Preparing ESL undergraduates for freshman composition through cooperative learning, collaborative writing, and portfolio grading: a course design rationale and case study

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Preparing ESL undergraduates for freshman composition through cooperative learning, collaborative writing, and portfolio grading: A course design rationale and case study

by

Roberta Enid Golliher

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Major: English (Teaching English as a Second Language/Applied Linguistics)

Major Professor: Dan Douglas

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1997

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Roberta Enid Golliher

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Major Professor

For the Major Program

For the Graduate College
For Ms. Anna Morris, my high school English teacher, because she believed I could write.
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1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis describes and examines an experimental ESL composition course that featured cooperative learning and collaborative writing\(^1\), a course that also involved thematic sequencing of assignments and portfolio grading of students’ individual writing. The course was a revised version of Iowa State University’s English 101C (Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers of English), with the revisions directed toward the attainment of the official course goal of preparing ESL students for the Iowa State First Year Composition Program (ESL Instructor’s Manual, p.3). The changes in the course enabled 101C students to write assignments modeled on ISU freshman composition\(^2\) assignments—particularly academic and argumentative writing assignments.\(^3\)

The Background chapter of this thesis explains the rationale for the course and

\(^1\)In the thesis, I use interchangeably all of the terms commonly used to refer to students’ working together to produce a single document: "group writing," "collaborative writing," "co-authoring" and "shared document collaboration."

\(^2\)At the time this research was conducted, ISU’s First Year Composition Program was still officially called a freshman composition program. (The name was changed so it would be gender-neutral.) For this and other reasons, in this thesis I will hereafter refer to "freshman" rather than first year composition. Another reason for my choice of terminology is that most beginning, mainstream composition programs at other institutions are still referred to as freshman composition programs, and I would like my research to be readily understood.

\(^3\)Sheltering is usually conceived of as something provided in a content area buffer classroom (one which provides ESL students with "temporary refuge" from mainstreaming, grouping them together for "comprehensible input in low anxiety environments," structured by sympathetic and preferably specially trained instructors) (Richard-Amato, 1988, p.59). In designing and defending this 101C course, however, I maintain that ESL teachers who teach transitional courses would be making a useful conceptual shift if they conceive of themselves as teaching sheltered English courses rather than more typical level-specific ESL courses.
describes how important elements of the course (thematic assignment sequencing, portfolio grading, cooperative learning and collaborative writing) were intended to work in concert to prepare students (ESL undergraduates at ISU) for mainstream freshman composition. The Course Evaluation chapter explores some of the outcomes of the course when it was piloted during the summer of 1994. These course outcomes are presented in a case study report which first evaluates the success of the course overall and then evaluates each of the main elements of the course. The evaluation informs whether, if I were to teach the course again, I would still teach freshman composition assignments in 101C, as well as whether and in what form I would retain each of the main course elements.

This study should be of interest to educators concerned in general with innovation in composition pedagogy, or in particular with how cooperative learning can be integral to the teaching of argumentative writing. It answers Nelson and Murphy's call (1992, p.190) for "additional research on different types of writing groups" and "further case study research on L2, as opposed to L1, writing groups." Studies such as this are important to the ESL and EFL field, since they can show teachers who have often failed to appreciate the work of cooperative learning researchers (Savova & Donato, 1991) some of the possible applications of this research. The "different types of writing groups" investigated in this thesis are those which evolve out of the teaching of a cooperative learning activity, structured academic controversy, which has previously been ignored in both L1 and L2 composition literature, but which potentially offers much to ESL students preparing for mainstreaming into freshman
composition.\textsuperscript{4}

The structured academic controversy in the course culminated in a collaborative research paper project.\textsuperscript{5} Though collaborative writing is a familiar topic in L1 composition and business and technical writing circles, it, like cooperative learning, has been unduly neglected in the journals of ESL/EFL pedagogy (Crismore, 1992; Harness, 1995). So the evaluation of this aspect of the course should also be valuable, particularly to those educators and researchers interested in collaborative writing.

\textsuperscript{4}Structured academic controversy is actually not a stand-alone cooperative learning activity, but a series of activities in which groups of four students each study a single controversial issue. They break into pairs which develop and present opposite sides of the issue; reunite, argue, and examine both sides of the issue; reverse positions and argue again; and finally come to consensus about the issue and draft a group report. The purpose and pattern of these activities, and their blending with the innovative course's assignment sequence, are explained later.

\textsuperscript{5}Note that collaboration and cooperation, as used in this thesis, are related but distinct terms. Collaborative writing is considered by some to be a form of cooperative learning, but those who hold to the tenets of formal cooperative learning [such as they are presented in Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991)] would view collaborative writing as something taught more or less cooperatively depending on the context. Of course not all teachers of collaborative writing embrace Johnson, Johnson and Smith's tenets of cooperative learning, however; some ignore them, and some weave selected concepts from these researchers into their own educational frameworks. I would fall into the latter category.
BACKGROUND

"If ESL and EFL composition classes are to prepare students for approaching a variety of rhetorical situations, then teachers and researchers must examine critical writing tasks from specific communities," claims Ann Johns, a spokesperson for two related movements in ESL teaching: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC). "Teachers and researchers need to be sensitive to task-specific and community-specific issues, particularly as they relate to students’ future needs" (1993, p. 76). Johns is especially concerned with preparing students to succeed in their chosen academic and professional fields.

She has been criticized by researchers such as Ruth Spack, who argues that "the teaching of writing in the disciplines should be left to the teachers of those disciplines," and "L2 English composition teachers should focus on general principles of inquiry and rhetoric, with emphasis on writing from sources" (1988, p. 29). Spack does agree, however, that "we must help students master the language and culture of the university; the role of the university writing teacher is to initiate students into the academic discourse community" (1988, p. 30). She also agrees with Johns that it is important to help students to deconstruct assignment prompts (1988, p. 45).

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"Deconstruction, according to Barbara Johnson, is "a careful teasing out of the conflicting forces of signification that are at work within [a] text...." It "implies that a text signifies in more than one way, that it can signify something more, something less, or something other than it claims to, or that it signifies in different degrees of explicitness, effectiveness, or coherence" (Johnson, 1985, pp. 140-141).
Perhaps these areas of agreement open up common ground between Spack and Johns. They might both approve of an ESL course (or course sequence) designed to prepare students to meet the "task-specific and community-specific demands" of future *freshman composition programs*. Spack's objections to an EAP/WAC approach wouldn't apply to such a tailor-designed course, since her objections are based on her "concern for teachers' [lack of] knowledge and abilities" in teaching writing outside their discipline (1985, p. 708). (Though ESL composition instructors may not be good judges of engineering proposals, they undoubtedly are—or are capable of becoming—good judges of freshman compositions.) Spack would appreciate how a tailored course—even if it were focusing on preparing students specifically to write freshman compositions—would also address general principles of inquiry and rhetoric, as well as writing from sources, at least inasmuch as freshman composition courses do, since imparting such principles is the intent of most freshman composition assignments.\(^7\) Furthermore, a tailored course undoubtedly would, in line with Spack's advice, teach students to deconstruct the assignment prompts they will later face in their particular institution's freshman composition program.\(^8\)

\(^7\)Of course, an EAP/ESP advocate might take issue with whether freshman composition assignments truly can impart generalizable principles of rhetoric to students, but that's another issue.

\(^8\)If the course were to include assignments modeled on the local freshman composition program's assignments, this deconstruction would involve ESL instructors' sharing their own interpretations of freshman composition assignments in class discussion and in their own assignment handouts, interpretations geared to an ESL student audience. More importantly, though, a course with assignments modeled on freshman composition assignments would give students actual experience in grappling with the assignments and assignment handouts, requiring students in the process to interpret these themselves and come to their own working understandings.
Johns, like Spack, should also find something to be admired in a course designed very intentionally to prepare students for freshman composition. Though she might object to the narrow goals of such a course, given those goals, she would certainly concur that its designers should a) look closely at the expectations their local freshman composition program places on students, and b) think deeply about how best to prepare ESL students to fulfill these expectations.

Iowa State University (ISU), like any institution of higher education which instructs ESL students prior to mainstreaming them into freshman composition, could offer ESL composition classes designed intentionally in this fashion to complement the university's freshman composition curriculum. ISU's ESL program includes courses explicitly intended to prepare ESL students for freshman composition. According to the ISU ESL Instructors' Manual, one of the core courses of the program, English 101C (Advanced Composition for Non-Native Speakers of English)

should introduce students to some of the types of writing they will need to produce in the university. These include a) compositions of the type written in 104 [the first of the two-semester freshman composition sequence], and b) summaries of lectures or articles. (p. 3)

The manual also says, among other things, that 101C should "prepare students to meet the basic standards of correctness in English 104" and "provide discussion of 'American style' development and organization of expository material," and "the avoidance of plagiarism" (Manual, p.3). In other words, it should prepare students for later expository writing in general and for freshman composition in particular.
Ostensibly, then, English 101C does provide a bridge of the type discussed above. But have its designers truly taken into account where students are going and what they’ll need when they get there? Have they looked closely at the expectations students must meet in freshman composition and thought deeply about how to prepare them to meet these expectations?9

Below, I argue that they haven’t, and that a redesigned 101C course could better prepare ISU’s ESL undergraduates for freshman composition. I explore my reasons for revising the course and the ways I have revised it. After briefly describing the alternative course and its assignments, I provide background about the major new elements of the course, as well as a more detailed description of the course. Next I describe the case study methods by which the course was evaluated when it was piloted during the summer of 1994. Finally, I present the evaluation, reporting some of the outcomes of the pilot course, highlighting instructor and student opinion. As the course had never been taught before, this evaluation is, of course, preliminary. In the spirit of real-world teaching and classroom decision-making, however, I draw conclusions from the preliminary evaluation about what I would do similarly and what I would do differently if I were to teach the course again.

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9In this thesis, I depend on the ESL Instructor’s Manual for official information about the design of English 101C. I do this because the manual is the most accessible "official word" on the design of 101C; no standard syllabus exists. In practice, a set of assignments and exercises developed by a former ESL program coordinator shape the course as it is taught. These assignments and exercises do, however, take very much the "simplify and build-up" approach laid out in the Instructor’s Manual.
Problems with 101C

Somehow, all of the goals and objectives of English 101C are supposed to be met while students write only "short assignments at the beginning" of the semester building to assignments of "400-500 words by the end" (Manual, p. 4). A research essay--the capstone assignment in both freshman composition courses--is sometimes assigned during 101C, sometimes not. Yet in 104 and 105, assignments late in the semester of 800-1000 words are typical; the "documented essay" suggested at the end of English 105 must be a minimum of 1,000 words: twice the length of the assignments recommended at the end of 101C. It explains something of the demands of freshman composition--and the disparity between the ESL and freshman composition courses--that during each semester in freshman composition students write "approximately 4,000-5,000 words" (Instructor's Manual for English 104-105, 1994, p. 11). Of course, length is only one aspect of the difficulty of these assignments; as might be expected, such lengthier assignments also call for greater sophistication, for example, of organization and argumentation. Elsewhere, I analyze in detail the complexity of the sentence structures and transitions produced by students successful in fulfilling the longer, analytical writing assignments in English 105 (Golliher, 1994), and I argue that students in general undergo a certain "U-shaped development" in their writing between the time they can write polished shorter essays and the time they can independently produce polished longer essays. I further argue that students need relief from one-shot evaluation in

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10 When a research essay is assigned, it is, not surprisingly, a shorter, simpler one than will be expected of the students at the end of English 104 and 105 (105 being the second freshman composition course).
order to have the freedom to make the grammatical, organizational, and logical mistakes they
must necessarily make during the "dip" in this U-shaped development (Golliher, 1994, 1995).

At present, however, 101C assignments are rarely of sufficient length or complexity
to push the students into this developmental dip. An obvious reason exists for the relative
simplicity of 101C assignments: The course designers have assumed that students prepare
to write longer, more complex assignments by honing their ability to write shorter, less
complex ones. This is clearly the approach taken in the most commonly used text for
English 101C, Academic Writing (Leki, 1989), which presents model student essays of one
to five paragraphs in length.

Undoubtedly a "build-up" approach has its place. I question, however, whether such
an approach is appropriate in the final semester prior to students' mainstreaming into
freshman composition. I don't believe short, simple assignments can adequately prepare
students to meet the expectations of ISU freshman composition instructors; I am also
concerned that short, simple assignments might mislead students into underestimating their
future instructors' expectations. Indeed, the problem of short assignments only scratches the
surface of the problems with 101C as it is actually taught. In practice, says a former ESL
program coordinator, "I always felt as though the [101C textbook] was dictating the course

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11These reasons are not stated in the ESL Instructor's Manual—they are only implicit.

12A placement test determines whether students require zero, one or two semesters of ESL
prior to mainstreaming into freshman composition; English 101C is the course that all students
who require ESL instruction take prior to entering freshman composition. Some of them place
content" (Barbara Schwarte, personal communication, April 6, 1995). She points out that the textbook was carefully chosen; nevertheless, a textbook-driven syllabus is not one tailored for a particular academic context. Ann Raimes, the author of one of the more popular ESL writing textbooks (Exploring Through Writing, 1992), has herself pointed out that "textbooks written for broad sales will inevitably be general...and cannot be context-specific (1988, p. 46).

Among the other problems created by the inattention to the design of 101C is the lack of integration into the course of speaking, listening and reading--this despite widespread faculty support for an integrated skills approach (Wolford, 1994). In addition, little or no effort has been made to include as a regular feature of 101C experiences of collaborative writing or instruction in the computer skills commonly required of students in freshman composition (Golliher, 1994).

A Solution: Providing Scaffolding as Opposed to Simplifying

The summer of 1994, I taught an innovative version of English 101C which sheltered ESL students in completing assignments such as those they would later encounter in freshman composition, as opposed to shorter, simpler assignments intended to build the students up to a state of readiness for writing freshman compositions. Since I deemed argumentation and writing from sources to be particularly crucial to the students' success in freshman composition, much of the course was devoted to these. A third of the way through the course, students were researching, reading and sharing material from library sources. Thus they were engaged not only in writing tasks atypical of those in the standard 101C
course, but also atypical speaking, listening, and reading tasks. In addition, the revised course provided 101C students with far more experience in computer use and cooperative learning than does the typical 101C course. See Appendix A for an in-depth analysis of the task-specific and community-specific issues (to use Johns’ terms) involved in redesigning the course in this fashion. Phil Black, a teaching assistant and a PhD student at ISU in rhetoric and composition, collaborated with me on the course design and teaching. We each taught a single section which met five days a week for an hour, for eight weeks.\textsuperscript{13,14}

The assignments in our course were of roughly the same length and complexity as assignments in freshman composition, and were indeed modeled on assignments from ISU’s freshman composition program. Because our course was intended to prepare students for freshman composition—not replace it—students wrote fewer assignments over the course of the semester than they would once they were mainstreamed, and they revised and edited only a subset of the assignments to meet what Phil and I considered to be the standards of English

\textsuperscript{13}During the school year, 101C meets three days a week, for fifty minutes, for fifteen weeks, plus a finals week.

