumentation as purely eristic has been pervasive in the teaching of composition and we, as instructors, have become culturally conditioned to consider argument a monological affair in which there is always a "winner" and a "loser". However, Richard Fulkerson believes that "the meaning of argument that discourse theorists and logicians are interested in . . . has nothing to do with there being two adversaries or with victory. . . argument is any discourse in which a rhetor makes a claim and attempts to support it with further statements.

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2 In Dialogic Argument the claim comes at the end of the argument while in Formal Argument the claim, stated at the beginning, is maintained by the support and backing that follows.
collectively called premises" (210). This brings up a new metaphor, "argument-as-building," in which a rhetor structures an argument so that there is a definite claim, and ample support and backing, and which relies on a warrant that s/he has constructed her/himself. Still, argument is seen as merely persuasive—with the goal of persuading an audience, whether through written or oral discourse, whether individually or with another person.

Instead of merely persuasive rhetoric, the discussion that takes place in dialogic argument can have a variety of goals: inquisitive, problem solving, and, of course, persuasive. Dialogic argument also takes into consideration the kairos or the context in which the argument takes place and because of this, is more difficult to categorize. Any discussion of dialogic argument looks at “arguments in their natural language settings” and as such, considers the “function” and the “purpose” of the argument rather than “as FDL would have it, . . . structure” (Blair and Johnson 44). This hegemonic nature is the most troubling aspect of FDL. The rhetor-centered argumentation that FDL proposes can become an open arena for dialogue among more than one rhetor or a rhetor and her/his audience when it is transformed to DA.

In addition to the fluidity of goals, dialogic argument is characterized by an emphasis on the idea of multiplex ratio disputandi, or many ideas in dispute. The “concept of argument” as “a conversation in which multiple voices ‘struggle toward’ an ever-more-comprehensive understanding of the nature and practice of oratory” (Mendelson 217) is a description of dialogic argument, with the goal being “to continue the dialectical process, to accommodate alternative logoi, to modify (instead of abandon) an initial position, and to (re)formulate new arguments by considering opposing alternatives as potential components in
a more comprehensive claim” (Mendelson 218). Since conversation is a “cooperative interaction” and depends on the “ongoing exchange of inherently interdependent statements and responses,” (Clark 2) then argument should be seen in the same dialogical way. According to Mendelson, the Greek concept of *multiplex ratio disputandi* and the idea that all issues should be argued *in utrumque partem* (both sides of an issue) were “in Cicero’s hands, "transformed into the thoroughly Roman practice of *controversia*” (31, RoF5).

*Controversia*, as practiced by Cicero, closely resembles dialogic argument. Because dialogic argument involves dialogue between two or more interlocutors, it is, as Crosswhite maintains “a communicative process, a process of question and answer, challenge and reply, affirmation and negation - all of which are subclasses of the general category of call and response” (51). This reminds us of Cicero’s *controversia* and the “patterns of assertion and response, defense and revision, the accommodation of one speech (or logos) by another” (Mendelson 196) that Antonius and Crassus engage in in *De Oratore*. Cicero’s text tells us that “in the realm of rhetoric and for the practice of argumentation -- no position is sacrosanct, everything must be argued for there are always two sides, or more, to every question and we should always be prepared *in utrumque partem*, to examine both sides of the case” (197). In order to reach the most prudential decision in any discussion, all sides must be considered; usually it is not a case of one side “winning” over the other side(s) but instead a generative solution is proposed that grows out of the individual ideas that are presented and considered. The best possible solution as an organic growth of argument or discourse between one of more persons inherently requires the participation of both interlocutors.
The notion that argument be conducted for the sake of inquiry rather than for the
eristic notions usually associated with formal deductive argumentation may be surprising.
However, if argumentation is dialogical, indeed, "the practice of a very tenuous hope that
people can settle their conflicts nonviolently, that they can act differently from the way they
otherwise would because they can open themselves to the dialogues that arguments are"
(Crosswhite 47), then argumentation can be constructive. If the aim of argumentation is, as
Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca note, to gain the adherence of other people to an idea, and the
way that this adherence occurs is through dialogue, the response of "other people" whose
adherence we aim to gain promotes inquiry. Crosswhite provides support for "the historical
connection between argumentation and inquiry and knowledge" (45) to distinguish between
argumentation that goes on for scholarly pursuit from the classical idea of argument as
eristic, "monological and disembodied" (40). Richard Fulkerson suggests that we combine
the two metaphors I mentioned earlier, "argument-as-war and argument-as-building" and go
even further and consider "argument-as-partnership." By this, he considers argument "an
interaction in which a rhetor puts forth a claim plus support, for the consideration of listeners,
and the listeners respond as partners" (211). To support this, he cites Aristotle, who
advocates discussion for the sake of inquiry. Certainly we need to realize the value of both
types of argumentation; however, for purposes of scholarly inquiry and problem-solving,
dialogic argumentation takes into account a wider context and the multiple opinions of both
speakers and members of the audience.

Above, I have advanced the claim that dialogic argument is essentially a process of
question and answer leading to inquiry and a process which undeniably involves more than
one interlocutor. Another important aspect of dialogic argument is the attitude that the
interlocutors bring to the discussion. In The New Rhetoric, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca
insist that "by listening to someone we display a willingness to eventually accept his [sic]
point of view" (17). If this is indeed always true, it is especially significant "when there is
some hope that reasoning about a claim with someone can achieve some good" (Crosswhite
96), for example, the mutual resolution of a conflict. If each person comes to the argument
with an attitude of intellectual openness to change her/his position, the chance of reaching
some agreed upon end, or one that satisfies all interlocutors, is more likely. Since multiple
voices are an important aspect of dialogic argument, the listener must be considered one of
these multiple voices.

The questions that I will address in this paper involve the above concepts in relation
to each other and the concepts of feminist pedagogy and collaboration. I am interested in the
relationship between the speaker and listener in dialogical argumentation, the social
construction of meaning and the dialogical way that argumentation leads to inquiry, and the
ways that a feminist and collaborative pedagogy can benefit from the introduction of a
pedagogy based on controversia. In short, I am trying to find out:

• How is the role of audience addressed in classical and modern
  argumentation theory?

• How can this scholarship help us look at controversia as a pedagogical
  approach to collaborative inquiry?

• How can feminist and collaborative pedagogies support conflict and
  controversia in the composition classroom?
These topics are interesting to me both as a scholar and as a composition teacher. In my teaching experience, I have often used collaborative approaches in order to promote dialogue among my students. Uncomfortable with the popular notions of argument as eristic, I hesitate to call what my students are doing argumentation, despite the fact that I encourage substantive conflict and the discussion of controversial subjects. However, I feel that if the students had a better understanding of their own thought processes and the ways that social construction and *controversia* operate within their own dialogues, they might be more likely to see dialogue as beneficial to their learning. I believe that a basic understanding of the social construction of meaning, which I will cover later in this paper, may encourage students to participate in argument for the purposes of inquiry.

As a scholar, I have been dissatisfied with the treatment of audience in rhetorical scholarship. Since Perelman and Olbrecht-Tyteca's landmark *The New Rhetoric*, there has been little written about the role of audience in argumentation. I believe that a participatory role for the audience is historically previewed by both Cicero's notion of *controversia* and the Sophists antilogic. As a feminist, I have searched for ways to reconcile the monological style of argumentation with my own circuitous thinking. My own review of scholarship on feminist theories of argumentation and criticisms of classical argumentation has helped me come to a more inclusive view of argumentation that combines traditional notions of argumentation with feminist theories about negotiation, mediation, and the responsiveness of the audience. This scholarship, combined with the practical application of theories of argumentation, by means of a feminist collaborative pedagogy, to a composition classroom, should provide rewarding avenues for further research.
CHAPTER TWO: OVERVIEW OF ARGUMENTATION THEORY

As I stated earlier, the roles involved in argumentation have long been considered by scholars of rhetorical and argumentation theory. However, the lack of emphasis on the role of the listener as a participant in dialogic argumentation has created a lacuna of research in this area. Classical rhetoricians like Cicero and Protagoras paid attention to the role of the listener and placed her/him in an active, participatory role. However, this role was virtually ignored until Perelman and Olbrecht's-Tyteca bring up the concept of the universal audience in 1958. Along with this renewed emphasis on the listener, modern theorists, especially feminist theorists, have privileged the idea of dialogic argument as provisional and emphasized the participatory role of both the listener and the speaker.