\textsuperscript{14}Phil agreed to help develop and teach this alternative 101 course and allow me to observe his students if I would engage my students in cross-class e-mail collaboration with his students, and in direct e-mail communication with me. These aspects of the course will not be emphasized in this thesis—these were, after all, Phil’s research interests and not mine. But they undoubtedly affected the course in many ways, and I will discuss them where appropriate. Though we might ideally have each wanted to pursue our research interests without involving ourselves and our courses in the interests of the other, the opportunity that collaboration provided us for brainstorming, co-authoring materials, and comparing notes was invaluable, and it paralleled nicely our students’ collaboration. Because we, like our students, worked in collaboration, we remained well aware of both the frustrations and benefits of working with others.
12

104, the first mainstream freshman composition course in their course sequence.\textsuperscript{15}

The support which enabled our 101C students to fulfill freshman composition assignments and tackle academic argumentation included a variety of elements. The major ones were collaborative writing assignments, cooperative learning activities, a modified thematic assignment sequence, and a portfolio system of grading students' individual writing. The inclusion of all of these elements (which are discussed in the next section) is in keeping with recommendations made by Schlumberger and Clymer (1989a) for "tailoring composition classes to ESL students' needs" (the title of their article). They suggest that composition teachers "organize courses around thematic units," "reduce the assigned number of formal, polished essays," and "encourage students to develop and use all four language skills" through group work (pp. 122-124).

The units in the revised course followed the phases of structured academic controversy--a cooperative learning activity which engages groups of students in rounds of debate and reversals of position followed by group consensus. Structured academic controversy encourages students to think critically (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). Phil

\textsuperscript{15}In focusing our course on preparing our students for academic writing, we subordinated the 101C course goal that "by the end of 101C, [students] should have a clear understanding of [the standards of correctness in English 104], should recognize their deficiencies with respect to them, and should demonstrate progress toward meeting them" (Manual, 1989, p.3). We made this choice partly because we considered this goal unrealistic--that if 101C were truly designed to accomplish it, the course would have to be designed as a grammar course, and even then the goal might be unrealistic. The appropriateness of the standards of correctness in ISU's freshman composition program is regularly debated by English department faculty; many, if not most, of the native English speakers in the freshman composition program at ISU pass through it without meeting the standards.

Instruction in grammar in our course was individual and contextualized, taking place when students were given feedback on editing their selected essays for their portfolios.
and I included it in the course to help the students in the course write argumentatively, hoping that ultimately it would, to use Spack’s phrase, initiate them into the academic discourse community.

The assignment sequence for the course, paralleling the assignment sequence in English 104, started with personal experience writing and moved through summary writing to argument. Specifically, the assignments (which are included in Appendix B) were as follows:

1) Diagnostic Essay, based on personal experience ("What I Hate About English Classes")

   This assignment was intended to give us insight not only into the students’ writing proficiencies but also their classroom experiences and learning style preferences.

2) Exploratory Writing (on a controversial issue selected as a theme for the semester by the student and at least seven other students).

3) Summary Writing (two different summaries on articles related to the selected issue).

4) Collaborative Position Paper Outline (one outline co-authored by a group of four students, defending either a pro or con stance on their controversial issue). The outline assignment Phil and I substituted for a collaborative position paper assignment we had originally planned. We made this substitution due to time constraints and the ease with which an outline assignment lent itself to clear, easily discussed class
presentations, a crucial element of the structured academic controversy at this phase of the syllabus.

5) Consensus Research Paper (a paper defending a consensus position co-authored by a group of four students, two of whom had just outlined the pro position on their issue and two of whom had just outlined the con position). This paper was based on the students' research and thinking over the entire course of the semester.

6) Final Exam (a reflection essay on the changes in the students' writing attitudes over the course of the semester). This assignment was something of a postscript to above sequence, and its purpose was to get students to reflect on their attitudes and the course, and to report this reflection in such a way as to demonstrate that they had learned academic style writing.

These assignments—especially the summary and consensus research paper assignments—we felt were key to the students' later success in the kinds of writing they would have to do in freshman composition. (Summaries are typically assigned once in 104 and twice in 105; some kind of research essay is assigned at the end of both 104 and 105.) They were also assignments which could be easily coordinated with the phases of structured academic controversy, as will be explained later.
Scaffolding: What It Means and Why It’s Important

Fundamental to the course design was the belief that when teachers challenge students to stretch into new levels of literacy and second language acquisition, they should simultaneously and significantly support students in their early efforts at meeting such challenges. Such support I call scaffolding, borrowing the term from Bruner (1978), who uses it to describe, analogously, how infants’ caretakers set the stage for "joint action formats" out of which first language acquisition emerges. [Joint action formats are "ritualized, frequently repeated and saliently marked caretaking and playing routines" within which infants begin "to take turns vocalizing, to play role functions and to sustain mutual attention" with their caregivers. (Dore, 1985, p. 28)] Scaffolding, as Bruner uses it, also refers to caretakers’ "pausing, vocally marking junctures in the [caretaking or playing] routine, and matching the child’s efforts with verbal formulae" (Dore, 1985, p. 28).

The point I am making by borrowing Bruner’s term is that it may be appropriate and in some sense even essential for teachers to provide students with significant support while the students are making later linguistic transitions such as the one from ESL composition to freshman composition. In revising English 101C, Phil and I attempted to provide this support. We "set the stage" for the students’ argumentative writing by assigning them various rounds of discussion, research and debate; we created "pauses" for students not only in requiring written reflection at intervals during the development of their argument, but also in providing them between-draft feedback on their writing, and in requiring them to reconsider and revise their writing. Some teachers shy away from giving their students such extensive support due to fears about doing too much writerly handholding and about
appropriating students' texts (in giving between-draft feedback, for example).\textsuperscript{16} I would ask these teachers to balance such risks against the risks of leaving students floundering and underprepared when they are asked to perform at subsequent, more complex educational levels. Of course, text ownership is an issue worthy of thoughtful consideration (Reid, 1993, p. 250). Nevertheless, I maintain that teachers and curriculum developers need to design a good deal of support for students into language curricula at those junctures where major transitions occur in our expectations of their literacy and/or fluency.

On the surface, what I am arguing may not seem revolutionary. Informing the first language/second language acquisition analogy with insights from Ron Scollon's research, however, reveals a deeper philosophical shift underlying a "scaffolding" approach to course design. Like Bruner, Scollon (when studying the early phonological development of a child named Brenda) came to recognize the importance of interaction with other speakers in not only her phonological, but also her grammatical development. Indeed, Scollon claims, "interaction with other speakers may well be the means by which Brenda has learned how to [grammatically] construct in the first place" (Scollon, 1973, p. 72). He coined the phrase "vertical constructions" for those communications that were only recognizable as sentences or multi-word utterances if the entire interaction between child and caregiver were taken into account.

\textsuperscript{16}Reid says that "constant teacher intervention can result in the appropriation of student text" and that if a teacher becomes "the sole or most authoritative responder to student writing...a final portfolio may be more a reflection of teacher-writing than of student work" (1993, p. 250).
Reasoning from audiotaped evidence, Scollon claims that the production of children's early sentences is of necessity a mutual project between learners and other speakers.

I believe it is important to ponder the extent to which this period of language acquisition is analogous to the period during which ESL students prepare for mainstreaming into freshman composition classes. How might we teach differently if we acknowledged that in some sense that the production of our students' early essays is also a shared project? We don't stand back from making a joint project of our children's first language acquisition; neither do we, when preparing graduate students for writing up research, avoid "co-construction" (Jacoby & Gonzales 1991). All of this is not to say, however, that we must

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17For example, Brenda (first column) and her mother (second) participated in the following exchange while she was looking into a fan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fæi</th>
<th>Hm?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fæ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faø</td>
<td>Bathroom?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faøi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faø</td>
<td>Fan! Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʰu</td>
<td>Cool, yeah. Fan makes you cool.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Scollon, 1973, p. 69)

Note how, in this vertical construction (as in others), Brenda's early phonological difficulties in producing words, and her mother's difficulties understanding her words, necessitate a certain amount of what we call in second language acquisition studies "negotiation of meaning" before Brenda can convey the meaning she might later convey in a two-word utterance.
take on full responsibility for our students' steps up in academic literacy. Again, Scollon’s first language acquisition studies offer a useful analogy: As Scollon points out, children’s early sentence "projects" are not even necessarily adult-led. Indeed, Scollon’s epiphany about the existence of vertical constructions came when he listened to a taped interaction between himself and Brenda in which he failed to understand either of the words in her vertical construction, "car go." On the tape, she comes off as a very active participant in their (unsuccessful) negotiation of meaning. She first repeats "'/kʰa/ /kʰa/ /kʰa/ /kʰa/.'" Scollon responds, "What?"

Then Brenda adds "'/gəə/ /go/" (Scollon, 1973, p. 67).

When Scollon doesn’t indicate any understanding, she begins saying—and repeating (nine times in all!)—'/bəiʃ/—her early phonological version of "bus." If Scollon can’t understand "car," then maybe he can understand "bus"!

Scollon replies, questioningly, "bicycle?"

Brenda, repetition and lexical substitution having failed her, finally drops her attempt at communication. (Scollon was later able to decipher the taped version of the conversation partly due to clues from hearing the background sound of a passing car and from hearing Brenda use the '/bəiʃ/ form of "bus" in another context) (Scollon, 1973, p. 67-68).

In this and other situations, Brenda very actively participates in becoming (or attempting to become) understood by her caregiver. By analogy, our students can be seen as active participants in the process of making meaning clear in their early college-level writings. And courses can be designed to provide them with ample opportunities for such clarification, especially through rounds of revision and editing.
This line of reasoning leaves me wondering how many times we as teachers of (especially second language) writing have been as clueless in reading our students’ writing as Scollon is in listening to Brenda talk about the passing car. Do we not too often take on the role of judge and jury of our students’ communicative success in their essays, rather than that of active listener or editor interested in the real, valuable insights and arguments that our students may be struggling to get across to us?18 After all, until they learn the rhetorical conventions that we use to interpret text, students will inevitably have ideas to communicate that don’t come clear to us as readers of their texts. (And of course, no matter how experienced we are at reading our ESL writers’ essays, there remain turns of phrase in them which we will misinterpret or fail to interpret--expressions invented out of the students’ interlanguages or originating in the Englishes of their home countries.) I believe there would be something qualitatively different about composition instruction if, acknowledging this quandary, we as teachers had more humility about our own abilities to comprehend our students (especially our ESL students), and more faith that when they write they are genuinely trying to communicate ideas that are important to them. I believe that far more attention should be given in course design to "scaffolding" in general and, in particular, to negotiation for the meaning in our students’ texts. It was in the spirit of these beliefs that Phil and I designed into our 101C course the course elements described in the next section--elements not only intended to assist the students in coming to and clarifying ideas, but also

18 Sometimes, of course, we take on these roles not willingly but out of compulsion, when we are asked to teach courses that either don’t offer our students opportunities for clarification and negotiation of meaning, or that rush students through these processes.
meant to motivate and appropriately challenge them, so they might indeed succeed at communicating real, valuable insights and arguments.
Modified Thematic Assignment Sequencing

A significant difference between our course and the standard 101C (or freshman composition) course was that the assignments our students wrote, with the exception of their diagnostic essay, all explored one controversial topic (in various ways, from various angles). Our choice to require our students to concentrate on single issues was based upon the work of researchers in both L1 and L2 composition. In L1 composition, Irwin (1993) argues for teaching from a research-oriented syllabus which requires students to research issues and write about them in depth, demonstrating increasing awareness of the variety of existing opinions about them. Irwin uses this approach both in classes organized around themes that her entire class explores, and in classes in which each student individually chooses a topic and researches that topic independently. Pytlik (1993) would approve of both of Irwin’s means of organizing classes. She reviews the L1 literature on sequencing assignments in order to foster critical thinking, and she discusses how writing can be taught as a way of knowing, of discovering, and of exploring complex problems and conflicting viewpoints. In Pytlik’s own classes, she uses a classic thematic approach, requiring all her students to write on the same theme; for example, she has developed a model eight-assignment sequence on the theme of “family.”

In the L2 composition field, Snow and Brinton (1988) point out that when ESL

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19 The students’ topic selection process is described in a footnote to the chapter "The Course."
students concentrate on a single topic for an extended time, the integration for them of reading, writing and study skills is highly desirable and effective. Schlumberger and Clymer (1989a) explain that recursive encounters with a topic allow both native and nonnative speakers of English to gradually amass a body of material to think and write about. By [their] examining a topic from different perspectives over time, the students’ lexical knowledge increases even as their intellectual understanding of the subject deepens: the result is greater fluency. (p. 122)

Thus, Phil and I had good grounds for providing our students with "recursive encounters" with single topics. We sought middle ground between a whole-class theme approach and an individual research-based approach to our syllabus design, requiring students to explore single issues in paired groups of four (eight students in all, per issue--structured academic controversy requires that a minimum of eight students share each controversial topic). We chose this "modified" thematic approach in order to provide students with some freedom of topic choice, while still offering them the opportunity to explore their issue in discourse and collaboration with others.

Portfolio Grading

Phil and I included portfolio grading of the students’ individual writing in our course for many reasons, including the way it would allow us each to assume the role of "coach"

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\[20\] In Phil’s class of eight students, there were two different groups exploring two different issues (gun control and housing the homeless), paired with two "sister" groups in my class. In my class of sixteen students, there were two additional "sister" groups paired with each other, exploring a third issue (interracial and intercultural relationships).
in helping our students write their assignments up to our standards. As Elbow and Belanoff put it, portfolio grading frees writing teachers "to concentrate...energies on useful comments" (1991a, p. 117). We wanted to be able to focus our comments and our conferences on communications which would help our students revise and edit, rather than communications which would explain and justify assigned grades; we hoped thus to emphasize the negotiation that earlier I claimed would enable students to tackle new, significantly more complex writing tasks. In addition, we hoped to use energy we might otherwise have put into traditional grading to conduct and supervise the cooperative learning activities and collaboration in our course.

In addition to such practical considerations, Phil and I also weighed the philosophical arguments for portfolio grading into our decision to include this method of evaluation in our course. Such justifications have been discussed extensively by L1 composition researchers, and are also working their way into the L2 literature. Butler, an L1 researcher, points out that many teachers of writing process who have shifted only their classroom activities have "founedered upon the hard rocks of evaluation" (1985, p. 57). An instructor's grading system, he says, "is the real arbiter of what is valued and what is not" (1985, p. 67). In other words, we need to put our grades where our mouths are: If we espouse a process approach we need to provide our students with incentive and opportunity to improve their writings through editing and revising. Portfolio grading does so, and thus, as Reid puts it, portfolio grading "reinforces the commitment to writing processes and multiple
Another reason we chose a portfolio system is that it would allow us to "withhold judgment of a student's progress until a suitable period of time had elapsed which would indeed allow for measurable growth" (Harmon, 1988, p. 78). Traditional assignment grading, on the other hand, might conflate writing development with unrelated variance in assignment performance, and it could set up unrealistic expectations for growth in writing with its week-to-week, linear model of progress (Harmon, 1988).