Classical rhetoric

The Sophist Protagoras, whose fragments remain the motive for much scholarly research today, is well known for the *dissoi logoi*, which makes it clear that there is always more than one opinion on any given subject. This point of view inevitably brings into play a kind of argumentation that involves antilogic and requires an open attitude from all interlocutors. However, except for the Sophists who promoted an antilogical type of argumentation, very few theorists have allowed the listener to make a significant contribution
to the argument. When argumentation is used as a means of decision making, not only must the interlocutors have an attitude of openness in order to reach a decision that is the best possible solution, they also cannot rely solely on Gorgias' style of rhetoric or formal deductive logic.

The speaker is the focus of early theorists' conceptions of dialogic argument. Although Aristotle did see argument as dialogic, his theories limited the contribution of the hearer almost as much as in formal argument. Aristotle's *topoi* were designed so that the speaker would always have an arsenal of rebuttals or responses to whatever her/his audience demanded. Instead of considering the audience's responses during the process of argument, the speaker would consider responses that the audience might come up with and have prepared responses that maintain the speaker's initial position. In this way, the audience has no way of contributing to the outcome of the argument. Demosthenes also invokes the opposition in a way that does not give the opposition a voice that was not anticipated by the speaker. Instead of even asking for a response from the audience, Demosthenes will tell them, "Perhaps, however, while agreeing with all that I have said, you are mainly anxious to hear..." (Murphy, 257). Instead of giving the audience a chance to contribute, he is assuming their contribution and even making assumptions about the nature of that contribution. Again, the audience has no voice of its own in this type of argument. The examples I've enumerated and the forthcoming examples demonstrate how argumentation theory, specifically discussions of dialogic argument, historically privilege the speaker.

Aristotle believed that "rhetoric was the art which employed the common knowledge of a particular audience to inform and guide reasoned judgments about matters of public
interest" (Farrell 1). This implies that the audience is an object to be acted upon by the speaker. This view is typical of classical rhetoricians who privilege the speaker in contributing to the outcome of the argument. Of the classical rhetoricians, Cicero\(^3\) is the only one who provides a sense of contribution for the audience. Cicero's *controversia*, if it takes place between equal peers, is more like a collaborative, reasoned inquiry that involves both the speaker and the listener. In this model, conflict, especially substantive conflict, promotes a resolution, or a call to action, among interlocutors. In Cicero's *De Oratore*, the interlocutor's use of turn-taking or "patterns of assertion and response" (Mendelson 196), patterns of identification which establish "cooperative rather than competitive partner[s] in controversy" (206), and the fact that Crassus and Antonius are modeling, for their students, a method of argumentation that will generate "an ever more comprehensive understanding of" the issue at hand (217), provides the listener with the ability to contribute to the outcome of the argument. Cicero models the character of Crassus on himself and the dialogue is structured so that by answering the questions posed to him through this dialectic inquiry, Crassus can serve as a model for the younger men. Cicero maintains that the speaker must be a good example because the audience will take their moral tone from the speaker. This one-

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\(^3\) Certainly, not all of Cicero's works support the role of the audience in the same way that the notion of *controversia* does in *De Oratore*. Indeed, Cicero is more well-known for the monological and eristic arguments of *The Philippics*, for his political views and how he presented them, and for his courtroom oratory. According to Bizzell and Herzberg, "his rhetorical theory collected most of what was known about Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle; impressed it with his own political stamp; and transmitted it both through Quintillian and through his own works, by far the most widely read of any classical treatises up to the Renaissance" (197). Even though Cicero is most known for this monological style of argument (and looked upon by feminist critics in much the same way that Aristotle is), I believe that his contribution of *controversia* to argumentation was a step in the direction of feminist/collaborative argumentation. It is also interesting to note than in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, Bizzell and Herzberg only include an excerpt from *De Oratore* as an example of Cicero's rhetoric.
way influence diffuses the contribution that the listener would have had if Cicero’s *controversia* were a shared enterprise. Although Cicero certainly allows the listener to have more of a say in the outcome of the argument, he is following in the tradition of other classical rhetoricians when he depicts the audience as an object, adopting their moral tone from the speaker.

**Modern rhetoric and the universal audience**

James Crosswhite, in *The Rhetoric of Reason: Writing and the Attractions of Argument*, sees three roles in argumentation: the claimant, who makes a claim and offers reasons in its support; the respondent, who questions the claim, asks for clarification, or challenges it; and the audience, who judges the argument (53). I would like to propose that the latter two be combined in order to make room for a responsive audience. Crosswhite emphasizes the role of the respondent, or the questioner as responsive to, and participating in, the dialogue.

For this reason, I have chosen to look at both the audience and the questioner as one and call that melding of positions a *responsive audience*. A responsive audience maintains the qualities of the audience but can function as a questioner as well, thus contributing to the line of argument. Crosswhite maintains that questioning is rarely considered an essential part of the process of argumentation (84) and has been historically suppressed in logic-based theories of reasoning. He argues that “a proposition is an answer to a question,” (85) a claim
which supports the idea that in argumentative dialogue, it is important to consider the first claim as itself an answer to a (n initial) question. Likewise, Blair and Johnson\(^4\) present Aristotle’s view that “an interlocutor’s contribution can be seen against the background of the question already asked and the answers already given” (45). If it is really the case that the initial claim is, in itself, an answer to an unexpressed question, the roles of claimant, questioner and audience become commingled. In a situation such as this, all interlocutors should be able to have equal contribution to the outcome of the argument.

Modern rhetoric is not much more rewarding in terms of the audience’s contributions to the outcome of the argument. The landmark *The New Rhetoric* by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, claimed to provide a new focus on the audience and much of James Crosswhite’s text focuses on their concept of the universal audience. The emphasis on audience is a result of their belief that the purpose of argumentation is to win the adherence of the audience, not merely to demonstrate that a proposition is true. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s audience is divided into two types, the particular and the universal. In order for a speaker to convince or persuade an audience, either particular or universal, s/he must use arguments that have been formulated with that audience in mind. The particular audience is the community whose adherence the speaker wishes to gain while the universal audience is “an imaginary construct comprising all rational people” to whom purely rational arguments are addressed (Bizzell and Herzberg 1067). The authors emphasize that this universal audience is just the speaker’s idea of what such an audience would be. Although they do give the audience a more prominent position in argumentation, their model is still very speaker-

\(^4\) Blair and Johnson also see in argument the role of the “answerer” (45) who plays much the same role as
centered. A responsive audience would be able to contribute to the line of argument rather than be convinced or persuaded in the way that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca suggest.

Instead of enabling the speaker to contribute part of the outcome of the argument, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca divide the speaker from her/his audience by giving agency to the speaker. Although the needs of the audience are considered by the speaker, their contributions often go unexpressed. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca write that:

> [t]he hearer who listens to arguments not only understands them in his own way, but also creates new arguments of his own, which are usually unexpressed but which nevertheless intervene to modify the final results of the argumentation” (189 italics mine).

Here, they seem to ignore the fact that the respondent’s argument is informed by the arguments of the speaker and thus they are not necessarily “his” but instead they are “theirs,” belonging to both interlocutors in the argument. In fact, since the speaker is sharing more of her/his argument (assuming an oratorical situation, not a one-on-one dialectic) the listener is actually more privileged because s/he has her/his own arguments as well. Instead of leaving these arguments “unexpressed,” the listener should share with the first speaker what her/his argument has caused her/him to think about. With this kind of interchange, true dialectic can take place and both the speaker’s original arguments and the listener’s subsequent arguments can together make up these “final results of the argumentation”. Precisely because there are different interpretations, these should be shared in order to find the best possible solution.

Unfortunately, neither Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca or Crosswhite promote this kind of

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Crosswhite’s questioner.

5 In their text, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca refer to the audience as “hearer,” presumably an individual audience. This “hearer” can also be considered a listener, or the equal of Crosswhite’s “respondent” and my hopeful “responsive audience.”
sharing. Although they have been credited with closing the gap between philosophy and rhetoric by emphasizing the role of the audience, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca still do not allow the audience to contribute to the outcome of the argument. Crosswhite reminds us that “if no one offered claims and counterclaims, there would be no argumentation” (109).

Unfortunately, neither his audience nor Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s is considered the one to offer those claims and, without an audience to offer claims, there truly is no argumentation.

Still other theorists have reviewed Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s concept of the universal audience. Gregory Clark’s *Dialogue, Dialectic, and Conversation: A Social Perspective on the Function of Writing* uses the metaphor of conversation to describe social interaction and discursive exchange in order to see the connections between classical rhetoric and recent discourse theory. This text spends considerable time analyzing the social construction of knowledge as a necessary framework for argumentation, something that I will discuss later in this paper in terms of feminist pedagogy. The fact that knowledge can be socially constructed implies that more than one “speaker” participates in this construction. In fact, Clark claims that “all statements are exposed to the collaborative process of judgment, revision, and redefinition that enables people to construct beliefs and values they can genuinely share” (10). This idea of collaboration and sharing of the construction of beliefs and values is a hopeful sign of the audience’s contribution to the outcome of the argument; however, it falls short later in the text. In his analysis of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s theory, Clark maintains that they believe that all rhetoric is essentially epideictic and the speaker invites “those they address to acknowledge . . . correctness rather than judge it, to be
witnesses to the inherent validity of . . . values rather than collaborators in the process of
determining their validity” (53). According to Clark, this represents a “performative” rather
than a “propositional” statement. This stance imposes the speaker’s belief system rather than
inviting contributions from the audience or interlocutors as a way of collaborating to
construct a reality. He continues with “[t]hat is why rhetoric must present preferences as if
they were consensual: from the perspective of the people who make them, those statements
state the truth and truth compels the consent of reasonable people” (italics mine, 53). Here
again, I am confronted with the question of appearances - why not present preferences that
are consensual? In this passage, Clark’s suggestion echoes the coercive tone of Demosthenes
who anticipates the audience’s argument for them instead of giving them agency.

Perhaps the major reason that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do not allow the
audience to contribute to the outcome of the argument is that they, like Aristotle, see the
audience as an object. In Perelman’s The Idea of Justice and the Problem of Argument, he
defines audience as “all those whom the argument is aimed at” (italics mine, 155) and later
analysis of his works show that the function of the audience is to “receive the argument of the
speaker as presented and react to it.” (Anderson 40) Although their audience is “the place
where the argument is formed and developed” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 19), I do not
see an active contribution to the outcome of the argument. If “it is solely the function of an
audience to receive, evaluate, and make final value judgments as to the acceptability of the
argument” (Anderson 40), how can the audience truly be, as Anderson believes, “an active
participant”? (40). In Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca’s theory, the speaker determines the
“type of audience, particular or universal” and “this decision . . . will determine his [sic]
selection of materials and appeals” (Anderson 41). In this way, they move no further in the concept of audience than Aristotle’s *topoi* which privilege the speaker over the interlocutor. Anderson’s final summary of Perelman’s discussion describes the audience as “determined by the speaker,” “selected by the speaker,” “addressed,” and “appealed to” (42). The language here cannot be ignored. When he compares Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca to Henry W. Johnstone and Maurice Natanson, the language does not change: “persuade,” “toward” (44) “to which appeals are directed” (50) are all used in reference to the audience.

Lisa Ede writes about how the “problematic status of the universal audience invalidates Perelman’s claims that *The New Rhetoric* articulates a truly audience based theory of argumentation” (142). She laments that “this concept, so critical to his theory, seems so dysfunctional in practice” (149). Again, she observes that the audience is given little credit. If, as Ede says, “rationality must be presented as a feature of the audience” (144), Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca have not done so. Instead, their audience is, like Crosswhite’s, one that passes judgment on the argument. The audience that only passes judgment is not responsive, no matter how much authority they are given, and again, they are placed in the role of object. Crosswhite maintains that “[t]he audience is active in any influence assertions and challenges and justifications have in the development of an argument, and in any resolution of conflict. Without the need to influence an audience, and without the responses of the audience at every point, there would be no argumentation” (111). This is problematic for two reasons: first, Crosswhite’s concept of “active” seems very ambiguous and second, there is still no place for the audience to respond if they are there only to pass judgment. If, as Crosswhite claims, the audience “must decide whether and to what degree to accept or refuse the claim”
this is still very little contribution to the outcome of the argument. Rather, the responsive audience will be able to contribute substantively to the argument rather than merely judge whether it is acceptable or not. In Allen Scult’s analysis of Perelman’s universal audience, he concludes that “[t]he sincere rhetor must have a way to assure himself, to the degree possible, that he [sic] is not perverting his ideas by adapting them to a particular audience, and that the particular audience he is addressing is in a position to judge the validity of his arguments” (161). This conclusion seems contradictory - if the speaker must be sure that her/his arguments are not perverted in order to adapt them to a particular audience, why would the audience necessarily have to be in the position to judge the validity of the arguments? In the first case, the speaker is responsible for making sure that the audience is not presented with perverted ideas merely for the purpose of persuasion, an echo of the pejorative sophism. However, putting the audience in a position to judge implies that they determine whether the argument is credible or not, giving them only two answers from which to choose rather than allowing them to contribute to the outcome.

There is some hope for the audience to respond in Perelman’s notion of Pluralism, which suggests an alternative to the authoritarian method of argumentation and maintains the value of the interlocutor or audience contributing to the conversation in a substantial way. “The people [a] statement addresses bring to their judgment of it alternative visions, and they can respond to it with opposing statements of their own that will enact the conflicts in ideology that constitute the community they share” (Clark 57). Also, when Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca refer in The New Rhetoric to argument as “a discussion in which the interlocutors search honestly and without bias for the best solution to a controversial
problem" (37), there is also hope that the audience will be considered worthy of contributing to the argument. These few glimmers of hope are not enough to ensure that the responsive audience is given an opportunity to contribute to the outcome of the argument. Allowing for listener response to an argument is a risk that means the argument will not have a set outcome but rather one that is provisional and dependent upon the contributions of the interlocutors.

**Feminist views of argumentation**

Lisa Ede is not the only feminist theorist to find problems with the hegemonic aspects of classical and modern argumentation theories. Feminist argumentation theories are refreshing because they suggest that the audience be participatory and partially responsible for the outcome of the argument. Catherine Lamb has written many articles in which she advocates feminist approaches to argumentation, especially in the composition classroom and written discourse. In "Beyond Argument in Feminist Composition," she claims that feminism is basically incompatible with monologic argument (13), especially in terms of written argument and suggests that, even in written argument, the speaker "must take the audience into account since it is the audience who supplies the unstated premise" (15). Here, she argues for a form of written argumentation that includes negotiation and mediation, "well established forms of oral discourse" that take into account not only the speaker's position but that of the audience as well (11). In this way, Lamb suggests, argument becomes "a means,
not an end" (11). This type of argumentation is certainly more useful for problem solving and conducting inquiry. Other aspects of feminist theory, the social construction of meaning, and ideas about the stages of learning, will be covered later in this paper.

Richard Fulkerson's review of feminist critiques of traditional argument, cites two standard criticisms feminists have of traditional argumentation: the equity critique and the cognitive/epistemic critique. According to Fulkerson, the equity critique asserts that "by nature, argumentative discourse attempts to change an auditor's viewpoint" (202). However, Fulkerson argues that this critique "simply ignores a good many cooperative rhetorical situations" (205). The cognitive/epistemic critique, according to Fulkerson, asserts that the reasoning of females is "not linear and hierarchical, but web-like, emphasizing context . . . indirect rather than direct, holistic rather than analytic" and rests on values of "caring and connectedness" (203). This critique seems limited as well because it excludes men from these indirect, holistic ways of knowing and Fulkerson claims that his personal experience as a teacher of advanced composition has provided evidence that females are indeed competent, sometimes more so than their male counterparts, in traditional, linear argumentative writing (208). The antilogic evident in these criticisms (and Fulkerson's criticisms of them) demonstrate that argumentation theory cannot be divided simply in terms of gender; in fact, simply because of the provisional nature of feminist discourse, feminists have trouble agreeing on these criticisms of traditional argumentation.

In "Feminist Responses to Argument," Lamb suggests that "argument, like knowledge more generally, is socially constructed" and encourages teachers of composition to encourage students to look at argument as "problem solving rather than a contest" (262). Lamb's
approach of mediation and negotiation suggests a conception of argumentation that allows more possibilities by considering "knowledge as something that people do together rather than something that anyone possesses" (17, cited in Gage's *An Adequate Epistemology for Composition: Classical and Modern Perspectives*). The fact that the goal and the process of argumentation becomes something that is shared by the speaker and the audience is significant.

Lamb also points out that "negotiation and mediation are . . . collaborative, with both parties using the process to identify interests and outcomes they share" (19, italics in the original). The collaborative nature of feminist theory is significant to my own argument as I will demonstrate later in this paper.

**Feminist views of conflict**

In their celebrated article "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of the Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy," Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford explore the concept of the audience of written text. Rather than consider audience as an object (addressed), or as a creation of the speaker (invoked), Ede and Lunsford advocate a synthesis of these two views that assumes a negotiation of meaning among interlocutors (writer and reader). Their view of audience accounts "for a wide and shifting range of roles for both addressed and invoked audiences" (169) and does not ignore the rhetorical situation involved in the relationship between the writer and the audience. This model can be generalized to oral
discourse as well and is refreshing in that it allows that interlocutors to interact with each
other equally and take into account the rhetorical situation.