Once Phil and I had settled on using portfolio grading for our students' individual writings, we still had to decide what type of portfolio system to use. When portfolio grading takes place and what portfolios contain vary from instructor to instructor. Instructors who don't want to "insist that students be judged on all their works" (Elbow and Belanoff, 1991b, p. 14) often allow students to select which papers to include in their portfolios. As Krest puts

21Though many teachers use portfolio methods exclusively, Butler suggests using a mix of grading methods, seeking a "range of evaluative techniques" in order to "give recognition to the students' efforts during the term, and at the same time assess the students' abilities at the end of the course." A final grade in a course, he says, "could be composed of five elements: journal writing, the student writing folio of first drafts, compositions published or presented to real audiences, and a holistic assessment of two pieces of writing, one an edited piece selected by the student, and the other an impromptu writing task assigned by the teacher" (1985, p. 65).

22As a teaching assistant, I once observed a writing instructor give one of her least proficient students and "A" on a summary because it had briefly and to the point conveyed the gist of the summarized article, as compared to the ramblings of other student summaries. Very obviously, however, in this case the student was pleasing her teacher as a matter of accident—the student's very limitations as a writer and her inability to produce text at length had happened to work in her favor. This is a classic example of how, using a traditional grading system, variance in performance unrelated to progress in writing proficiency or other qualities we intend to measure when grading (effort and class participation, for example) can ultimately figure into a student's grade in a course.
it, this selection allows students to "fail" on some papers without failing, and it gives them the opportunity to just "practice writing on others" (1987, p. 39). It enables students to abandon some essays in progress in order to concentrate on the revision of the essays which have the most potential. Thus, the student can become actively and purposefully involved in judging the quality of his or her own work. Furthermore, a selection policy gives students a chance to experiment with writing: It allows for the variability in writing performance that is especially wide during experimentation.

Butler has his students put only first and final, student-published drafts of their essays in their portfolios, but most instructors, Krest among them, ask students to include multiple drafts-in-progress well as final drafts in theirs. The inclusion of these multiple drafts in portfolios makes it possible for teachers and researchers to investigate students’ writing processes, and to grade for whether students are actually incorporating suggested changes into their essays. It also makes it possible for teachers and teacher-researchers to notice when they themselves have been failing to suggest important changes in their comments on early drafts. So requiring the inclusion of multiple drafts in portfolios not only allows teachers to review whether students are incorporating their suggestions and making significant changes in their essays—it also allows them to take the shortcomings of their own comments on early drafts into account when meting out final grades.

For the above reasons, Phil and I asked our students to include in their portfolios...
multiple drafts of their writings and select which writings to include. The selection, however, was constrained, since we wanted our students to demonstrate competency in each of three areas: personal experience writing, summary writing, and other academic writing (either argumentative or informative.) We borrowed this limited selection concept (specifying the types of writing samples that would go into our students’ portfolios), along with other ideas for our portfolio system and handout, from Elbow and Belanoff (1991b; see Appendix C for a copy of our portfolio handout, which details our system). Our limited selection policy allowed our students some of the advantages of a regular selection policy, while ensuring that they didn’t specialize in any particular essay genre and avoid learning about other genres which we considered important to their preparation for freshman composition. Limited selection also gave students a context in which to learn the distinctions among essay genres.

Another idea we borrowed from Elbow and Belanoff (1991b) was that of grading a "trial run" paper midsemester. We modified the "trial run" concept and instead incorporated into our grading system a late semester "working portfolio examination" which was intended to alleviate some of the "frustration and anger" which may result for students who are surprised by lower-than-expected grades they receive "only at the end of a course" (Reid, 1993, p. 250). We also asked students to include a writer’s note for each writing sample in their portfolios explaining what they tried to accomplish in it, what they liked about it, and what they would still change about it if they could. This was intended both to encourage our students’ metacognition about their writing (Reid, 1993, p. 249) and to give us a window into this metacognition. In our portfolio handout, we let the students know their grade was
partly based on whether they thought about their writing, telling them to "make sure your instructors can tell from your drafts that you thought about how you might improve your writing assignments and that you attempted to improve them." The writers' notes gave us extra evidence about these matters.

Phil and I did not use portfolio grading exclusively. Like Butler, we combined it with other methods. We graded our students' group projects in a traditional fashion. Our main reason for this was simply to save time: We wanted to teach a number and variety of assignments, and including some traditionally graded, one-shot assignments gave us more time to do so. We chose to have our students revise and edit their individual assignments rather than group ones because we wanted to ensure that each of our students was actually getting experience at revision and editing. We also assumed that revising and editing an individually authored document would be an easier process than revising and editing a group-authored document. We knew that many of our students would be having their first experience in our class of receiving between-draft feedback from their instructors, so we tried to keep things relatively simple. (Furthermore, the early individual assignments were the ones for which we had higher standards, and they were the ones we felt most of our students could revise to meet higher standards.)

Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Writing

Our inclusion in our course of cooperative learning activities and collaborative writings was grounded in both composition and educational literature. Phil and I hoped, and research led us to believe, that these two elements of our course would encourage meaningful
interactions among our students, which in turn would help them learn language better. As Jacob, Rottenberg, Patrick and Wheeler put it while briefly reviewing research on the topic, "the opportunity to negotiate meaning in a language helps the learner to move from the most basic strings of words to more sophisticated, nativelike use of grammar and vocabulary" (1996, p. 262).

Many researchers in L2 composition, such as Kagan (1990), Long and Porter (1985), Reid and Powers (1993), Savova and Donato (1991), Shlumberger and Clymer (1989), and Pica, Young, and Doughty (1987) have suggested that group work can provide just this sort of opportunity. Kagan says that "as students interact during cooperative learning, the goals of increasing comprehensibility of input and increasing the quantity and quality of language production complement each other: Through the negotiation process the language production of one student becomes the comprehensible input for another. Thus, cooperative learning simultaneously serves to aid both understanding and practice of language and content" (1990, p. 2:11). Long and Porter claim that group work "increases language practice opportunities" and "improves the quality of student talk," encouraging "genuine communicative practice, including negotiation for meaning" (1985, p. 208 & 211). Jacob, Rottenberg, Patrick and Wheeler say that cooperative learning, theoretically, should benefit second language learners by providing them with "opportunities for premodified input that focuses on meaning in low-

24"Meaning-centered" activities, according to Savova and Donato, are those which require a learner to "attend to and choose among the meanings of the words s/he and others use." They contrast these with exercises in which "success is always determined by the accuracy of the student's response (morphological changes, primarily) rather than by its informational content" (1991, p. 12).
anxiety contexts" as well as "interactionally modified input...and comprehensible output" (1996, p. 254).

Reid and Powers investigated the benefits of collaborative tutorial groups, and found that "increased oral ability was...a central part of the learning process" for the students they studied, and that the "oral experience" the students had lead them to "develop a vocabulary for writing and talking about writing in English" (1993, p. 29). Dam, Legenhausen, and Wolff have claimed that collaborative writing in particular is "an excellent interactional activity" (1990, p. 325).

In addition to providing students with opportunities for the sort of input and output that foster language acquisition, cooperative learning and collaborative writing can also encourage students to think critically, and thus to write better. (And perhaps better understand critical discourse and its role both within and outside of academia.) Phil and I based this assumption--and our syllabus--on the work of educational researchers Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991). They claim that structured academic controversy, the cooperative learning activity on which our syllabus was modeled, "promotes critical thinking, higher-level reasoning, and metacognitive thought" (p. 7:2). Structured academic controversy engages students in rounds of debate and discussion as well as reversals of position: Johnson, Johnson and Smith have designed it to "capitalize" on "the conflicts among [students'] ideas, conclusions, theories, information, perspectives, opinions, and preferences" (p. 7:3).\footnote{I describe structured academic controversy in more detail later, in the section "The Course."} They do not use the term "substantive conflict," a term coined by Burnett (1993) to describe
the kind of considered disagreement which results in higher-quality collaboratively written papers. Nevertheless, in designing structured academic controversy, Johnson, Johnson and Smith have clearly attempted to structure into the activity a delay of consensus and examination of literature in order to foster substantive conflict, and thus better writing and more learning. As they put it,

when teachers structure controversies within cooperative learning groups, students are required to research and prepare a position (reasoning both deductively and inductively); advocate a position (thereby orally rehearsing the relevant information and teaching their knowledge to peers); analyze, critically evaluate, and rebut information; reason deductively and inductively; take the perspective of others; and synthesize and integrate information into factual and judgmental conclusions that are summarized into a joint position to which all sides can agree. (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991, p. 7:8)

During the early phases of structured academic controversy, pairs of students defend polarized positions; these pairs are argumentatively pitted against each other. I believed that, as a result, structured academic controversy would be particularly helpful in teaching, as Eason (1994) advocates, the American expectation of a clear opponent or other side in argumentative writing.

Chinese writers, for example, may be "reluctant to take a stand" and "prefer moderate positions" (Reid, 1993, p. 62, citing a large but unpublished study by Feng Chenyu). Writing teachers "have a responsibility to teach the expectations of the English audience" to such students, according to Leki (1992, p. 103), since they "advance or are impeded in their progress by their ability to manipulate the target culture's... rhetoric."

Phil and I combined structured academic controversy in our course with shared
document collaboration--something Johnson, Johnson and Smith suggest--for the challenging assignments at the end of the course which required synthesis of argument. We did so because we assumed two heads--or three or four heads--are better than one when the task at hand may be beyond the reach of some group members. In this way, we reasoned, we could justify assigning our students a five-to-seven page research paper, rather than a two-page research essay, which is the longest source paper typically assigned in 101C. We hoped the collaborative research paper writing students did in our classes would provide them with a very rich context for understanding the complex research writing they would later face alone in freshman composition. Chapman, Leonard, and Thomas have suggested as much, calling co-authoring a "natural form of cooperative learning," and claiming that "once students have experienced success with a co-authored paper, writing an individual paper becomes easier" (1992, p. 46).

Phil and I hoped our students' writing groups would become what Moll terms "collectively created...mutually supporting zones of proximal development" (1989, p. 67). We were banking on the claims of cooperative learning researchers that students in their groups would mutually influence each other,26 "consider[ing] each other's ideas and conclusions and coordinating their efforts" (Johnson, Johnson & Smith 1991, p. 2:8). We recognized that we might be entering dangerous territory--that L2 writing groups can suffer from problems that arise from in-group/out-group distinctions [a concern of Carson and

26This mutual influence, according to Johnson, Johnson and Smith, occurs in well-functioning groups through "direct influence, social modeling, and situational norms" (1991, p.2:8).
Nelson (1994) regarding peer response groups, and that L2 writing groups can be "difficult for the new teacher to manage," stymied by non-participatory or absent members, impeded by "differing student learning styles" or impaired because some students do not "know how to negotiate" or do not "choose to negotiate" [potential "group project" problems discussed by Reid (1993, p. 173)]. Phil and I also recognized that our students would have to overcome differences in language abilities, communication styles, politeness strategies and notions about the conventions of "good" writing [issues explored by Allaei and Connor (1990)]. We hoped, however, that the advantages of cooperative learning and collaborative writing would outweigh the disadvantages, and we tried to establish classroom atmospheres in which they would. And, of course, we intended for my case study research to inform whether they did.

27Carson and Nelson are especially concerned with Asian students: "If Japanese or Chinese students perceive the other writing group members as strangers and/or competitors for high grades or positive teacher comments, they may behave as if the others were outgroup members and act with corresponding antagonistic behaviors" (1994, p. 27). They point out that peer response groups are usually structured to benefit individual writers, and they seem to suggest shared document collaboration as an alternative, saying that "if a Japanese or Chinese student perceives the writing group as functioning for a common goal (e.g., the improvement of all student's writing) or a common fate (e.g., a grade by the instructor), it is possible that the group will function as an ingroup with the corresponding helping and supporting behaviors" (1994, p. 26).
THE COURSE

Getting Started, Exploratory Writing

In the beginning of the semester, students wrote a diagnostic essay, and Phil and I introduced them to the course and to the software of the English department computer labs, including e-mail and word processing software. At various points in the course, we assigned readings from Ideas and Details (Bauman, 1992) about personal experience writing, revision, argumentative writing, and summary writing. Ideas and Details is a freshman composition text, albeit a very readable one; Phil and I chose it rather than an ESL composition text as part of our "scaffolding" and "sheltering" approach to the class. We supplemented the text with handouts, both borrowed and original, about sending e-mail, word processing, writing summaries, arguing positions (including Rogerian forms of argument), locating sources, finding statistical information, citing sources, and coming to group consensus.

Early in the semester, Writing Center tutors came to our classes and introduced our students to the services of Iowa State's Writing Center; many students later sought Writing Center assistance with portfolio preparation. Phil and I distributed and re-collected our respective preclass surveys (his on computer use, mine, as described below, on writing attitudes).

Then the core activity of the semester began: The students each chose an issue with a clear pro and con side, an issue on which they would concentrate their thinking, writing
and research for the duration of the semester. As mentioned above, the issue they chose had to have attracted the interest of at least seven other students, because Phil and I were grouping the students into paired groups of four, with eight students in all per issue. (Students had "home groups" and "sister groups.") Their first assignment on their topics, as mentioned above, was an "exploratory writing" assignment, an assignment modeled on an assignment previously used in English 104. It asked students to explore either a pro or a con position on their issue, arguing from personal experience and knowledge.

In their home groups of four, students chose which two of them would argue the pro position and which two would argue the con. They were assured that, whichever position they chose, they would soon be writing from the opposite perspective, and that eventually they would likely be arguing a compromise position. (See Table 1, on the following page, for a schematic representation of student groupings and pairings.)

Each student peer reviewed the paper of his or her home group position partner--the other student in his or her group who shared the same stance on the group's issue. Students were also asked to give copies of their papers to their position partners in their sister groups. (The technologically proficient students with sister groups in the other class had the option of sending the papers by e-mail. Most students at this point, however, accomplished these

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28 The students each nominated a controversial topic, which could come from, but was not limited to, preliminary reading they had done from the reader America Now (Atwan, 1994). (Each student had chosen an article to read, and had been asked to write and e-mail to our combined class e-mail list a nutshell statement about that article--this in anticipation of their later summary assignment.) Then students submitted their personal first, second and third choice from the list of all topics nominated. Finally, Phil and I divided the students into groups based on the popularity of the various topics and based on each student's personal topic choices.
Table 1. Student groupings and pairings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Phil's class:</th>
<th>My class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is gun control necessary?</td>
<td>XX OO</td>
<td>XX OO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should we house the homeless?</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there racial boundaries to loving someone?</td>
<td>XX OO</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each X or O represents one student. An X represents a student who first defended a pro position, then a con position on his or her issue; an O represents a student who first defended a con, then a pro position. All X’s sharing the same topic are "position partners," as are all O’s sharing the same topic.

Each grouping of four students (XX OO) represents one "home" group or consensus research paper group. On each topic there are two such groups, termed "sister" groups.
exchanges by hand, as they were still experimenting with sending basic e-mail messages).

Students then came together in their home groups and discussed and debated their polarized positions on their issues. Next, teacher conferences (along with the previous peer review) helped students decide which of their first two essays to begin revising and editing for inclusion in their individual portfolios, and how to go about the revision.