These two authors collaborate again in the text *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*, which explores the many ways that collaboration has been maligned, especially in academic writing. Their text is hopeful, however, in that it does promote collaboration in academic discourse as a productive means of sharing intellectual
information and pursuing inquiry. This kind of collaboration, as an intellectual pursuit of new
knowledge, necessarily involves more than one contributor and is a cooperative enterprise, as
Crosswhite mentions when he discusses Habermas' claim that "communication that is
motivated by an honest attempt to reach a shared understanding" (58). Looking at substantive
conflict and argumentation as the sharing of ideas and claims, implies that all interlocutors
are contributors to this outcome, no matter how provisional. Since "all statements are
exposed to the collaborative process of judgment, revision, and redefinition that enables
people to construct beliefs and values they can genuinely share" (Clark 10), collaboration
among interlocutors and a willingness to share is necessary in order to reach a consensual
agreement. Claims are "above all invitations to share a particular way of making sense of
something" (Crosswhite 62) and this means that when one asserts something as a claim,
"there is the expectation that someone else can hear the call, that someone else will
understand the claim as a claim." (Crosswhite 55) and that someone else will question or
challenge that claim. In this way argumentation can take place in a collaborative exchange of
ideas, questions, claims, and challenges and all participants have the ability to contribute to
the outcome.
Claiming that conflict is necessary for argumentation, Lamb argues that since "the expressionist pedagogy accompanying an emphasis on developing a personal voice means there is no need for conflict," many feminist composition instructors may deliberately discourage conflict. In fact, as I mentioned above, many feminists see the combination of conflict and feminist theory as inherently contradictory. However, Lamb claims that "[w]ith our history of either ignoring conflict or criticizing others' attempts to respond to it, and our use of women's experience as a source for theorizing, we have not talked much about how it can be feminist to both at times be confrontational and at other times advocate approaches that minimize confrontation" (260). Instead, she advocates "[t]echniques of mediation," "negotiation," and responding that "provide concrete ways to resolve conflict when the goal is no longer winning but finding a solution in a fair way that is acceptable to both sides" (261). Substantive conflict is productive to feminist argumentation precisely because it encourages negotiation, mediation, and, most importantly, a responsive audience.

The feminist theorists above advocate a return to the Sophist ideals of argumentation and have brought collaboration and cooperation to modern argumentation theory. Like Protagoras, who recognized that perception colors a person's response to a situation, we must remember that all participants in an argument can, and should, contribute substantively to its outcome. For this reason, the antilogical approach of collaborative inquiry is a more productive view of dialogic argument. One of the best ways to use argumentation as a means of inquiry is collaboratively. By allowing all participants to contribute, the outcome of the argument becomes not a predetermined “Truth” but rather new and provisional knowledge generated by the participants. There is no single ownership of this outcome but instead it is
the product of the argumentation itself, a product of the contributions of all interlocutors.

Lamb mentions the "open-ended, provisional nature" of thinking which "has become associated with (and prized in) feminist composition" (12). The provisional nature of arguments and the importance of conflict mentioned by these theorists are important aspects of feminist theories of argumentation.

**Argument is provisional**

The outcome of true argumentation, involving both the speaker and the hearer, is never final. Crosswhite maintains that "[t]o make an agreement is to resolve a conflict - in one way, and not in another. Every agreement achieved represents a loss of some possibilities" (106). The provisional aspect of any argument lies in the ability of both interlocutors to come up with new knowledge and even to return to the dialogue at a later time. The "mutual influence of claims and arguments is taken to be an important part of argumentation's ability to make new knowledge, to inquire, and to resolve conflicts" (Crosswhite 98). The argument can never be settled on either side. With agreement as the purpose of conversation or argumentation, a "discourse that challenges existing assumptions", that keeps provisional agreements open to question and revision is permitted" (Chark 8). This process must remain provisional in order to keep ideas or "every version of reality" contributed by the interlocutors, open to revision and refutation (Clark 8). As Crosswhite
reminds us, “the resolution of conflict through argumentation . . . is never final, never complete” (105). What makes the provisionality of argument so important is the fact that the contributions of both interlocutors can be challenged, questioned, accepted or rejected and the outcome becomes a truly collaborative decision. The sense of the provisional encourages collaboration because all interlocutors have the ability to contribute to the outcome of the argument and the opportunity to risk refutation.

This provisional status of arguments is directly related to the substantive conflicts that make up the argumentation. In fact, “the process of conversation that sustains every community is necessarily fueled by conflict” (Clark 58). Clark refers to W. Lance Bennet who says that when conflict is “denied, the rhetoric that sustains a community becomes necessarily . . . repressive, divisive, subversive to collective action and costly in terms of human potential” (55). Instead of denying conflict, the interlocutors must embrace the challenges to their claims as a request for clarification, definition, or explanation7 and the means of reaching an agreement. Regardless of who makes the first claim, argument is primarily “a conflict between speakers engaging in speech acts” (Crosswhite 52). This implies that both interlocutors are involved in resolving the conflict, an important distinction. In light of this emphasis on conflict, several theorists, namely Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca and Crosswhite, refer to the similarities and differences between war and argument. However, because it is based on communication and dialogic, argumentation is not considered to be as violent as war. Crosswhite reminds us that “it is when one is faced with a

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6 This is the job of the responsive audience.

7 Crosswhite defines three types of responses to claims: a call for reason, a call for clarification, and a countercall or counterclaim that conflicts with the original claim and provides antiphony (97).
choice, when a conflict of disclosures, interests, plans must be resolved nonviolently, in language, that argumentation finds its proper place as a genre” (99). Instead of a conflict resolved by means of violence, like war, we must advocate a conflict resolved by language, in which interlocutors use their conflicting claims (and the claims that grow out of those claims) as a means of reaching an understanding. The provisional status of argumentation supports the productive aspect of substantive conflict in argumentation because it allows for those differences to be challenged and does not expect one right answer. Accepting the provisional nature of argumentation almost precludes the acceptance of conflict as an inherent, and productive, aspect of argumentation.

So far, I have examined the contribution of the audience/listener/hearer in classical and modern rhetoric and looked at the ways that conflict and provisionality play a part in allowing this contribution. At this point, it is necessary to examine how the listener’s contribution affects the outcome of the argument or the dialogical interchange. If the audience is given the space to contribute substantively to the argument, that outcome is the product of a collaborative exchange. As noted above, the idea of conflict leading to collaboration is not new; Cicero’s method of controversia uses conflict (or argumentation) as a means of inquiry and discovery. Many feminist theorists and theorists of composition studies see the relationship between substantive conflict in argumentation and teaching argumentative writing as a collaborative interchange. In the next chapter, I will examine some feminist pedagogies and concepts of argumentation as a collaborative enterprise.
CHAPTER THREE: MOVING FROM ARGUMENT TO COLLABORATION: A FEMINIST ARGUMENT

Because the traditional concept of argument is generally aggressive and feminism and composition studies share a tendency to resist aggressive conflict, many feminists hesitate to look at argumentation in a favorable light. However, as I mentioned above, Catherine Lamb and other feminists suggest that provisionality and conflict can be hallmarks of feminist argumentation. In this chapter, I will argue that feminist theories of argumentation, which encourage conflict and provisional stances, provide strong support for the inclusion of collaboration in the composition classroom. In order to support my own argument, I will employ a feminist style of argumentation and draw on the contributions of a variety of theorists, many of whom have been mentioned already in this paper. Theories about social construction, negotiation and mediation, stages of learning and problem solving, and dialogic argument in the classroom will be considered as I look at the productive aspect of conflict in not only argumentation, but collaboration. Since I will consider these contributions threads of an argument, I will be able to weave them together to create a whole, multi-faceted argument in which many voices are represented.

The composition classroom may be the ideal place to promote the productive aspects of conflict. The instructor of a composition classroom can encourage substantive conflict and negotiation in order to help students discover the productive aspects of such dialogue. Otherwise, a teacher may be unprepared “to negotiate the oppressive discourses of racism, sexism, and classism surfacing” in such classrooms. Susan Jarrat and other feminist theorists
have viewed conflict as a positive aspect of communication. Jarrat looks back to the Sophists as models of an antilogical style of argumentation that can be used pedagogically to teach the importance of argument. She complains that some feminist pedagogies “spend too little time helping their students learn how to argue about public issues—making the turn from the personal back out to the public” (121). Instead, we should look at the examples of the sophists and especially Protagoras who maintained that knowledge of rhetoric and argumentation prepared one to be a citizen of her/his democracy. Pedagogically, Jarrat promotes a modification of the expressivist pedagogies of Peter Elbow and Donald Murray in a way that takes into consideration the multiple forms of power reproduced in the classroom (113). In the classroom, this approach makes room for all “respondents” to participate in the search for solutions or new knowledge.

This participatory view of inquiry is integral to many characteristics of feminism that are also characteristics of collaboration. An understanding of the characteristics of feminist pedagogy that inform collaboration is essential to an understanding of the ways that these two pedagogies can benefit from a focus on controversia. Both feminism and collaboration emphasize interrelationships, Bakhtin's dialogism, reciprocity, cooperation, ethnographic

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8 An overview of existing scholarship exploring the relationship between feminist pedagogy and collaboration reveals that it has been fertile ground for researchers. The relationship between feminist methodologies and collaborative research and the benefits of this relationship have been explored by Rebecca Burnett and Helen Rothschild Ewald in "Rabbit Trails, Ephemera and other Stories: Feminist Methodology and Collaborative Research" (1993). The role of collaboration in research can help us in the classroom because when we ask our students to work collaboratively, the group inquiry we ask them to perform is essentially a sort of collaborative research. Not only is the relationship between collaboration and feminist pedagogy evident in studies of collaborative research. Many scholars see the connections between feminism and collaboration in terms of teaching and writing as well as research.
research, and narrative⁹. In addition, feminist pedagogy and collaboration share certain theoretical bases informed by the above characteristics that make it possible for us to view collaborative pedagogy through the lens of feminist pedagogy. The theoretical bases that these two pedagogies share are (1) the social construction of meaning and knowledge; (2) the stages of learning and problem solving; and (3) negotiation. The first of these, the social construction of meaning, accounts for the latter two and therefore merits more discussion.

**Social construction of meaning and knowledge**

The social construction of knowledge and the metaphors inherent in this theory are important aspects of a collaborative approach to the writing classroom. Because it involves the sharing of information for the sake of inquiry, this theory complements dialogic argumentation and helps to develop a way of looking at argumentation as collaborative. Theories of the social construction of meaning look at how various voices and texts are informed by prior voices and texts. According to Bakhtin, "our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of 'our-own-ness,' varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, rework, and re-accentuate" (89). In a collaborative

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⁹ Although collaboration and feminist pedagogy share these characteristics, this is by no means an exhaustive list.
exchange, when two or more people recognize that their knowledge is informed by their own
and other's experiences, they are acknowledging the social construction of meaning. As
collaborators share information, they construct group driven meaning or knowledge.

The idea of group driven meaning is behind Nancy Roundy Blyler and Charlotte
Thralls' description of all writing as "a social process or act" (xi). This social nature of
writing is evidenced in the acknowledgements scholars make of prior contributions by
previous scholars in fields as diverse as engineering, physical education, and linguistics.
Beyond writing, however, collaborative groups can engage in dialogue with each other in
order to get a clearer idea of the issue at hand. In any collaborative experience, Linda Flower
emphasizes, "[i]ndividual meaning is not sui generis, but it is nonetheless a cognitive
construction, created out of prior knowledge in response to the multiple layers of a . . . social,
rhetorical, and cultural context" (Flower 89). In effect, acknowledging social construction of
meaning in composition allows the audience (the writer) to join in the conversation that the
speaker (the writer of the original document) has begun with her/his own writing.

Lamb suggests that "argument, like knowledge more generally, is socially
constructed" and encourages teachers of composition to encourage students to look at
argument as "problem solving rather than a contest" (262). The application of a social
collectionist approach to learning and meaning making provides a solid argument for the
use of a collaborative pedagogy linked to a feminist pedagogy. In fact, traditionally feminist
terms like cooperation, conversation, and dialectic are connotative of "a philosophical
commitment to the social construction of knowledge" according to Susan Miller ("New
Discourse City" WW, 284). By adopting a social constructionist approach in any classroom,
Jone Rymer writes, "we are transforming our pedagogy, [and] overtly professing a social perspective that our knowledge of the world, ourselves, and others is constituted in written and oral conversation within communities" (Thralls & Blyler 180). This approach, an important aspect of feminist pedagogy, is also essential to effective collaboration. In a classroom atmosphere in which conversation and dialogue are encouraged, students can learn about their roles as participants in the many conversations of which they are a part. They can actively play the role of speaker as well as that of responsive listener. According to bell hooks, "all students . . . seem more eager to enter energetically into classroom discussion when they perceive it as pertaining directly to them," (87). Their participation in the dialogue and their understanding of the social construction of meaning helps students to understand their own roles as members of a community or classroom and gives them a sense of agency.

Community is also an important aspect of feminist pedagogy and of collaboration. Community depends upon the social construction of group narratives, knowledge, and meaning. When students feel that they are part of a community, they will be more willing to share with each other in order to come up with group-driven ideas. The idea of a classroom in which both students and the instructor feel that they are all participants in the search for knowledge, "a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute," is a central goal of "the transformative pedagogy" (39) promoted by bell hooks. While encouraging instructors to take on a critical feminist pedagogy, hooks claims that in order to build such a democracy, we must "enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build 'community' in order to create a climate of openness and intellectual rigor" (40). The
community created in such a classroom necessarily thrives on negotiation of difference through substantive conflict and the dialogic interplay this difference brings about.

Social construction is not only important for instructors to understand, but for students as well. Understanding the processes involved in meaning making as well as knowing that they can have agency and power as a part of meaning making is empowering for students. In the same way that, as hooks claims, students are more willing to participate if the discussion relates to them, the information that they learn becomes more relevant if they can apply it to something that they care about. Scholarship in educational psychology looks at various cognitive levels of learning. Since cognition occurs in a social context, understanding a concept to the point that one can synthesize and analyze it becomes a higher level of cognitive activity. Not only do higher levels of cognition lead to more in-depth understanding of concepts and processes and provide students with a sense of agency in relationship to the subject they are learning about, but they encourage students to make their own meaning rather than repeat existing information. Understanding the concept of social construction is critical for students because with this understanding, they will be able to function on a higher cognitive level.

Students who engage actively in the social construction of meaning in collaborative groups are able to participate in their own learning and develop knowledge on their own rather than routinely mimic textbooks or teachers. Instructors can expect students who work collaboratively to answer questions with creative answers that demonstrate a depth and breadth of thinking that will help them with future academic and social endeavors. As hooks claims, "Feminist education for critical consciousness is rooted in the assumption that
knowledge and critical thought done in the classroom should inform our habits of being and ways of living outside the classroom" (hooks 194). Traditional forms of communication popular in academia, such as the idea of the student as a received knower who passes on what s/he hears in tests or written essays, do not promote independent learning. Expecting students to think in such a rote manner is limiting and does not allow them to share their experiences with each other. Mary Belenky criticizes traditional forms of communication and describes a pedagogical style that distinguishes five different levels of knowledge. Constructed knowledge is considered the "highest" of these five levels which include silent, received, subjective, procedural, and constructed. Students who function on the level of constructed knowledge demonstrate an understanding of her/his participatory role in the construction of knowledge. Belenky encourages instructors to be aware of these ways of knowing so that they can come up with activities that challenge their students and perhaps even allow them to reach higher levels of thinking. When students learn to shift from a received position to a subjective position and then learn that they can become a part of the dialogue of knowledge making, they become empowered and eager to be a part of the social construction of meaning.

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Belenky hesitates to call this pedagogical style developmental even though Piaget, Perry, Kohlberg and Gilligan are influences.
Stages of learning and problem solving

As important as it is to understand the social construction of meaning, it is also important to be familiar with theories of stages of learning and problem solving in order to utilize a collaborative approach in the composition classroom. As Belenky noted, instructors should be aware of different levels of thinking exhibited by their students. Students who share an understanding, based on levels of thinking and language, should be able to work well together on collaborative projects. Levels of cognition are closely related to Vygotsky's theories about stages of language learning. Vygotsky writes about the development of social speech in *Thought and Language* (1986) and claims that "the word is a direct expression of the historical nature of human consciousness" (256). This supports the views of social constructionists. Speech itself, according to Vygotsky, begins as thought which is related to word as "not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought" (218). This relationship echoes the way that meaning is created by means of a process of social construction. In Vygotsky's theory, thought becomes "egocentric speech" (226) and then, to communicate with others, develops into "social speech" (233). In order for social speech to take place, interlocutors must share a sense of understanding or a "shared apperception by the persons involved in the dialogue" (Vygotsky 242). Awareness of levels of language and cognition are significant for participants in the social construction of meaning because it depends on communication. If, as Feuerbach says that "the word is a thing . . . that is absolutely impossible for one person, but that becomes a reality for two" (quoted in Vygotsky, 256), the social construction of meaning, and
collaboration, depends on effective communication based on an awareness of levels of language and cognition.