**Reversing Positions**

After drafting their exploratory writings, the students reversed positions on their issues. Then each student wrote two summaries based on articles which took a position opposite to his or her stand in the exploratory writing. (The summary assignment, like the exploratory writing assignment, was modeled on an English 104 equivalent, with some added instructions about the cooperative learning activities going on in the class, as well as some extra, explicit rhetorical information about summary writing.) A library research field class helped students locate the articles they summarized. The summaries were peer reviewed and sent to position partners in the students' sister groups; thus each student had access to eight articles.

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29In their home groups, each student had two minutes to summarize his or her exploratory writing (for a total of eight minutes). Then each pro pair and con pair of position partners within the group had five minutes to present their core arguments to each other. Then for twenty minutes the students discussed their arguments and refutations to each others arguments. After the discussion, the group generated a list of the arguments and counterarguments they had developed. It was recommended that each group have one student in each of the following roles: timekeeper, alternate timekeeper (of an opposite position from the timekeeper, to keep time when the timekeeper was speaking), secretary (to record arguments and counterarguments), and facilitator.
summaries of articles supporting his or her new position. The peer review and a later additional round of conferences with instructors helped students choose one of their own summaries and revise and edit it.

The next assignment required that the students, in groups of four, co-author an outline for a position paper which would argue for their new stand on their issue. The groups consisted of sets of four position partners from the paired sister groups--those students contemporaneously arguing the same positions on the same issues. (For the groups cooperating across classes, this cooperation proved to be problematic, despite the e-mail communications with which they could establish connections. One pair of students in my class wound up working independently of their position partners in their sister group; the other pairs worked out their logistics more or less successfully.) Students supported their outlined argument with information from the articles they had summarized, as well as statistical and other information they looked up during and after another library field day. Then they presented their outlines to the class for response to and critique of their

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30 Or at least informing, since some students summarized neutral, informative articles, saying they were unable to find articles that took a stand on their issue, and that these informative articles would be, quite naturally, very useful.

31 Originally, Phil and I had meant for the position paper outline to be a collaboratively authored paper (written in addition to the consensus research paper). But, typically, we found ourselves running short on time midway through the semester, and we felt it important to leave enough time for the students to collaboratively write the consensus research paper. So we changed the position paper assignment to a position outline, in order to lessen the writing demands on the students and to encourage them to focus, during this assignment, on meeting specific rhetorical expectations for argumentative writing (appropriately introducing and concluding the argument; maintaining a reasonable tone; and including both support and refutation, and where appropriate statistical evidence and numerical data).
arguments. (In my class, class feedback was both oral and written, and was based on the assignment grading criteria spelled out in the assignment handout). At this point in the course, each student also turned in for instructor feedback a working portfolio of individual writing: drafts-in-progress of his or her selected essay and summary.

**Coming to Consensus**

Finally, students came back to their original home groups of four. (Two students who had outlined the pro side of their group's issue reunited with two students who had outlined its con side--these were the same four who had discussed and debated their original exploratory essays.) In these home groups, students wrote the consensus research paper, which argued for a position on which all of the members of their group could agree. (Note: The position paper outline assignment handout and the consensus research paper handout were not strictly based on any English 104 or 105 assignment handouts, but they were intended to provide the students with a notion of the expectations their 104 instructors would have for English 104 position paper and source paper assignments, and the expectations their 105 instructors would have of their documented essay assignment.)

In my class, because some students had been frustrated about inequality of contribution from group members during the outline project, students elected to be graded on their participation in the consensus research project. We decided that participation would count for one-fifth of their consensus research paper grade, and that it would be determined in one of three ways, based on the choice of each group. I would either 1) give each individual in each group a separate participation grade, or 2) give all members of a group...
the same participation grade. If I gave individual grades (option one), groups could a) choose to just advise me about how they thought I should evaluate each student in their group, providing me with written comments, and if they chose, a letter grade. Or they could b) actually determine their own participation grades, with these being the average of the grades individually given them by themselves and their fellow group members. In this latter case, I required that students assign all group members letter grades, and I strongly recommended that they supplement these with written explanations.

Option two, my grading the participation of all group members with one grade, I tried to make an exacting choice, requiring written comments, a letter grade, minutes of meetings to show equality of participation, and taped formal procedures for conflict management. I did this because I knew otherwise it could be easy for groups to just decide all members wanted an "A" for participation. In the end, only one group chose this route, giving themselves, as might be expected, an "A." Though they didn't fully meet my required submissions for evidence of their deserving this "A," they were, in my opinion, a well-functioning group with fully participating members, and I did not hesitate to assign them an "A."

Wrapping Up

At the end of the course, students turned in for evaluation a final portfolio containing a selection of text from the consensus research paper for which they had been the primary author, as well as their final drafts of their two selected essays, and any earlier drafts of their essays which had received peer or instructor comment. They were also asked to submit
writer's notes for each piece. (As described above in the portfolio grading section, the students were asked in these notes to explain for each of their writing samples what they tried to accomplish in writing and revising it, what they liked about it, and what they would change if they could.\(^3\)

The students' final exams were essays reflecting on their writing attitude changes as they expected these to be measured in their postclass surveys. Because by this point the course was essentially over, and the students would not have the opportunity to revise or edit these essays, the grading criteria for the final exams were simple. Students were told their essays would be graded on whether they had stated a controlling idea and on whether and how well they had supported it with a discussion of at least three of the factors measured by the surveys.

**Stages of Structured Academic Controversy**

The syllabus of this course was patterned on the stages of structured academic controversy, and it included all seven stages: 1) preparing positions, 2) exchanging ideas, 3) presenting positions, 4) advocating and refuting, 5) reversing perspectives, 6) reaching a decision, and 7) processing (Johnson, Johnson & Smith 1991, p. 7:22). We stretched these seven steps out over the entire semester and integrated them with the students' writing.

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\(^3\)In practice, these notes were not as complete as we had hoped, and some students, despite written reminders, failed to turn them in. In retrospect, if I were to assign them again I would assign them during the working portfolio stage and give feedback on them in order to obtain more of the information I would like to have when evaluating my students' work.
assignments. "Exchanging ideas" occurred in our course when students shared their exploratory writings during peer review with position partners in their home groups. "Presenting positions" occurred when the students shared their exploratory writings with position partners in their sister groups.

"Presenting positions" also occurred, along with "advocating and refuting," during the class session in which each group discussed and debated the pro and con sides of their issue. "Reversing perspectives" occurred when the students wrote summaries and position paper outlines taking stands opposite to those they had taken in their exploratory writings, and then presented their outlined positions to the entire class. "Reaching a decision" occurred as each home group came to consensus about the position the group would take in the co-authored consensus research paper, and as students in their groups worked out the details of their particular consensus positions in the writing of their papers. "Processing" involved ongoing class and electronic discussion, and each student's filling out the consensus research paper evaluation form and sending regular, assigned e-mail notes to his or her instructor.

In a sense, then, Phil and I borrowed heavily from Johnson, Johnson and Smith in designing our course. We had, however, greatly expanded on their concept. A standard structured academic controversy as designed by these educators requires only eighty-five minutes of class time, with some additional follow-up time for discussion of group interactions.\(^{33}\) Structured academic controversy does not typically involve the writing of

\(^{33}\)They do, however, present an extended controversy taught by Roger Johnson which takes place over six one-hour class periods.
formal compositions—just a group report drafted in thirty minutes at the end of the activity. An extensive evaluation of the course was thus warranted on the grounds not only that we were using a cooperative learning activity rarely used in composition classes, but also that we were using it in a unique fashion.
METHODS

Students

Our students were 24 Iowa State University students who took English 101C--advanced composition for non-native speakers of English--during summer semester 1994. Sixteen were in my section and eight were in Phil's. All but one were international undergraduate students ranging in age from 19 to 26. The exception was an adult student (over 30 years old) from Puerto Rico who was taking the course for professional purposes and to prepare himself for later graduate education.

Seventeen of the students had been in the United States for 1 year or less; four for 1-2 years; two for 3-4 years; and only one (the adult student) for more than 4 years.

Upon entrance into the university, the international undergraduates' TOEFL scores had ranged from 507 to 607 (mean score: 540; median: 533). For placement purposes, they had all taken a timed, holistically scored essay test and had been determined to require either one or two semesters of ESL composition instruction (English 101B and/or English 101C) prior to mainstreaming into freshman composition. At least seven of our students had placed into English 101B prior to taking 101C, according to their self-reports.

At least two students who placed directly into 101C were attempting to simultaneously take their first semester of freshman composition at a local university. Two other students had taken at least one semester of freshman composition already at colleges or universities other than Iowa State (and another had audited a freshman composition class), but these students had still placed into ISU's pre-freshman composition ESL classes. Two more
students had already taken a semester of ESL composition at another college. Eight students reported having taken intensive English courses in an Intensive English Program in the US.

Many of our students were ethnically Chinese--eleven total. Of these, one was from Hong Kong, one from the People's Republic of China, two from Taiwan, and seven from Malaysia. Two other students were Malaysian, but not ethnically Chinese--one was Malay and the other was ethnically a mix of Malay and Indian.

Five students were South Korean and four were Hispanic (one each from Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Costa Rica). One student came from Indonesia. Many of our students were multilingual. Table 2 lists, by group, the languages spoken by each student in home and in school back in his or her homeland. The table also identifies their genders and home countries.

All the students agreed to participate in this study by signing a consent form submitted to and approved by the Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Committee (reproduced in Appendix D).

Case Study Approach to Evaluation

In evaluating our innovative 101C course, I took a case study approach. I did so because I was interested in getting a good picture of how our course worked. A simple survey study would not have let me evaluate the course as fully, or in as ongoing a fashion. A diary study might have, but it would not have been as methodologically eclectic. Methodological eclecticism strengthens case studies, providing a researcher with "converging lines of inquiry" derived from multiple sources of evidence (Yin, 1994, p. 34).
Table 2. Students' genders, home countries, and self-reports of languages spoken at home and in previous schools, by group and class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class, Group, Home Country, Gender</th>
<th>Languages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roberta's class</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Homelessness&quot; group</td>
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<tr>
<td>• US (Puerto Rican), M</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), M</td>
<td>Cantonese, Malay</td>
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<td>• Malaysia (Malay), F</td>
<td>Malay</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), M</td>
<td>Mandarin, Cantonese</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Gun Control&quot; group</td>
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<tr>
<td>• People's Republic of China, F</td>
<td>&quot;Chinese&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• South Korea, M</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>• South Korea, M</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Japan, M</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Interracial Relationships&quot; group</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Japan, M</td>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Malay/Indian), F</td>
<td>Malay, English, &quot;Chinese&quot; and Tamil</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hong Kong, F</td>
<td>Cantonese</td>
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<td>• Indonesia, M</td>
<td>Indonesian</td>
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Table 2. (continued)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class, Group, Home Country, Gender</th>
<th>Languages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roberta's class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Interracial Relationships&quot; group 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), F</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• South Korea, M</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Costa Rica, F</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Guatemala, M</td>
<td>Spanish, English, Italian</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phil's class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Homelessness&quot; group</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), M</td>
<td>&quot;Chinese,&quot; Malay</td>
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<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), M</td>
<td>Mandarin, Cantonese, Malay</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Taiwan, F</td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Taiwan, M</td>
<td>Taiwanese, Mandarin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>&quot;Gun Control&quot; group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), M</td>
<td>Malay, English, Mandarin,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Malaysia (Chinese), lived in</td>
<td>Cantonese, Hakka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore 10 years, M</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nicaragua, M</td>
<td>English, Mandarin</td>
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<tr>
<td>• South Korean, M</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>• South Korean, M</td>
<td>Korean</td>
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Case studies are appropriate "when a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which [an] investigator has little or no control" (Yin, 1994, p. 9). This certainly describes the conditions I faced as an investigator trying to describe how and why I felt this course worked (or didn't), and how and why the scaffolding in the course supported or failed to support the students in their writing and learning. My lack of control over events was due partly to the radical nature of the course design changes I chose to make and study; had I been interested in smaller changes over which I had more control, an experimental approach might have been more appropriate.

Case study also promised to be do-able; a "major strength" of the method "is its suitability to small scale investigations of the type often carried out by graduate students and/or classroom practitioners" (Nunan, 1992, p. 88). Case studies, according to Nunan, are particularly suited to...action-oriented research projects where the purpose is, in the first instance, to help practitioners enhance their understanding of, and solve problems related to, their own professional workplace, and where the problem of external validity is 'less significant than in other types of research.' (1992, p. 89)

The situation Nunan describes fit my task as an evaluator of the pilot 101C course, since I was in a position of trying to solve problems in my own workplace: I needed to "enhance my understanding" of whether my solutions seemed to work, and of what new problems they might create. I was not interested in putting a great deal of time and energy, for example, into operationalizing definitions of freshman compositions and judging to what

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34"Who" "what" and "where" questions lend themselves better to survey and archival analysis techniques, says Yin, and investigations of historical events necessitate historical methods (1994, pp. 5-8).
extent my students' compositions constituted freshman compositions. I was more interested in trusting my own knowledge, as a former teacher of 104 and 105, about the criteria by which I judge ISU freshman compositions, so I could move on to describing what Phil and I—and our students—saw as contributing to their learning during our course. Ultimately, I wanted my research to help me decide how I would change the course if I taught it in the future, and I wanted it to help me articulate recommendations to teachers attempting similar courses. (For more detailed information on the design of the case study, see Appendix E.)

Admittedly, in addition to the aforementioned matches between my methods and my research context is another, more controversial, fit between case study methods and the research task I faced. In designing, teaching, and researching the innovative 101C course, I had, in a very real sense, an educational ax to grind: I wanted to show how the abilities and capabilities of ESL students in general, and 101C students in particular, have been underestimated. A case study report would allow me to tell a certain "transformative narrative," as Newkirk puts it, of what occurred—a narrative in which "a member of a submerged group" is invisible, labelled and stereotyped "until someone, often a teacher...doubts or rejects the label and enables the individual to reveal himself or herself as competent—or even gifted" (1992, p. 134 & 142). As an example of a case study involving transformative narrative, Newkirk discusses the work of Nancy Atwell, a teacher-researcher who encouraged Laura, one of her case-study subjects, to transform from a "ghost" student shunted into learning disability labs into an active writer, reader, and participant in Atwell's collaborative classroom (Atwell, 1987). Likewise, though in not so
dramatic a fashion, I hoped my teaching and research would show that the capabilities of 101C students are underestimated in a way which leaves them less prepared than they could be for freshman composition.

Newkirk encourages researchers such as myself "to admit, from the beginning, that we are all storytellers." He does not have a problem with storytellers' inherent bias or lack of objectivity; he sees these as inevitable even in more positivistic research. He does, however, point out the problem of "polyvocality" for the case study researcher: How does one both tell a compelling story and complicate it at the same time with what Newkirk calls "discordant voices" (1992, p. 148)?

Taking Newkirk's reservations and insights seriously, I choose to admit openly to having viewed myself as a "transformative agent"35 both when designing and teaching the revised 101C course. To deal with what he calls the "problem of polyvocality," I allow a multiplicity of discordant voices into my case study report by structuring it somewhat unconventionally. Typically, composition researchers who conduct case studies focus their reports on one or a few individual student writers and tell their stories. In the following report, I instead use my data to answer for the course overall and for each of the main course elements how it supported or frustrated the students in their writing and learning. This allows me to include, in commentary upon these subjects, the voices of many students: those who felt disempowered by the course and its elements, as well as those who felt empowered; those who felt the pain was worth the gain, and those who did not.

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35*agent" in the sense of chemical agent, something which catalyzes, not in the grammatical sense of agent as doer
Furthermore, where transformative narration is part of my case study report, I generally, so as to stay out of the role of promoter, let the students tell their own tales.

In breaking down the evaluation by course element, I inevitably present a view which highlights the contributions of these elements to the success or failure of the course, and downplays or ignores other factors. Given my aims as a teacher and course designer, however, I find this a productive sort of perspective-taking. These are the areas I had considered important in designing the course, and these are the areas I felt most needed examination.

This style of course evaluation contrasts with a more traditional one focused on how well particular goals and objective have been met; for the pilot 101C course, I didn't consider such an evaluation appropriate. Though traditional evaluation may be ideal for the (rare) course which is part of a consciously designed curriculum with well-articulated goals and objectives, I believe a less rigid approach is needed for evaluating a course such as this, whose design has been neglected, and which fits into a more or less accidentally evolved curriculum (Golliher, 1995). Moreover, in my context, I thought traditional evaluation would be downright counterproductive, serving as it would to foreground old goals and objectives (what the course had once been intended to do) rather than innovations (what it might become). As the most immediate articulator of the course's goals and objectives, I didn't even feel that an evaluation based on them made sense; indeed, I recalled working up course objectives for the course policy sheet as a preliminary and somewhat frustrating exercise in retaining what I felt I must of the customarily stated course objectives (more at goals, really), and including new ones to justify the more radical aspects of the revised
course, aspects which otherwise might not obviously fit under the "objectives umbrella," as it were. I had no desire to evaluate the course based on how well it met these preliminarily stated, working goals.

My position on this issue fits with Graves' perspective on course goals and objectives and their articulation (1996). She points out that teachers "report...that they cannot clearly formulate their goals and objectives until after they have taught [a] course at least once, and that for many teachers, the setting of course goals and objectives "is not the entry point into the process of course development" (Graves, 1996, p. 19). Like these teachers, I often find the articulation of goals and objectives to be a creative as well as rational process; inductive as well as deductive; iterative, experiential, and contextual. Under the circumstances, I think it is important to employ flexible means of evaluation, such as case study, where entry points other than goals and objectives predominate in course development. Especially under pilot conditions, flexible means of evaluation may be essential, particularly in empowering teachers to contribute to ongoing course development (as flexible evaluation frees them up from strict adherence to the very goals and objectives which may need to evolve with the course).

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36 The new objectives were "to instruct you [the student] in the various uses of computers in writing" and "to provide [the student] with experience in collaborative writing."

37 I suspect this process of goal and objective setting is not uncommon in educational contexts where courses have become stale.
The case study database

Case study research involves the compilation of "a case study database, that is, a formal assembly of evidence distinct from the final case study report" (Yin 1994, p. 78). My database contained multiple sources of evidence from the whole classes and from a single writing group in Phil’s class which functioned as what Yin terms an "embedded group" (a naturally occurring subset of those researched whom I could study in depth). See Table 3 for a breakdown of the contents of my database.

My data include a mix, as recommended by Yin (1994), of documentation, interviews and direct observations. The mix and variety were important not only to allow me to address a broad range of issues related to the effectiveness of the course and its elements, but also to enable me to develop differing "lines of inquiry" that might "converge" on my findings or conclusions, in what Yin terms a "corroboratory mode" (1994, p. 92).

I collected the students’ written compositions--both the consensus research papers and the individually written and revised assignments in their portfolios--in order to be able to pass my own judgments on their success at writing up to what I saw as the standards in ISU’s freshman composition program. The students’ individual portfolios, which contained drafts of essays in progress and instructor’s comments, provided a paper trail that spoke not only to the students’ ultimate success but also to the helpfulness of the portfolio grading element of the course in the students’ achievement of that success.

For additional data on these matters, I interviewed Phil after the class was over, eliciting his opinions on the overall quality of the students’ writing and his views in general about how the elements of the course helped or hindered the students. In addition, of
Table 3. Case study database

Data from whole classes

My set of departmental course evaluations
Portfolios of individual writings from students in both classes, and authors' notes about their revisions
Consensus research papers from each group
Consensus research paper evaluations
Pre- and postclass writing attitude surveys
Final exams in which my students discussed their changes in attitudes toward writing over the semester
E-mail communications with my students
A Daedalus Interchange synchronous computer discussion transcript from my class evaluating the position paper outline project*
Notes from two postclass interviews with Phil

Data from embedded collaborative writing group

Pre-, Mid-, and Postclass interviews (midclass interviews were conducted after the position paper outline assignment, at the beginning of the consensus research paper project)
Informal e-mail communications between group members and me
Observations and tapes of meetings
Record of meeting times, places, tasks accomplished, and group members in attendance
Drafts in progress toward the final draft of the consensus research paper

*Daedalus Software is reviewed and described by Brown, 1992. I refer only once in my case study report to data collected via Daedalus, so I refer readers to Brown rather than describe Daedalus in this methods section.
course, I had my own experiences as a participant-observer to draw upon in conducting and
writing up such evaluations.

In order to closely examine the collaborative writing element and how and whether
it contributed to students' learning, I collected extra data on a focus collaborative writing
group, the embedded group. I did this because writing groups are so controversial in the
ESL literature. (And, as I discuss in Appendix F, because scrutinizing the collaborative
writing had been the original intent of my case study!) Collection from the embedded group
of a record of their meetings and of the drafts in progress toward their consensus research
paper, as well as direct observation and audiotaping of some of their meetings, provided
evidence of their collaborative writing process. Interviews with the embedded group
included many questions designed to reveal the students' opinions, attitudes, and experiences
with this course element. The mid-class interview was timed to catch the students between
collaborative projects (the position paper outline and the consensus research paper) in order
to provide a dynamic view of how the students' opinions changed. See Appendix G for
more information about my interview methods. I describe my procedures of collecting data
on the embedded group only briefly because I have not reported much of this data in my
evaluation of the course.

In general, the data upon which I have drawn most heavily in writing my case study
report comes from the consensus research paper evaluations and the final exams which the
students wrote reflecting upon their changes in attitudes over the course (as they anticipated
these would be measured by their postclass writing attitude surveys.) So though, as I
describe above, I collected a wide variety of evidence, my case study bears out Richards and
Lockhart’s claim that “surveys and questionnaires are useful ways of gathering information about affective dimensions of teaching and learning, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation, and preferences,” and that they “enable a teacher to collect a large amount of information relatively quickly” (1994, p. 10).

The consensus research paper evaluations were designed to help me evaluate the collaborative writing and cooperative learning in the course. The final exams, though less targeted evaluations, proved to be very useful in that the students often attributed one or another change in attitude to one or another--or a combination--of the main elements of the course. In these essays students could describe downturns as well as upturns in attitude; thus the essays could reveal not only how the course elements helped, but also how they frustrated students in their learning. And because students could range fairly broadly in their essay commentary, they often offered insights into their growth and changes as writers as well. (Note: The final exam assignment is included in Appendix B.)

The writing attitude surveys upon which these essays were based provided an important additional angle from which to view the course; sometimes the quantitative data it produced corroborated what students said in their essays, and sometimes it contradicted it. The surveys also provided measures of overall shifts in student attitude that themselves inspired and focused investigation of what had transpired during the course.

In addition to the final exams and consensus research paper evaluations, the other data I draw upon a good deal in my course evaluation come (not surprisingly) from the students’ course evaluations. In the next subsection, I describe in detail these data collection instruments and methods.
Data collection instruments

Consensus research paper evaluation

The consensus research paper evaluations, as opposed to the prescribed departmental course evaluations I administered at the end of the course, were questionnaires "directed toward the particular course," as Brown (1989, p. 201), recommends. Brown also recommends that course evaluation have "focus" (p. 201). I chose this assignment as my focus, concentrating an entire form on its evaluation, since I expected the opinions elicited by it to be particularly revealing about the two most experimental elements of the course, the cooperative learning and collaborative writing. The consensus research paper was, after all, the culmination of the course's structured academic controversy, as well as its most significant collaborative writing project.

The evaluation forms (filled out by students in both classes) were designed in such a way as to elicit open-ended responses from students to questions about the consensus research paper assignment—the difficulties they had in fulfilling it as well as any rewards they had experienced. I chose to ask open-ended questions since such questions elicit responses which tend to be "more interesting to teachers," providing "more information about the quality of teaching," as they allow students "greater freedom to answer as they want" (Brown, 1989, pp. 202-204). Specifically, the consensus research paper evaluation asks the following questions to get at what about the assignment went well and what involved difficulty:
1) What did you like about writing the consensus research paper?

2) What didn’t you like?

3) What would you change about the assignment?\textsuperscript{38}

4) What wouldn’t you change?

5) What else could the instructor do to help students with the assignment? Try to be very specific.

6) What did your instructor or anyone else do which helped you fulfill the assignment?

The form’s next questions were designed to focus in on group work, since so little is still known about the dynamics of groups in ESL classrooms:

7) What did you learn about working in groups?

8) What advice would you give to a 101C student who is about to work in groups for the first time?

The last section of the form was an optional one, worded as follows:

Optional: Write 1-4 "I" statements about how you felt while doing the assignment. "I" statements take the form "I felt _____ (when _____) because _________________."

I included this last section to get specific information on how students felt when

\textsuperscript{38}This proved to be a poorly worded question, with many students construing it as asking what they would change about their paper, rather than what they thought should be different about the assignment procedures: the latter had been my intended meaning.
trying to complete the assignment. Of course, affective information from students is very important in evaluating group work in which they have been involved. As I mentioned earlier, research indicates group work may trouble ESL students considerably (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Carson & Nelson, 1994; Nelson & Murphy, 1992); research also indicates ESL students may have difficulty communicating their troubles to their teachers (Reid 1993, p. 136; Robinson & Stocker, 1994).39

"I" statements, I hoped, might open a channel for students to communicate both troubling and pleasant feelings to Phil and to me. These "I" statements are designed to allow communicators to pinpoint and reveal both positive and negative affect, and to offer explanations of their beliefs about the causes of their feelings. Gordon (1974), who uses the term "I messages," recommends that in order to communicate effectively that teachers use similar "I messages" on a regular basis with their students.

I chose to make the "I statements" section optional for students since I had already asked nine open-ended questions, and, more importantly, since some ESL students may have personal or cultural reasons for not wanting to reveal their feelings about class so directly to their teacher.

Using "I" statements in this questionnaire to collect information about students'

39As an ESL teacher, I was particularly concerned with my students' self-disclosures since, as Reid (1993, p. 136) puts it, "because of differences in educational experiences and expectations, ESL students often do not provide their teacher with clear signs that indicate confusion, acceptance, understanding, or reluctance. These differences can result in enormous frustration for the teacher as well as the students." Or students may indeed be sending signals, but American teachers unaware of how to read such comparatively subtle signals may fail entirely to notice them (Robinson & Stocker, 1994).
feelings served a dual purpose. Not only did it offer the students a channel to communicate
the information I needed as a teacher and researcher, but it also reinforced a lesson I had
given the students in communicating with each other in their groups in "I" statements. "Self-
disclosure," after all, "helps form the collaborative web," according to Lay (1989, p. 14);
teaching the students "I" statements and using them in the classroom evaluation was one way
I could contribute to the weaving of this web. To the best of my knowledge, using "I"
statements in classroom evaluation is an innovation of mine; I may indeed be unusual in even
my teaching of "I" language as part of cooperative learning activity. Despite the fact that
the teaching of the use of similar disclosure statements (variously termed "I" language or "I"
messages, for example) is prevalent in counseling contexts to facilitate and improve
communication between individuals (Suzanne Zilber, ISU Student Counseling Center,
personal communication, February 1997), I have not found the direct teaching of these
statements discussed in the cooperative learning literature. Johnson and Johnson do,
however, point out the importance of "clear" and "unambiguous" communication of ideas
and feelings in cooperative learning groups, and they encourage students to use "personal
pronouns such as 'I' and 'my'" in "complete" and "specific" messages (p. 192, 1994).

The attitude survey and reflection summaries

Attitude "plays a very important role" in the ability of ESL students to "successfully
develop skill using a second language," according to Hughey, Wormuth, Hartfiel, and Jacobs
(1983). For this reason, I chose to administer a writing attitude survey to Phil's and my
students both before and after our course, and to use the data collected in evaluating the
course. I based the survey on the most current version of the "Writing Attitude Survey" created and described by Wallace (1994). According to Brozick, this survey provides "insight into students' writing attitudes" as well as a "window into describing some of the problems the must overcome," which can "prove valuable in learning how to teach" them (1994, p. 67). Questions asked in the survey relate to the following categories: writing apprehension, sense of control about writing, belief in the usefulness of group work, desire for teacher control of class, student involvement in class, belief that writing ability is a gift, and belief in the usefulness of collaboration.40 I altered the demographic portion of the survey in order to collect data pertaining to international students, and, in the interest of brevity, I eliminated some questions (those related to attitudes toward the "usefulness of planning" in writing).41 I also made a point when administering the survey to explain some of the idioms and phrasal verbs it contained, and to encourage students to ask questions about any vocabulary in it which they did not understand. (A copy of the survey I administered is included in Appendix H.)

The Writing Attitude Study is a survey which has been thoughtfully developed. Multiple questions contribute to students' scores for each category, and factor analysis has been employed to ensure that the questions which contribute to each attitude category do indeed "hang together," at least in terms of the general ISU student population (Wallace, 40 Un fortunately, given the context of my study, this last category construes collaboration as collaborative planning, not collaborative writing.

41 Collaborative planning of individually authored papers was central to the classes first administered the Writing Attitude Survey, but was not a feature of the course I developed.
personal communication, June 1994). (Note: ISU's student population is only about 10% international.) Wallace cautions that the Writing Attitude Survey should be used "descriptively rather than prescriptively," saying that the "results have not been correlated with any other kinds of measures" and so "have to be interpreted in light of other data" (1994, p. 141-142). He also points out that "any differences in pretest and posttest scores may or may not be due to" the treatment in question--in his case collaborative planning, in mine the innovative 101C course.

Students’ scores for each attitude category are determined by the degree of agreement they indicate in their survey to statements related to that category. For example, they are asked if they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement "I avoid writing." A student who strongly agrees receives four points, and these points are added to his or her scores of one to four points for responses to the statements "Discussing writing with others is an enjoyable experience," "I enjoy writing," "Writing is a lot of fun," and "I'm no good at writing." (Scores for all but the last statement are scaled in the opposite direction of the scores for the statement "I avoid writing.") The total becomes the student’s score for the attitude category "Writing Apprehension." (Appendix H presents the survey questions and the direction of score scaling for each question.)

The Writing Attitude Survey is general in nature; however, aspects of it promised to provide interesting data relevant to my study. Comparing students’ pre- and postscores in the category "usefulness of group work" could reveal something about what the students thought about the collaborative writing in the course. Increases in the students’ scores in the category "sense of control about writing" or decreases in their scores for the categories of
"writing apprehension" or "belief that writing is a gift" could indicate ways in which the course positively contributed to the students' development as writers; more to the point, the students' explanations of either positive or negative changes in these categories would reveal information about highlights and trouble spots of our course.  