Since communication depends on the shared understanding that students have and their ability to communicate new ideas to each other, students who participate in collaborative learning need to understand "scaffolding" (Bruner 254) or how to build on previously learned information. Scaffolding is a concept of learning that was developed by Jerome Bruner. Describing the way that mothers and children develop speech patterns beyond baby talk, Bruner claims that scaffolding "characterize[s] what the mother provides on her side of the dyad" by concentrating the child's "attention into a manageable domain," providing "models of the expected dialogue" (254). In other words, the mother is able to build on what the child already knows by "extending the situations in which and the functions for which different utterances or vocalizations can be used" (254). It simply makes sense for the mother to utilize what the child already knows and extend that knowledge so that the child will recognize the inter-relatedness of speech. The effect of this kind of "extension," according to Bruner, is that it "widen[s] the range of contexts in which particular kinds of dialogue exchanges occur" (254). In any collaborative exchange, the ability for participants to transcend contextual arenas is important.

When we consider stages of learning and problem solving, gender differences inevitably come into play. The cognitive/epistemic critique of traditional argumentation by feminist argument theorists has been challenged by Richard Fulkerson, as mentioned above. In fact, this critique seems to indicate that males and females have such different ways of knowing and coming to knowledge that, since argumentation styles are so different,
collaboration might be impossible. However, Fulkerson encourages instructors to look beyond gender differences and notes that "[t]he most recent and thorough study of both male and female cognitive development during college identifies four stages of knowing that both males and females tend to go through: absolute knowing, transitional knowing, independent knowing, and contextual knowing" (207, italics mine). Fulkerson also cites Thomas Farrell's view of gender specific modes of argumentation. Farrell concludes, in "The Female and Male Models of Rhetoric" that the more holistic, web-like "female mode" of argumentation is "too complex to be taught" and, in fact, "whoever can write the more complex 'female mode' can also use the simpler male mode effectively when they wish" (Fulkerson, 209). Finally, Fulkerson cites researchers on cognitive development have concluded that "higher stages of development involve the ability to assess evidence, draw inferences, and make qualified commitments in a complex and contingent world—in short, the ability to argue" (213). The ability to argue therefore is not necessarily a gendered enterprise; instead, this ability is linked to cognitive levels of learning and problem solving.  

A collaborative pedagogy must build on the idea that stages of learning make problem solving something that involves collaborative group members in the cooperative processes of building scaffolding, making connections, and socially constructing meaning. As Bruner and Vygotsky's theories demonstrate, students will be more likely to learn information if it is presented in steps that make sense. For example, students do not usually learn about algebra until they have mastered subtraction and addition. Subtraction and addition represent the "given" information and algebra represents the "new information." Soon, as these students begin to move on to higher and higher levels of math, algebra becomes the "given" and more
complex computations become "new." Belenky promotes a teaching philosophy of "connecting with the known and moving on from there" (A-I, 276), which can also be used with collaboration in the composition classroom. If students are able to recognize effective communication by actively participating in it in a collaborative setting, they will be more likely to produce it in individual assignments as well. In addition to theories of the social construction of meaning and stages of learning and problem solving, an instructor who utilizes a collaborative approach to the composition classroom needs to understand theories of negotiation.

Negotiation

Negotiation, with an emphasis on the connections made by group members and the social construction of meaning, is the feminist response to the traditional competitive model of communication that emphasizes the subject and object positions of students and teachers. Negotiation, which is promoted in the feminist argumentation theories of Catherine Lamb, also hearkens back to Cicero's *controversia*. In the process of creating meaning and working on a collaborative project, group members must negotiate about everything from the subject to group procedure (when a group is going to meet and where). The ways that this negotiation takes place depends on the group members. Some collaborative groups follow the traditional models of negotiation that involve hierarchies and dichotomies. Many scholars have commented negatively on the masculine nature of traditional classrooms in which
dichotomies and contrasts rule the pedagogy. Mary Lay suggests that many males prefer a competitive classroom style while "competition in the classroom may be threatening to females as it seems to sever connections" (Gender Studies, 221). Similarly, Helen Dale notes that "when students are asked to do cooperative work in classrooms and are given no preparation for effective interaction, mixed-gender groups often run into problems with unwanted male dominance" (Dale, 41). Both scholars suggest a more feminist approach which emphasizes connection. Lay refers to Stern's definition of *interdependence*, "a distancing from and then returning to a relationship with an 'enhanced capacity to love'" (Lay, Gender Studies, 218), and explains that for the nurturing, feminine, interdependent mind, "connection becomes a basis for maturity" (Lay, Gender Studies, 218).

Rather than a traditional competitive model of communication, feminists pedagogies suggest a more cooperative model of communication that involves a continuous process of discourse and negotiation. This continual process echoes the Sophist's antilogic and Cicero's *controversia* and gives equal responsibility to both speakers and hearers in a dialogic argument. An emphasis on connection can be an essential aspect of collaboration in the writing classroom, especially one in which a social constructionist approach is in place. Citing Chadorow's (1978) argument that women's penchant for cooperative rather than competitive settings for learning stems from the fact that women are cared for by women as they are growing up, Belenky promotes a model of communication in her classroom that takes the place of the traditional competitive one. She "envisioned a dialogic pedagogy of cooperation and collaboration. The pedagogy she recommends is not 'soft' but, rather, allows for both 'believing' and 'doubting' activities toward cooperative ends" (A-J, 276). Group
negotiation, and the idea that if meaning making is a social process, discovery is a group endeavor, fuels the fire of collaboration.

This cooperative model of meaning making can be productive for the writing classroom as well as in research. Ellerby and Waxman claim that collaboration is "stimulating to the imagination," (209) and, believe that collaboration was responsible for "bolder, more daring" (210) thoughts about their research. For many researchers, collaboration is a way to work through the academic, theoretical, and epistemological questions that are inherent in any research. Collaboration as a way to work through questions can be helpful in the writing classroom as well. Substantive negotiation and dialogue can be a productive way for a collaborative group to function. In discussing their collaborative writing project (the book *Missing Chapters: Ten Pioneering Women in NCTE and English Education*), Virginia Monseau, Jeanne Gerlach and Lisa McClure attribute their ability to write well together to their ability to talk to each other. "We wrote for six hours. We forgot to eat dinner. What made us so prolific in our efforts? We believe it was our talk—with each other and with our colleagues. As teachers we know that we should encourage students to engage in talk before, during, and after they write" (WW, 66). This continuous process of discourse and negotiation is not only an aspect of feminist pedagogy but, as seen above, an essential aspect of collaboration in a writing classroom.

Collaborative pedagogies must draw on feminist pedagogies to the extent that many of the characteristics of collaboration are considered first characteristics of feminism and then characteristics of collaboration. Monseau, Gerlach, and McClure refer to a "feminist" nature of collaboration when they write that "it is through our collaborative efforts as writers that we
have come to value our views" (WW, 67). If "collaboration accentuates salient characteristics of feminist discourse and feminist politics" (E & W, 210) because of the inherent "fluidity [of text and ideas], flexibility, versatility, [and] mobility" (E & W, 213), then collaboration must involve aspects of feminist pedagogy. Feminist pedagogies can certainly be non-collaborative but whether collaboration can be non-feminist is still a question. Awareness of the social construction of meaning, levels of problem solving, and the productive nature of negotiation are essential to dialogic argument as well as collaboration. All of these theories are based on the idea that dialogue is an essential part of social interaction.

Dialogic argument in the composition classroom

Mikhail Bakhtin's focus on dialogue as the key aspect of social interaction is an intriguing twist to the issue of audience responsivity. Bakhtin's contributions have certainly been influential to the modern focus on collaboration in composition pedagogy. His rhetorical theory incorporates what I earlier call a "responsive audience" or a listener that contributes substantively to the outcome of the argument. Many Bakhtinian scholars address the difference between dialogue and monologue. It is sufficient for my purposes here to consider this difference as similar to the differences between dialogic argument and formal deductive logic. Although the idea of "give and take" is still present in monologue, the final discussion does not involve the dialogical interplay of more than one voice. In reference to
Bakhtin's theories, Danow states that "Ideally, meaning is sought and perhaps derived through dialogical interaction on the part of a set of interlocutors" (125).