I had access to such explanations because, in keeping with Wallace's practices, Phil and I assigned students final essays requiring them to reflect on changes in their attitudes over the course of the semester (1994, p. 141). [Wallace terms these "reflection summaries" (personal communication, June 1994); I refer to them simply as "final exams" or "final essays." ]  

"By reading what individual students have to say about how their attitudes change," Wallace says, he is able to "discover a great deal" about the meaning of overall changes in the measured attitudes of whole classes (1994, p. 141). Because our students' reflection summaries were to be graded final exams, I expected the students to take the writing of them seriously and to be more  

42 I used this general writing attitude survey, as opposed to one designed for this particular study, because of the "pilot" nature of this study. A pilot case can be "much broader and less focused" than a case study which has a design informed by a previously conducted pilot study; ideally, "substantive and methodological issues" can be worked out during a pilot study which focus the final case study (Yin, 1994, p. 75). Since I lacked time, resources and opportunity for doing a proper pilot study prior to conducting my research, I chose to administer this general survey and hope that the results would, as Yin puts it, "provide conceptual clarification" (1994, p. 74) for any future research I might do into the outcomes of a course such as the one Phil and I designed.

43 When Wallace assigns these reflection essays, he gives the students the results of their post-class surveys and asks them to comment on any changes or lack of changes measured in their attitudes. Our students, however, did not receive their post-class survey scores until after the semester was over, and they were asked instead to predict, rather than reflect on, changes that would appear in their post-class surveys.
thorough in their explanations than they might be in an anonymous evaluation. Also, because the essays would not be anonymous, I could view the students' reports in them in light of other knowledge I had of their experiences during the course. On the other hand, given that the essays were not anonymous, I realized that the students might be less than candid about their negative experiences. To help counter this problem, the assignment handout encourages students to write honestly and reassures them that they are not being graded on their attitudes themselves. Another counter to this problem, of course, is the fact that the data collected in the exams can be viewed in light of data collected on ungraded forms of student feedback, including anonymous course evaluations.

Course evaluation form

Phil and I were required at the end of the semester to administer departmentally prescribed course evaluations, so of course these went into my case study database. For confidentiality reasons, I use only my results in my evaluation of our course. The evaluations, while limited in their usefulness in that they were based on a standard form, did give me a general sense of how my students evaluated a variety of aspects of the course. Because most of the questions asked on the form had also been asked of students whom I'd taught a more standard version of 101C during a previous semester, using the form allowed me to roughly (unscientifically) compare student reaction to the two different versions of the class.

The form I had used to evaluate the previous sections I'd taught of 101C was based on a department freshman composition evaluation form, modified slightly for ESL
composition. It contained 19 statements to which students could express Likert-scaled agreement and disagreement, as well as, on the reverse, open-ended questions, of which students were asked to respond to at least two. During the summer of 1994, Phil and I altered this ESL composition course evaluation form slightly, and asked two questions that provided us with evaluation data relevant to our portfolio grading approach. We replaced statement #9 on the department's form ("Major assignments were returned to you before the next major assignment was due," which did not apply to our system), with "The portfolio system gave you the opportunity to revise and edit your papers." We also added an additional statement to discern specifically whether the students preferred portfolio grading to traditional grading (#20: "You preferred the portfolio grading system to receiving grades on regularly turned in assignments). For the actual form administered, see Appendix 1.  

Besides its not being designed for our course or our purposes, another problem with this departmental evaluation form was that it asks students to respond to so many statements prior to giving them the opportunity to respond to only relatively few open-ended questions. This sort of top-loading can tire students out with interpreting and responding to the Likert-scaled items, giving as it does higher priority in both positioning and sheer numbers to these items. At least, however, as recommended by Brown (1989), the standard form we adapted did, on its reverse side, elicit some open-ended responses. (Students are asked to respond to two of five open-ended questions relating to their learning and their teacher's

44For a summary of student response to the portfolio grading questions, see the portfolio grading section of the "Course Evaluation" chapter.
performance. Where germane, student response to some of these are included in the case study report below.

\[\text{In practice, students often answer none, sometimes one, and sometimes more than two of the questions.}\]
Course Overall

As a teacher, I felt this was a demanding course to teach. If group projects can be difficult to manage, then group projects embedded in an innovative course design can be even more unwieldy. Phil and I were forced to develop materials as we went along; our syllabus came out in three installments, and we had to write assignments from scratch and substantially revise others. Being busy graduate students taking courses ourselves, we hadn’t had much preparation time before the semester, and we had extra demands on our time during the semester. (Under more favorable conditions, I would probably feel much less stress teaching this course, especially now that I have had experience at it.)

What made teaching the course possible, however, was the energy and enthusiasm that the course frequently generated. High points for me were the group discussions when students "presented positions," the one-on-one conferences with those students who actively engaged in the revision and editing process, the e-mail exchanges with those students who established close e-mail relationships with me; and the position paper outline presentations, which gave me the opportunity to facilitate what I considered to be the best critical discourse of the semester. I also enjoyed reading many of the students’ final exams, especially the ones that seemed to demonstrate that their authors had learned how to incorporate into their own writing, independently of a teachers help, various aspects of academic writing.

By the end of the course, many of our students did seem to have become initiated into the academic discourse community, or at least to have become much more familiar with its
expectations for argumentation. In general they also, with the course’s scaffolding, seemed quite capable of meeting my standards for freshman composition (for notable exceptions, see the portfolio grading analysis section that follows). There was an absence on the final course evaluations of any comments to the effect that this course was just too hard (an important point, given that the assignments were much more complex than typical 101C assignments). Interestingly, however, one of the better writers in the course complained in a Daedalus Interchange conference discussing the position paper outline assignment that she had consulted with a friend of hers and decided the course was "harder than 105!" In a sense, this was a backhanded compliment—clearly she and her friend had recognized that Phil and I were serious about preparing our students to engage in argumentative writing. Happily, this student was later one of the students who was the most satisfied with her group’s consensus research paper, and indeed the course as a whole. (In her final exam she states, "I am so grateful to be in the English class that really changed my writing attitudes. The benefit and knowledge that I got from this class will surely help me in my future paper/writing.")

One of the signs that the course had a positive effect on students was the increase from the beginning to the end of the semester in our students’ mean scores in the attitude category "sense of control over writing" [statistically significant at the 0.05 level using a two-tailed paired t-test to compare the means of the pre- and postclass groups; \( t = -2.2 \) (df 23) \( p < 0.05 \) (Winer, 1971, p. 44-46)]. Though the changes in the mean scores for the other attitude factors were not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the change in the mean scores for the students’ "writing apprehension" came was indeed significant at the
0.1 level \( t = 2.02 \text{ (df 23)} p < 0.1 \). These results suggest that the course we taught succeeded in encouraging students to feel less fearful and more in control of their writing. [Given the very small sample I had to work with, I consider to be noteworthy results significant at the 0.05 and even 0.1 levels. Though a one in ten chance of a type I error (rejecting the null hypothesis when it is indeed true) is too great a chance for most researchers to take when publishing research results, it does not seem too great a chance for a teacher like myself to take when developing working hypotheses with which to evaluate her own class.46] See Table 4 for more complete comparisons of mean attitude scores of our combined classes, as measured by the pre- and postclass Writing Attitude Surveys.

Prior to my analysis of the results of the surveys I had actually expected the change in the mean score for the students' attitude toward group work to be slightly positive, though perhaps not statistically significant; Phil, who had taught collaborative writing before, was not surprised by the (statistically insignificant) drop in the students' mean scores in attitude toward group work \( t = 1.39 \text{ (df 23)}, \) statistically insignificant at a 0.1 significance level]. In fact, one of his objectives was to teach students that "collaboration is difficult" (personal communication, June 1995). See the section of the Course Evaluation chapter on collaborative writing for interpretation of the ambiguous changes which occurred in our

46 As Harshbarger (1977) puts it, "no one insists that you use an alpha level of .05 or smaller, but if you use one greater than .10, it would be a good idea to justify your choice." He adds that one justification can be that within the context of one's experiment, it is impossible or impractical to use a conventionally small alpha level (pp. 216-217).
Table 4. Comparisons of means of pre- and postclass attitude scores for combined classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Factor</th>
<th>Range of possible scores</th>
<th>Preclass mean</th>
<th>Postclass mean</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apprehension</td>
<td>5-20</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>0.9*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belief writing is a gift</td>
<td>4-16</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of control</td>
<td>6-24</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>1.3**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of collaboration</td>
<td>5-20</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement</td>
<td>4-16</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for teacher control</td>
<td>5-20</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usefulness of group work</td>
<td>3-12</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* preclass and postclass means differ at a 0.1 significance level
** preclass and postclass means differ at a 0.05 significance level
students' attitudes toward group work.47

My departmental course evaluations for this revised 101C did not seem to me to differ radically from previous evaluations I had received for teaching the same course. Making a rough, unscientific comparison, the main differences I saw in the Likert-scaled item responses were for the items "the writing assignments were distributed over the semester" and "you were prepared for the course and attended regularly." In the case of the former item, "the assignments were distributed," my students in the revised course seemed to agree with the statement less strongly than did my students in the past, and I interpret this as having been a result of portfolio grading (see the discussion in the evaluation of portfolio grading, below.)

The other item for which responses seemed to differ ("you were prepared for the course and attended regularly") was an item which seemed to elicit more agreement from the students taking our revised course. This could have been due to major features of the course design. The collaborative learning, for example, could have helped prevent students from getting lost, or the single topic focus could have helped the students experience growing expertise and therefore preparation. The effect could, however, have been simply due to something else: our effective attendance policy, for example.

If I were to conduct a study similar to this one, I would try to study more students and/or to redesign the survey to include more questions on group work in order and see if statistical significance were achieved in any drop in the mean attitude toward group work. The Writing Attitude Survey has only three questions contributing to the "group work" factor, while other factors involve up to five. More questions could produce a greater range of response from students and a larger difference in pre- and postclass means. Redesigning the survey, however, could be time-consuming, entailing a new factor analysis.
(Students were required to write position papers on topics of their choosing for each day absent, and these papers were required to be of a page length equal to the number of days they had missed class during the semester.)

In retrospect, given how little information I got from the standard, departmental evaluations, I am glad I supplemented them with other means of evaluation. On the standard evaluations, not only did I get little out of the Likert-scaled items, but I also received sometimes terse (and sometimes no) responses to the open-ended items. Even when lengthy, these responses seldom related to the major course elements--they had a randomness to them, consisting of compliments on my teaching style, for example, or complaints about my handwriting. Where students discussed their own improvements as writers, this discussion was fairly generic. The main recurring theme was that five students commented on learning about how to improve their organization in their writing. Only two students even mentioned the group writing, and they mentioned it vaguely. I am quite convinced from this experience of the importance of focus in evaluation of teaching innovations.

In contrast, the final exam reflection essays and the consensus research paper evaluations, part of my focused evaluation, produced much data that was useful to me in the evaluation I wanted to make. They left me feeling that overall, ours was quite an effective academic English course. Some of the final exams were downright inspiring. The following exam, excerpted in its entirety and full of praise for the course, shows that at least for this student author, our 101C course could lead to much learning about writing and the writing process, as well as improved attitudes about writing, even when
the student coming into the class begins it with somewhat negative attitudes about it.

English 101C was the last thing that I remembered for taking classes in my academic planning. I did not pay much attention for it, because the credit that I will get for the course can not be applied for graduation credit. Because next semester I have to take English 104, so I have to take English 101C in this summer.

First time in the English class, I felt it was enjoyable. I said myself "hmm.... not bad for the class. All the student is friendly, and Ms. Roberta is great. She is friendly, humorous, and could make interaction with us, that mostly is an international student."

When I got more and more involved in the class, Ms. Roberta give us assignments of personal experience essay, and how to make a summary from an article. She also taught us about summarize an article and searching statistical data in the library. The last assignment that she gives to us was a research paper assignment.

The last one is usually the hardest ones and it was. We work as a group to finish the research paper.

With my experience for almost 8 weeks in english class, I am really amazing of what I can found and get from the course, especially related to my writing attitude.

There are three changes that I felt during my English class. The sense of control about writing, about the belief that writing ability is a gift and usefulness of group work.

Before, I belief that writing was a gift. People who could wrote so many pages and had so many ideas in their essay were a special one. This class makes me change my mind about it. It makes me realize that writing skill can be developed. More and more practice can give us better and better skill of writing. Much revising could make our ability in writing is increasing too. The assumption that writing is a gift is not fully right. Writing skills can be developed with practicing.

Sense of control about writing was the second changes in my writing attitude. The assignments that Mr. [Ms.] Roberta gave us make me learn about the importance of controlling our ideas. We have to keep our ideas in control, to have a good and structured essay. If you don't control all the ideas that you have, you will just make the reader confuse and bore
when they read your essay. We also learn how making transition words or sentences are really important to build a relation between ideas.

The last one was about attitude of usefulness of group work. I used to have an opinion that group work was only wasting my time. I would rather do it by myself than having a group work. I was wrong, the group work that I have in these class makes me changing my mind. I feel how a work group is really useful. It will take much time and energy if I work alone. It will really hard to finish the paper. Through the group work, I felt easier. We can share so many ideas and work together in editing and revising, and building transition words or sentences. We were helping each other.

Many aspects of this essay point to successes of the course. The author appreciated the main assignments and the library research and viewed, as I did, the group research paper as the culmination of the course. As I hoped, he found the collaboration helpful, and he developed confidence in his writing, as well as rhetorical and grammatical tools for continuing to improve it. And though I’ve mentioned in the methods section that these essays, as they are not anonymous, need to be interpreted in light of other data, I have particular trust in the honesty of this student. As his introduction shows, and as candid e-mail feedback from him during the class proved, he was not a student who was unwilling to discuss his neutral and negative impressions of the course and of academia. (He also was a "B+," not an "A" student, so his end-of-the-semester praise was probably not in anticipation of an inevitable reward.)

Perhaps most gratifying to me is the way this essay itself demonstrates that the author has learned much about writing, including much which will prepare him for freshman composition. The student introduces the essay effectively, and sets immediately
to fulfilling the core requirement of the assignment—that he specifically discuss three attitude factors and any changes he predicts his surveys will measure in his attitudes about these matters. He does so in an organized and succinct fashion, using sentence-level complexity on the order of that required for writing successful freshman compositions. All of this despite the fact that, as his essay also demonstrates, the author's own interlanguage is still fraught with non-nativisms.48 So this essay also is a demonstration that grammatical difficulties can co-exist with readiness for and success in English for academic purposes.

Of course, not all of the final exams bore such evidence of student success in the course, and very few students finished the course with visions of it so compatible with my own. Curiously, the final exams also contain some of the best evidence of student resistance to my course vision. Sonia,49 probably the student most resistant to the course, wrote a long, discursive, introspective final essay quite antithetical to the assignment specifications—much more like a free-writing, albeit a rich one, than a formal essay. (Essentially, though she discussed much that was related to the subject of writing attitudes, she only directly addressed one attitude factor). Because her reaction to the course was so different from that I'd hoped my students would have, her case is worth examining.

Sonia's resistance had been hinted at earlier in the course by her failure to

48Note: this is an essay graded single-draft style; it did not go through any peer or instructor review prior to final submission.

49A pseudonym, as are all names in this thesis which refer to students.
establish an e-mail relationship with me, even though periodic e-mails to instructors were assigned. This was a hard hint to pick up on, though, because a few other students had failed early on at the same task, but later after resolving their technological difficulties, they succeeded. Sonia, though, made clear in later written (as opposed to electronic) feedback which I required about the outline assignment that she was resisting the course itself, saying "I felt frustrated because before to start this course I had a lot of expectations, so, any of those have being doing." [I interpreted this, in context of other complaints she made, to mean none of her expectations had been met.] By the time I received this feedback, unfortunately, it was late in the course, and she continued to avoid communication with me over e-mail and to avoid seeing me in my office, rebuffing my direct invitations.

In a sense though, Sonia’s resistance may be due to the very success of the course as an academic English course. She was a student who had already developed a sense of identity as a creative writer, participating in her home country in the Costa Rican Writer’s Circle, a student writing workshop which she found vibrant and inspiring and which, she says in her final exam, ended with at least thirty percent of her classmates publishing books. (Sonia’s specialty was poetry writing, and she too published.) But though she acknowledges ways the course has benefitted her, saying in the end of her final exam, "about my self during this course I will be sincere, I had to recognize that it made me improve my writing skills in reference to formal papers, how get information,

50I had required students to write three "I" statements about the course following the position paper outline assignment.
uses of the computer, and be patient with my communication mistakes," overall, she really seemed to hate the course.

The sense in which her difficulty with the course may stem from its success as an academic English course is the sense in which the course forced her to struggle with the differences between academic English and the creative writing which was so near and dear to her. She herself puts this into words quite well:

During the last nine years I had concentrated my writing in Poetry, spending most of the time in learning how to be more and more concrete because one of the principal secrets of poetry is to write the essential words with the most possible feelings. That’s the reason, I think, which make me love writing a lot and it is the same that made me had a hard time now expressing myself in a formal way....

Sonia also expresses, in a very reflexive fashion, her process of struggle with the organization I required in the students’ writing, and her reasons indeed for resisting this organization in the very essay she is writing:

There are a lot of [as many] different ways to start an essay or writing paper as persons in this world; some rather to make a previous plan which has all the contents to develop; some prefer to go ahead with their creativity; some like to make an outline to put in order everything before start doing those, so, in this point everybody has the right to decided about what ways is better to them. In my personal case, like in this paper [emphasis added], I rather to express all I think freely, without plans, just with my feelings. Therefore the good or bad results depend from the effort that everyone put in their works.

Now, though it’s arguable that a more successful academic English course would accommodate writing styles and histories such as Sonia’s (and I believe this to be quite
possible), I nevertheless believe that sooner or later students such as Sonia will face, in today’s academia at any rate, some cold, hard realities about the constraints it will usually place on their writing. (Ironically, my own personal writing history contains much struggle with and resistance to academic styles of organization and prescribed writing processes such as outlining.)

Perhaps I am glossing over Sonia’s resistance to this course and dealing too superficially with the issues it raises regarding the place for induction and creativity in academic writing. In reality, hers is the reaction which haunts me, and which may inspire or at least inform any future generation of ESL composition course which I design. For now, however, I am not throwing my new baby out with the bathwater. In the next sections, I discuss the less than global changes I would make in the course, and the aspects of the course I would most definitely retain, if I were to teach it again. I do this in an element by element evaluation. Despite Sonia’s criticisms, I do not feel compelled to revamp this course entirely, partly because I am increasingly accepting of polarized reactions to my teaching. I have begun to notice that innovative teaching often produces polarization in student response, and I believe that such polarization may be a real sign that something important is happening in the classroom. (Students don’t love or

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51 I was indeed very amused when some of my students praised me for teaching them outlining—all my writing life, often to my own downfall, I have resisted it. However, for group projects on the order we were expecting of the students, and for teaching the argumentative styles we wanted to teach to students far from fluent in English, I found outlining a very successful means to our ends. Despite some degree of student resistance, I would still include something like it in a future version of this course.
hate mundane, routine, predictable classes. Students who are challenged may rise to the
challenge, or rebuff it, but they cannot ignore it.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Modified Thematic Assignment Sequencing}

Undoubtedly, the fact that our students researched a single topic over the course of
the semester contributed greatly to the depth and breadth of knowledge evident in the
students' writing—especially in their research papers. By the end of the course, I definitely
believed that our thematic assignment sequence facilitated the students' writing of freshman
composition level assignments. Some of the students recognized this, as well. On the
consensus research paper evaluation, in response to the question "What did you like about
writing the consensus research paper?" (the assignment to which the sequence built), one
student wrote,

\begin{quote}
As we studied about the topic for a long time, I could work the topic without big
confusion.
\end{quote}

In response to the same question, another student directly credited the assignment sequence
with helping prepare him for writing the research paper about his topic:

\begin{quote}
It was easy after the essay paper and outlines.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{52}This is, of course, a serious dilemma for course and instructor evaluators who rely
heavily upon student evaluations in their analyses.
Phil agreed with these students' positive assessments of thematic assignment sequencing, claiming "it helped. It allowed them to see different possibilities—that there are different sides, viewpoints, and sources of information." He talked about how in their research papers, due to their semester-long focus on their topics, sometimes students had too much material, but pointed out "though they may have to cut back, [this] is a better problem to have then [for the students to not] have enough to say."

So the students and Phil confirm what researchers and educators such as Pytlik (1993) and Schlumberger and Clymer (1989a) claim: a thematic approach encourages depth of perspective and facilitates the development of student expertise. One student's comment about what she liked about writing the consensus research paper spoke directly to this point:

"After finishing my research paper, I found that I know a lot about my topic. I have confidence to argue with people within my topic."

Interestingly, in mentioning increased confidence in argument, this student brings up a point well worth pondering: Good assignments and a good assignment sequence can foster a willingness to engage in argument in a student who might otherwise shy away from it. The composition and contrastive rhetoric literature frequently discusses cultural reasons for such reluctance, including cultural preferences for indirectness and induction (see Allaei & Connor, 1990; Fox, 1994; and Leki, 1992; for overviews of this discussion); this student's comment supports the claim that we can nevertheless create a classroom environment or subculture in which an argument-shy student becomes willing to engage in argument and
argumentative writing. Of course, the modified thematic assignment sequence in our course worked in tandem with the structured academic controversy to foster such an environment; a course which involved a thematic assignment sequence but no structured academic controversy might not have been as successful at creating such a subculture. Even in the absence of structured academic controversy, however, it’s obvious that a thematic approach would encourage the development of student expertise.

It can backfire, however, if students tire of their topics. One student, on her consensus research paper evaluation, wrote in response to the question "What would you change about the assignment":

The topic because it’s quite boring to concentrate on the same topic.

This is a matter about which I would collect more data if I taught a course with a modified thematic assignment sequence again. At the very least, information could be gathered via a final course evaluation Likert-scaled question regarding whether students remained interested in their topics. Significantly, though, in all our evaluation forms, conferences, and e-mail communications the above is the only instance we had of a complaint about the thematic approach, and I can speculate as to why. As I mentioned in the chapter "Elements of the Course," our approach was a compromise between the two most common single topic approaches: thematic (all the class writing on the same theme) and research-based, individual single topic exploration. The major pitfall of the first I learned about when tutoring students who became bored with, or were never interested in, the topic the teacher
had selected for the course. The major pitfall of the second, as I see it, is that students who are afraid of research or unfamiliar with it can be left very much alone in the task of generating enough knowledge about their topic to write about it with authority. Phil and I had sought to avoid both pitfalls by offering students the chance to choose among topics which were popular enough to attract the interest of seven other students.

Our decision proved pivotal, at least for some students for whom freedom of topic choice was important to their engagement with their writing. One student referred in her final exam directly to this positive effect of topic choice on task engagement:

The reason that many students do not like writing [is] because they don’t like the topics. For me, to write something I really hate is as painful as asking me to die. Therefore, to let students to explore the topics which they like gives them the power to write better. During this semester, I’ve chosen a topic that I feel interesting and comfortable to write.

Other comments implied that some of the students might have had difficulty writing their position paper outlines and research papers had we asked them to choose topics individually—topics which would have been theirs and theirs alone for the semester. These are the students who wrote in their exams and evaluations about how working in groups helped them generate knowledge and arguments about their topics (see the next section on structured academic controversy.) So in our course, the effectiveness of the thematic assignment sequence was very likely increased both by freedom of topic selection and by cooperative learning activity, since both could have increased student engagement with topics. Under the circumstances, I found modified thematic assignment sequencing quite
effective, and if I were to teach 101C again I would preserve it. As I mention below in the section evaluating the collaborative writing, I might do more to help students narrow their topics by the end of the course, but I would still have them investigate a single topic for the whole semester.

**Portfolio Grading**

I found the portfolio grading approach that we used to be an extremely important component of the scaffolding which enabled the students to successfully write our assignments. In my estimation, in my section of the course, twelve of my sixteen students were able, through the portfolio process, to produce individually written essays up to my standards for 104/105 essays, and only three did not succeed in doing so. This I consider to be a good success rate, especially since, judging from my students' first drafts, only one student would have been able produce satisfactory freshman compositions without the portfolio approach. (Her first drafts were already of a quality more than acceptable to me as an instructor of English 104.) In other words, I feel that through the between-draft feedback that portfolio grading allowed, eleven of my sixteen students were substantially aided in producing assignments of freshman composition quality.53

53Upon re-examination of my students' portfolios, I noticed that the three students who did not succeed in revising and editing their portfolio writings up to freshman composition standards all had problems generating text in response to revision cues. Indeed, their initial drafts were generally shorter and their paragraphs often less well-formed than other students'. In the future I will be quicker to consider a student's unresponsiveness to revision cues as a red flag that he or she may be misplaced and may need extra assistance.
By and large, my students agreed with me that the portfolio grading approach contributed to their success. In the final course evaluation, all but one student agreed with the statement "The portfolio grading method gave you the opportunity to revise and edit your papers" (nine strongly agreed, five agreed, and one disagreed.) In addition, all but one agreed with the statement "You preferred the portfolio grading system to receiving grades on regularly turned in assignments" (five agreed strongly, six agreed, four agreed slightly and one disagreed). The one student who did not prefer the portfolio system commented in the open-ended question section of the evaluation,

I still don‘t understand why do the teacher wait until the last two weeks to ask for get ours works finished.

I interpret this to mean, among other things, that having many final drafts due at the same time at the end of the course was troublesome.

This dissatisfied student also strongly disagreed with the statement "The writing assignments were distributed over the semester." An additional student disagreed, but not strongly, with this statement. The fourteen remaining students, however, agreed that the assignments were distributed over the semester (six agreed, three agreed strongly, and five agreed slightly.) On the whole, nevertheless, compared informally with other sections of 101C which I have taught, I interpret these results to mean that the students felt more end-of-
the-semester assignment pressure.\textsuperscript{54} (As I mentioned before, my students in the past seem to have agreed more strongly that my assignments were distributed over the semester, though again, this is an unscientific comparison.)

Despite this pressure, in their final exams, students frequently praised the portfolio system and the opportunities they had had to revise and edit their papers, most of the students saying that these opportunities had contributed to an increased sense for them of control over their writing. Wrote one student,

I’ve learnt how to control my essay better through repeating revision with my teacher. Also, I believe that extra effort will produce good results because my rewrite essays are much better than their first drafts.

Another student directly praised the portfolio system, saying,

I think, the portfolio system of this course was very good. I have chances to edit and revise my papers. I was usually too immersed in the paper I wrote that I could not identify the mistakes. However, I was able to find helps from others. My instructors have been very helpful. They always gave me advices and pointed out my weaknesses in writing. Besides that, I also went to the Writing Center\textsuperscript{55}....Through revising the papers, and by doing corrections

\textsuperscript{54}They may, however, have felt correspondingly less pressure during the semester. As I mentioned above, compared informally with students taking similar courses that I’ve taught, these students responded more positively to the statement, ”You were prepared for classes and attended regularly.”

\textsuperscript{55}This student’s comment brings up a very important point: a portfolio system of grading is highly compatible with writing center tutoring. Students can take their instructors’ prompts for editing and revision to the tutors, and they can work on essays without so much deadline pressure. In our course, students were encouraged to use ISU’s Writing Center, and our grading system may have allowed more of them to do so than would the grading system of a typical 101C class. Because the Writing Center is often vital to international
of the errors I made; I learned a lot.

Later in the same essay, this student illustrates how her struggles with her drafts led her to eventual satisfaction with them and to a "viewpoint...that writing ability [improves] through practice and learning":

Because I have had so much experiences in writing during the course...I realized that it was no doubt that people could improve to be a better writer. At least, I found [I] was now better than I was before taking Engl 101C. For example, the writing process of my personal experience essay on gun control issue was hard. I did a lot of editing and finally I have a much better final draft. Also, in summary writing, I encountered a problem where the contents were not linked. I have then spent a lot of time to add transitions and changed the structure of the sentences in order to make the summary well organized and smooth. The final draft of the summary became very different from the first draft and it was indeed improved a lot. Process of writing these assignments were not easy, but I was satisfied with the final drafts. Therefore, I felt so strongly that writing skill could be improved through hard works.

I feel it is obvious from this student’s metacognition about both her essays and her attitudes that fewer chances for concentrated revising and editing would have deprived her of good learning opportunities.

Other students also showed evidence both of having taken advantage of the learning opportunities which the portfolio grading method afforded them, and of having engaged in the kind of metacognition about their writing that Reid (1993) has said portfolio grading and

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student success in freshman composition, I felt good that many of my students were learning during my course to use its resources.
writer's notes can encourage. For example, one student wrote,

I remember that the first draft of my personal experience essay...was too terrible for readers to understand what I wanted to say. However, as I repeated revising the essay, I started to grab something to make readers' interest in my essay. Now, the papers became easy enough for other people to figure out my meaning in my essay....

This student goes on to credit this experience of revising and preparing his essay for his final portfolio as being related to changes in his attitudes about writing:

I think this result is strong related to my attitude which began have interested in writing. That's why, I can feel that spending more efforts to creating writing is very reasonable to make better results.

Some students were not quite so introspective, but still credited the course with teaching them the basic lesson that, as one student put it,

...it takes alot of patience to write a good paper and that it takes more than one revision.

One of the most telling pieces of evidence that our students had been won over to a multi-draft grading system was their dissatisfaction with the one-shot grading of their consensus research papers. This shows clearly in the following student response to the consensus research paper evaluation question "What else could the instructor do to help students with the assignment?":

I think we need more revising time for [the paper]. My instructor just wrote down her revising words on our paper. If I had met her personally, I could have made a better paper. In my case, I didn't have much time since I also had another class. Next time, please give students individual revising time in your room between you and [the] students.

Another student wrote the following in response to the same question ("What else could the instructor do to help the students with the assignment?"):  

I prefer the instructor getting help in editing, and provide some critical comments. I like the conference, probably, instructor can help the students in conference for giving some suggestions in their research paper.