The relationship between interlocutors described by Cicero's *controversia* is magnified by Bakhtin's theory of addressivity. Bakhtin believes that the linguistic concepts of the "listener" and the "understander" in communication are fictions because they simplify the communication process to mere transactions. "The fact is that when the listener perceives and understands the meaning (the language meaning) of speech, he simultaneously takes an active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on. And the listener adopts this responsive attitude for the entire duration of the process of listening and understanding, from the very beginning—sometimes literally from the speaker's first word" (68). The way that a speaker takes into account her/his listener's responses (prior to her/his utterance or afterwards) is known as addressivity. According to Bakhtin, "addressivity, the quality of turning to someone, is a constitutive feature of the utterance; without it the utterance does not and cannot exist. The various typical forms this addressivity assumes and the various concepts of the addressee are constitutive, definitive features of various speech genres" (99). Because of this, he contends, "all real and integral understanding is actively responsive, and constitutes nothing other than the initial preparatory stage of a response... And the speaker himself is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding, "[s]he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, execution, and so forth (various speech genres presuppose various integral orientations and speech plans on the part of the speakers or writers)" (69).
Bakhtin also recognizes notions of antilogic when he notes that "Quite frequently, within the boundaries of his own utterance the speaker (or writer) raises questions, answers them himself, raises objections to his own ideas, responds to his own objections, and so on" (72). He also sees the fluid nature of communication and does not rigidly set roles for the speaker and the listener. In fact, he claims that "any speaker is himself a respondent to a greater or lesser degree" (69). The social construction of meaning is reiterated by his theory that the utterance is related not only to preceding, but also to subsequent links in the chain of speech communication. . . . from the very beginning, the utterance is constructed while taking into account possible responsive reactions, for whose sake, in essence, it is actually created. As we know, the role of the others for whom the utterance is constructed is extremely great. We have already said that the role of these others, for whom my thought becomes actual thought for the first time (and thus also for my own self as well) is not that of passive listeners, but of active participants in speech communication. From the very beginning, the speaker expects a response from them, an active responsive understanding (94).

Bakhtin's theories of addressivity and his nod to antilogic are important steps in the scholarship of argumentation. When we consider social interaction and dialogue major avenues of meaning making and acknowledge the differences inherent in any classroom, we must be prepared for controversy. The way that this controversy is handled by the instructor can determine whether a student will learn the skills of argumentation that enable them to be self-reflexive critical writers and thinkers. Michael Mendelson takes the idea of controversia and dialogic argument into the classroom by advocating what he calls a controversial pedagogy.
In Michael Mendelson's article, "The Rhetoric of Embodiment," he laments that the practice of *controversia* has fallen into disuse among teachers. He demonstrates that *controversia* can be helpful at many stages in the writing process (invention, narratio, revision) when working collaboratively. He notes that "in the Aristotelian-inspired model, the primary axis of concern is between the rhetor and the topic; whereas in the 'controversial' model, this axis shifts to the interaction among rhetors, audience, and other writers, all of whom bring slightly different, often 'incongruous' perspectives to bear on the controversy" (40). This is an important distinction and prepares students for participation in the social construction of meaning and collaborative inquiry. Mendelson provides substantial support and suggestions for how this controversial pedagogy may really play out in the classroom.

If students realize the importance of Perelman's injunctions about audience as the arbiter of argumentative development, and if they come to accept the notion that all initial positions in argument are necessarily partial, then the exchange with 'the other' is abundant with opportunity for the invention of new ideas. (41)

Quoting Martha Nussbaum, Mendelson points out that "both the suspension of judgement and the willingness to grapple with alternatives are parts of the process of becoming what the Stoics called a 'citizen of the world'" (42). Mendelson makes it clear that the instructor needs to be on hand for mediation because "our cultural conditioning to argument more often suggests combat than the amicable agonism depicted by Cicero" (41). However, a controversial pedagogy inherently takes into account the belief that argumentation is more than the traditional eristic notion. Sometimes the instructor needs to mediate discussion in order to keep students on the right track. Often, Mendelson suggests (as Brent has) that
"Rogerian practices of acknowledgement and recapitulation as well as the Rogerian ethic of 'mutual exploration' . . . contribute to defusing the antagonism seen as obligatory between argumentative opponents" (42). Finally, he notes, no matter how the interchange is mediated or managed, "the Ciceronian precedent seems to indicate that there is an intellectual/rhetorical energy stimulated in rhetors as the mind shuttles between/among alternative logoi," (41).

Mendelson's focus on the productive use of controversia in the classroom is refreshing since the collaborative interactions that take place among students who follow this model should produce comprehensive documents and projects. If, by promoting negotiation and collaboration, instructors can help students discover the effective uses of collaborative conflict and dialogic argument, their students will benefit from critical thinking.

Conflict as a productive part of collaboration

Since any communicative act involves some sort of social construction, when instructors ask students to take part in collaborative activities, they are asking them to take part in the social construction of meaning. Meaning is constructed in many different ways. Flower suggests three "metaphors for how meaning is made" that include "construction as reproduction," "construction as conversation," and "construction as negotiation" (55). When we enter and encourage our students to enter into these territories of reproduction, conversation, and negotiation, we are asking them to acknowledge conflict, differences of opinion, and multiple voices. By acknowledging their roles and the roles of their peers in the
social construction of meaning, students should learn to recognize the productive aspects of conflict and negotiation and ultimately, work well collaboratively.

As instructors, we must acknowledge (and encourage our students to acknowledge) that multiple voices, including conflict and differences of opinion will be a part of any collaborative activity. Conflict is an essential aspect of negotiation. Rebecca Burnett encourages conflict in collaborative planning and claims that "stripping collaboration of conflict and urging consensus is not necessarily productive. In fact deferring consensus and engaging in certain kinds of conflict can have advantages" ("Decision-Making During . . ." 125). If we can help students to discover that, despite the difficulties inherent, collaborative practice ultimately produces effective communication and a cohesive account of a shared meaning, students understand that the conflict involved, or the "price" of collaboration, is worth the outcome. The invitation for an equal contribution from both speakers and listeners contributes to the final project while the productive challenges inherent in conflict promote self-reflexivity and individual intellectual growth.

Although it may seem that conflict would not belong in a collaborative classroom, it can actually be very effective and useful. Burnett defines three types of conflict inherent in collaborative planning and decision making: affective, procedural, and substantive ("Decision-Making During . . ." 126). Conflict is an integral aspect of effective collaborative groups (Burnett 1993, Karis 1989); however, for conflict to be productive it should be based on substantive issues rather than interaction or procedural problems. As both Burnett and Karis note, the most productive kind of conflict is substantive conflict based on the subject matter. Thia Wolf, in "Conflict as Opportunity in Collaborative Praxis" points out right away
that "collaborative praxis requires that we use conflict in our classrooms productively rather than as a means of polarization" (*Writing With*, 91). She suggests that an instructor provide opportunities for tensions between the students and him or herself to become apparent and [try to] negotiate polar positions" in order "to recognize a tendency toward reproduction of the status quo; to expose hidden conflict and appreciate the political value of revealed agendas" and provide students "with opportunities for creating change in the classroom, the institution, and the community/state/country/world of which they are a part. (WW, 92)

As instructors, we must encourage substantive conflict by encouraging debate that promotes critical thinking and demonstrates the social construction of ideas and meaning making. Some instructors may be wary of letting their students engage in conflict-laden negotiation but they must remember that critical thinking and learning thrives on such conflict.

The above review makes it clear why methods of argumentation that involve collaboration and conflict in tandem have been proposed in pedagogy. These methods rely on the classical ideas of *controversia* and antilogic. Susan Jarratt maintains that both Plato and Aristotle believed in a rhetoric that "would not only lack conflict, it would be unnecessary" (114). In fact, they idealize an audience which is in "harmony about fundamental assumptions" or an audience which consists mainly of the people in political power - "a small, homogenous group of aristocrats" (114). Instead, she encourages us to look at the sophists’ theory which “assumes that knowledge is always constructed socially and that public action is guided by informed debate among members of a democratic community” (114). Clark quotes James Berlin who believes that courses in writing prepares students to be citizens (as leaders and participants) in their democracy (xvi.). This can be compared with Protagoras’ views on rhetoric as a means of teaching democracy and citizenship. If
conversation and argumentation (written and oral) are "fundamental acts of citizenship that enable individuals to contribute to the construction of community by making them individually and collectively responsible for it" (Clark, xvi.), then collaboration would certainly be a means of encouraging participation. Collaboration as a means of solving problems is promoted because "only through recognition of an argument over differences can conflict be resolved into homonoia, like-mindedness" (114). This type of collaborative argumentation does not privilege the speaker or the listener. Instead, both interlocutors become Crosswhite's questioners to the claims they offer each other. Since "[i]t is more productive to bring out and examine the contradictions and conflicts being resolved in that space than to overlook them or minimize their significance" (116), if the two interlocutors come to the argument with the attitude of open-ness advocated by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, they can work together to reach new knowledge or a solution to their problem.

The productive conflict that the various scholars cited above promote hearkens back to Cicero's controversia and the Sophists antilogic. Collaboration in the composition classroom can benefit from a focus on the ways that dialogic argument promotes contributions by all members of a collaborative group. Productive collaborative groups utilize the opportunities presented by conflict by coming to terms with controversy rather than merely reaching consensus. Mendelson writes that the claims involved in dialogic argument "are multilateral in influence, democratic in spirit, and often disparate in form" and "aim at coming to grips with difference through decisions based on mutually derived standards" (notes, 1). Critical thinking and student agency in meaning-making become by-products of the collaborative process. bell hooks celebrates this kind of exchange by saying
that "It is this passion for ideas, for critical thinking and dialogical exchange that I want to celebrate in the classroom, to share with students" (hooks, 204). In fact, this celebration of critical thinking is exactly what composition instructors, who are teaching a process rather than skills, want their students to understand.
CHAPTER FOUR: LOCATING CONTROVERSY IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

As bell hooks reminds us, "the classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility," (207). As instructors, it is necessary for us to take advantage of this possibility and encourage the critical thinking and learning of our students by encouraging dialogical exchange. In the preceding pages, I have attempted to consider argument as collaborative and fully examine the way that the focus on the contribution of the listener has changed throughout rhetorical history. I have examined dialogic argument and then considered various theorist's positioning of the listener in argumentation. I have indicated how several feminist theorists are beginning to look back at the antilogical approach of the Sophists in order to introduce collaboration and substantive conflict, or argumentation, into the composition classroom. Finally, I have examined a way to do this by considering collaboration as a way of thinking, a way to approach the classroom. This kind of collaborative pedagogy depends on students and instructors buying into collaboration, understanding the roles that they play in collaborative situations, and being actively involved in conflict and negotiation.

In order for any collaborative activity, and a collaborative pedagogy, to work, both the instructor and students must buy into the idea of collaboration as useful to learning. Part of getting students to "buy into" collaboration is getting them to understand the idea of meaning making as socially constructed. When students are aware of the fact that individual meaning is a response to previous individual and shared experiences, they become more self-
reflexive in looking at their own contributions to collaborative efforts. Consequently, they will begin to see the emergence of a constructed meaning as the result of shared ideas and substantive conflict. This should lead them to the discovery that effective learning can, and does, take place collaboratively.

In *Making Thinking Visible*, David Wallace suggests that for students to understand learning that takes place collaboratively, they can take part in collaborative planning. Collaborative planning, as the co-authors of *Making Thinking Visible* use the term, means more than just group work, but collaborative sessions in which rhetorical concerns such as audience, purpose, and writing conventions are questioned and repositioned as group members interact. As Wallace points out, "[c]ollaborative planning takes advantage of the help that peers can give each other . . . [and] provides a set of rhetorical prompts that students can adapt to help each other attend to issues that they might not otherwise address in their planning" (49). This planning process is one option for getting students to see how their interactions with each other can influence the outcome of the group project.

A second feature of collaborative pedagogy is that both students and instructors have an understanding of the procedural roles and the individual social identities of collaborative group members. Contrary to popular belief about collaboration, an instructor's authority does not have to be lost when s/he brings a collaborative pedagogy into her/his classroom. In a collaborative writing classroom, the instructor's role is not rigidly set as either authoritarian or passive, but rather, as facilitative. Instructors as facilitators can "participate in classroom conversation, interacting with . . . students and limiting [the] tendency to give answers and render judgements. This role does not mean that instructors abdicate . . . responsibilities as
instructors" (Rymer, 184). Instead, they become a part of the classroom dialogue that makes meaning. With this kind of participatory relationship in collaborative learning, instructors can model behaviors of critical thinking such as challenging existing social or ideological issues. Encouraging students to challenge existing notions of appropriate behavior and thought encourages them to test theories against their own experiences. Authority is then located within personal experience rather than with the instructor.

A collaborative approach to the classroom enables the instructor to provide students with ample opportunities to practice the different roles involved in collaboration. The *Making Thinking Visible* authors speak of collaboration as involving two procedural roles: writers and supporters. Burnett claims that while "being an engaged supporter is difficult . . . becoming a good supporter is the single most difficult thing for students to learn as they work toward being effective collaborators" (73). She uses Bruner's and Vygotsky's theories of learning (scaffolding and zones of proximal development) to support the idea that supporters are not necessarily repositories of substantive information but rather resources of encouragement and reinforcement. According to Burnett, supporters provide prompts to the writers, contribute information, and challenge and direct the writer (73). Through the practice of playing the roles of collaborative planners, learners, writers, and supporters, students become familiar with these roles and benefit from the collaborative learning processes.

In order for students to become familiar with roles in collaborative learning, certain procedural tasks, such as the division of tasks, planning meeting times, and discussing expectations, should become familiar. The division of tasks in a collaborative project
involves peer interaction directly unless the roles are given by the instructor.\textsuperscript{11} This negotiation of group roles is an opening for the further substantive negotiation which the students will take part in as a group. Both instructors and students must have opportunities to practice these roles in order to become familiar and comfortable with them in the collaborative classroom. If, as Thomas Fox claims, "collaboration remains an unpredictable practice, giving both unexpected rewards and disturbing results," groups need "time to establish a sense of mutual obligation," and "to interpret the way they conduct their own work" (WW, 119).

The roles that students play in their collaborative groups and the ways that they negotiate these roles are greatly influenced by their social identity. Social identity is an important consideration in collaboration because, as Fox, Bleich, and Reagan say in the introduction to Writing With: New Directions in Collaborative Teaching, Learning and Research, "It is no longer a simple matter to 'get into groups' because the ideologies of belonging—those related to gender, race, class, and individualism—emerge in ways that can no longer be ignored" (1). The instructor should be aware of the ways that gender, culture, class, and ethnicity contribute to the group dynamics of any collaborative group. David Bleich reminds us that instructors committed to a collaborative pedagogy are risking problems caused by insisting that students put aside class, race, and ethnic differences in

\textsuperscript{11} Dale notes that "it is simultaneous collaboration that leads to the most engagement, so it is important that students not break the writing task into parts and parcel it out" (45). However, as instructors, we should be aware of the importance of letting students figure some of these procedural tasks out on their own. We may want to suggest that they not break their task into parts, but ultimately, if they want to do it that way, perhaps they will learn from that mistake. We must be careful not to impose our own learning styles on our students but rather give them the flexibility to choose while modeling the behavior that we believe works best.
order to "all get along" in a collaborative situation. However, if we borrow the idea of negotiation from feminist pedagogy, we can diminish the risk involved. Instead of allowing differences to prevent collaboration in a classroom, Bleich suggests that instructors use collaboration as a means of encouraging students to share their different realities as a way to contribute to the social construction of knowledge and meaning that their group is working towards. In other words, conflict, negotiation, and dialogic argument should be encouraged as a means of promoting the social construction of knowledge.

Asking students to take part in collaborative exercises, indeed, asking them to buy into a collaborative pedagogy, assumes that they will be actively involved in interactions and interrelationships with each other. When students work together, doing peer review on a paper of their own, participating in a collaborative planning session, or writing a collaborative piece, they are able to see how process and product are related. Kip Strasma and Gavin Foster found that "In general . . . collaborative activities help to legitimize students' knowledge, increase students' engagement in reading and writing, and develop students' authority over their own texts" (113).

Since the composition classroom is indeed a "location of possibility," (hooks 207), it is important for instructors to be aware of the ways that critical thinking and learning can be promoted by means of a collaborative pedagogy. This research has not been exhaustive by any means and the position of the listener in dialogic argument obviously merits further research, as does *controversia*. Argumentation is a fertile area for research, especially in terms of the practical applications for learning and teaching involved. Collaborative activities in the composition classroom present ideal opportunities for instructors to introduce
substantive conflict as a productive aspect of learning and making meaning. Once students and instructors have bought into collaboration and become engaged and familiar with the roles involved, they will benefit from the conflict and negotiation involved as much as from the substantive projects actually completed.


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