To me, these responses indicate that our students had come to accept as the norm that papers were ongoing projects and that between-draft conferences with students were part of the process. Indeed, some of the groups saw to it that they got such between-draft feedback on their consensus research paper from me even though I had not scheduled it in. So in a sense, I had succeeded too well with the approach—there was no easy route for me back to an old disengaged judge role. Three other responses on the consensus research paper evaluation requesting more between-draft feedback on the consensus research paper, as well as seven other responses requesting more time to complete the paper, all add weight to the following conclusion: Switching from a multi-draft grading approach to a single-draft approach is not easy on students.

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This is vivid evidence that portfolio grading is not a simple way to reduce grading effort, but rather a different means of evaluation altogether.
Issues related to portfolio grading to consider during future course revision

I now question whether the transition from a multi-draft to a single-draft grading approach is justified during the course; the mixed messages it sends are confusing. It's possible a regular rather than summer semester might allow enough time for multi-draft grading of the consensus research paper, so little would have to be changed about the course design to accommodate such a change. Realistically, though, conferencing with groups and guiding them through multiple drafts of a paper could turn out to be very time-consuming. Anyone teaching this course again ought to give serious consideration to this design issue.

Regarding the other (less common) complaint related to the portfolio grading--that of the end-of-semester work load--I would also be willing to entertain alternatives. Phil says that in the future, he might give students grades "in stages." Phil was concerned about the stress students felt because they didn't know their grades until late in the semester. Our working portfolio evaluation only gave students a late-in-the-game rather than a midsemester sense of what their grade would be. This was far preferable, I believe, to no preliminary evaluation at all, but some students may have wanted to know more, sooner.

Of course, too much tinkering in the direction of a traditional system could offset some of the advantages of the portfolio system and shift the instructors' role back from coach to judge and the students' focus from revising work to completing it. (Phil concurred with me that the course as it was had successfully fostered both the instructor-coach role and student focus on revision.) One alternative which might provide earlier grade feedback and better distribution of assignments, while keeping the course otherwise much as it is, would be to have a fixed due date for the final draft of the selected personal experience essay, and
then a fixed due date for the final draft of the selected summary, both prior to the due date for the consensus research project. Of course, once again, a longer, regular semester would be more conducive to this stage-by-stage grading approach.

At any rate, what I would not change about the grading in the course is that there be ongoing evaluation during which students receive between-draft feedback that they can use in revising and editing their essays before final submission. In addition to the advantages of this approach evident in the student comments, during the piloting of the course, as I expected, this sort of evaluation proved to be invaluable in teaching the students about plagiarism. During conferences, with xeroxed copies in hand of articles which students had summarized, I could point out those portions of text which had been inappropriately borrowed, and guide the student through his or her options for remedying such problem. This was in keeping with Wells’ suggestion (1993, p. 69) that "teachers of writing...balance compassion with tough expectations when assigning academic research papers" and that they intervene as Vygotskian mentors sensitive to the conceptual level of learners, allowing the learners to first attempt to accomplish complex research paper writing tasks "first with assistance and then alone." Remarkably, by the end of the course, in their consensus research paper groups, some of the students had gone beyond accomplishing documentation alone and were even policing each other for plagiarism!

In addition to keeping a multi-draft approach with between-draft feedback, another aspect of the grading system I would not change is our inclusion of "selection" as part of it.

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57 I learned of this in a note a student wrote me about problems he had working in his group—see the later section on collaborative writing.
Something had to "give" in order for Phil and I to have the resources to guide our students through shaping and polishing their writings, while simultaneously encouraging them to produce enough writing to provide them with both practice and the opportunity to truly explore their topics. As mentioned earlier, what "gave" was our expectation that each writing would be shaped and polished and evaluated. As predicted, these changes definitely helped both instructors and students concentrate their efforts. I didn't feel as pushed or pushy as I have when teaching a revision intensive course which didn't entail selection. The one drawback was that a few students did "toss off" their second summaries when they felt sure they wanted to revise and edit their first; this was counterbalanced, however, by their having to share the summaries with other students to inform them about the ongoing consensus research project. Furthermore, in the process of teaching the summary assignment, I came to realize that as long as the "tossed off" summaries adequately conveyed information about the articles summarized, I didn't mind if students hadn't focused their attention or effort on them. My primary concern was that students learn from the revision and editing process about the conventions of summary writing; in order that they do this I wanted each student to have the experience of selecting and trying to revise and edit one summary up to my standards for a freshman composition summary.

**Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Writing**

The collaborative writing in the course cannot easily be evaluated apart from the cooperative learning, since the collaborative writing was embedded in a great deal of cooperative learning activity—namely, structured academic controversy—and the structured
academic controversy culminated in the main collaborative writing project, the consensus research paper. Nevertheless, I will discuss the structured academic controversy and consensus research paper separately. I do so because a possible avenue for course modification would be to preserve the cooperative learning but scrap the collaborative writing—to have students just present their groups’ consensus positions to the class, and either not write consensus research papers or write the papers individually. Considering the cooperative learning and collaborative writing separately will inform whether it would be wise to make such course modifications.

*Cooperative learning: structured academic controversy*

I found some of the promises of cooperative learning to be fulfilled in our course, and some to be overstated. After teaching the course, I agree with Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) that structured academic controversy facilitates students’ critical thinking, and I believe that this in turn improves their argumentative writing. I also became aware, however, of an unevenness to the oral contributions of group members to group work.

Regarding fulfilled promises, I was especially happy during our course with the way structured academic controversy required students to examine both the pro and con sides of their issue and to develop their arguments. Phil felt similarly, saying structured academic controversy enabled the students to "specifically see there are two sides to an issue" and to "know a real arguable issue may not have one answer but several answers."

Time and again, in their final exams and in their consensus research paper evaluations, the students echoed our opinions. From the final exams come the
following comments:

[C]ollaboration...provided many different and other angle of opinion that I couldn’t thing about. It was really useful for me.

I...learned many things from my "Homelessness" group. Things I don’t know about and thought are less important points for the topic.

If we had no group work, I would not have learned so many strong arguments and I could not find so much good materials to support these arguments. I am very glad to have this group opportunity.

We could exchange own experience and idea to each other. And, the instructor would gave us some opinions and suggestions when we needed or made a mistake. Sometimes we would discuss the controversial topic which is interesting for me.

One student gave a concrete example of how he and his peers engaged in the sort of substantive conflict which Phil and I had hoped that structured academic controversy might facilitate:

The most difficult problem was that each member asserted himself/herself. For instance, when we made a outline of gun control, the opinion of Kozi and mine are absolutely different from those of our sister group members’. To mix up different ideas, we had to creat[e] a new outline which is not the same with ours and sister groups’. I’m sure our final outline is better than what we made before. This gave me a lesson that is working alone is more difficult than group work and even if a person has an idea, we can get over 4 ideas in 4 members’ group work. This means what we can get from group work is more than we think.
From the consensus research paper evaluations come the following comments which also support the claim that structured academic controversy encouraged the students in our classes to view issues from multiple perspectives and to think critically about them:

I learned that we were able to get some ideas which we can’t get alone.

Writing consensus research paper made me realize of how I missed a lot of things and gain more information about the topics that me and my other group members wrote.

When we work together, we got a many ideas from each member. It’s better than individually.

I can improve and correct my idea from other partners suggestion.

I can get other’s opinion about my point.

...get more ideas from others.

I can…work with a group that provide me…others’ vision on writing.

I felt that my group member had good ideas....

I like it because we have points from different perspective.

In addition to evidence of critical thinking, the consensus research paper evaluations and the final exams contained evidence that the students often enjoyed the argumentation that was part of structured academic controversy.

These comments came up in response, again, to the question, "What did you like about writing the consensus research paper?", and they included the following:
Having a group discussion with my group members and arguing for my own position (pro or con-side)

I like the consensus research paper because I was given an opportunity to state my point regarding to my position.

From one student came very specific commentary to the effect that this activity had indeed helped him become aware, as Eason puts it, "of Americans' expectation of a clear opponent, and other side" (1994, p. 5). In his final exam, he stated,

I...learned that there always [is] an opposite side of a point in the paper which suggested by group partners.

Some of the most vivid evidence of the students' becoming adept at argumentation during the structured academic controversy was the following narrative intro to one student's final exam:

"We are against gun control, and we have the following arguments." Kozi said in the second group meeting of our 101C class.

"We have four supporting arguments. The first is that people could use gun to protect themselves. The second is that we have the right to own guns for sporting purposes. The third is that a gun does not kill people, people kill people. If we had gun control, we also need to control knives and other weapons. Finally, if we had gun control, it could cause the increase of illegal guns." Kozi gave a strong supporting side to his con opinion.

Now, though in an L1 freshman composition class this narration might sound like NRA
propaganda, in this ESL context, I find it remarkable. It shows me that these students have picked up on the directness of argument that American audiences expect in position statements, and that they have become more conversant and culturally literate about a very American issue. (To fully appreciate the above dialogue, one must know that Kozi, the student about whom the author of this exam writes, is one of the most sensitive and soft-spoken students I’ve ever had.)

All of this discussion about how the students enjoyed argumentation is not to say that the students did not have trouble negotiating their controversial positions, and other aspects of their cooperative learning, with each other. They did, and I will discuss these difficulties later in the section on collaborative writing. What the students did not seem to do, however, was to carry over from these difficulties any sort of dislike for argument and argumentative writing per se. Indeed there is evidence that some students who were initially reluctant to engage in argument became less so during the course. In a final exam, for example, one self-described introvert said the following about overcoming, during the course, some of his difficulties with argumentation:

Originally, I am an introspective person and I always feel nervous whenever I speak in front of people. But I tried to overcome my characteristics and that now I am kind of brave in telling my opinion.

In a similar vein, another student discussed how she and the other members of her

58 And, of course, the argument these students laid out in their paper had more sophistication and dealt with some of the objections to these points.
group came to understand more about how to assume an argumentative stance when appropriate. In her consensus research paper evaluation, in response to the question "What did your instructor or anyone else do which helped you fulfill the assignment?" she answered,

My instructor gave us the opinion about our position in this consensus paper. We finally take a position. At first we were not in pro or con position but a compromise position which was not that concrete.

This student is referring to a very interesting and humorous contrastive rhetoric discussion which arose between me and the members of her group, who were reluctant at first to take a firm position in their consensus research paper. In the beginning of the consensus research paper writing process, I had taught a formal consensus decision-making procedure and asked each group to write out and hand in or e-mail me the consensus position at which they had arrived. Thus, I became aware early in the process that this group's "position" wasn't firm enough to satisfy my expectations, and I told them so. In response, they expressed a good deal of unwillingness to become more definitive in their stance.

The next day, having pondered the contrastive rhetoric issues involved and feeling more culturally relative, so to speak, I returned to the negotiating table willing to let them present both sides of their issue and not take a stand—as long as they were aware of expectations of future American instructors who ask them to write and defend argumentative theses. The group informed me that they had changed their minds and had indeed come up with a consensus position—and then they admonished me for being too soft on them!
(Interestingly, however, this paper—one of the papers on the issue of interracial relationships—still had a very informative rather than persuasive tone.)

In this example, it is clear how structured academic controversy can facilitate students’ learning about American style argumentative writing, and it’s clear how important the various stages of the controversy were. Having thoroughly explored both sides of their issue, and perhaps being culturally predisposed to equanimity and/or indirectness, these students had difficulty taking a stand. Nevertheless, the activity required them to do so, and to have their position reviewed by the instructor. This contextualized our discussion of argumentative rhetoric in a way that I believe was beneficial both for the students’ writing of the assignment at hand and for their learning about American-style argumentative writing in general.

One expected benefit of cooperative learning which was not so obviously realized during the course was the oral and aural encouragement and facilitation, due to group interaction, of students’ acquisition of English. Researchers have claimed that group work can improve students’ speaking and listening skills and help develop their vocabularies, but I found reasons for them to qualify their recommendations that group work be used for these purposes.

In support of their claims, however, one student observed in his consensus research paper evaluation that he liked the fact that while writing it, he "learned new lexicon." Indeed, on several occasions I observed the embedded group (the gun control group in Phil’s class) engaging in debate about the meaning of one word or another, and settling these debates with dictionary definitions or third opinions (see their discussion of the term
"militia," in the transcribed meeting excerpt in Appendix J). I also heard students use and apply writing vocabulary terms that I expect they picked up from Phil and me (Yan Fang, for example, uses the term "refutation" in the same transcribed excerpt, a term she very likely picked up in class.)

I wouldn’t say a large number of general vocabulary words were acquired in group work, but I do believe group discussions and debates about words became part of an overall atmosphere which was conducive to active language acquisition, and I believe that cooperative learning was central to this atmosphere. Development of a vocabulary for talking about writing in English, the type of vocabulary development discussed by Reid and Powers (1993) (and the type exemplified by Yan Fang’s use of the term "refutation") was probably more supported in our classrooms. Students could hardly get out of the course without learning, or learning more about, the terms editing, revision, collaboration, consensus, and portfolio, for example. But I’m not sure how much of this kind of vocabulary acquisition to attribute to the group work, as opposed to the evaluations, the conferencing, the assignments, etc.—ultimately I don’t see how these can be teased apart.

Regarding the issue of whether group work improves students’ conversational fluency, I found conflicting evidence. I definitely heard students negotiate meaning and phonology in their groups (Again, see Appendix J for examples. Phonologically, for example, they have to discern at one point whether Yan Fang has said "help" or "health."). But I also observed some students avoiding conversation and participation in their groups in a way that certainly was not helping them improve their spoken English. Such conversational avoidance turned out to be not at all a simple phenomenon. At times it appeared that individuals who
did not converse much in their groups were indeed shying away from it, and sometimes it appeared to me that they were being conversationally dominated when they might otherwise have participated. The latter problem came to my awareness when I listened to a tape that the "homelessness" group in my class submitted to me for their grade for group participation in the consensus research paper project. Interestingly, the group leader dominating the conversation in this group was aware of the problem and was the only one in his evaluation who mentioned it, saying "I felt like a dictator because I took charge," and "I felt that my group member should have participated more verbally." 

Conversational reticence was not always due to conversational dominance by a vocal group member, however. Min, a Korean male in the gun control group in Phil's class, is an example of a student who often shied away from conversation despite his group leader's

59Numerous aspects of this problem were interesting. Cross-cultural issues undoubtedly figured into it: the group leader was an older Hispanic male, while the others in his group were either from Taiwan or Malaysia. Curiously, two of the three Asians were effusively positive about their group in their final exams (to quote one: "We had discussions on what, when and how we do for our essay. I also learn and enjoy the collaboration with someone who is from a different country. Our group work went perfectly."). This says to me that an expectation that good deal of egalitarianism is necessary to a positive group work experience simply may not hold for some ESL groups.

Note that intervening to make a group such as this one more egalitarian, and to provide each member with more conversation practice, may not be at all simple. Just making the dominant member aware of his domination of the group is not the solution--the leader of this group had identified himself as overly dominant. Furthermore, the satisfaction with the group of some of its less vocal members despite its non-egalitarian nature would undoubtedly work against changes a teacher might encourage in its group process. At the very least, the experience of this group does problematize Carson and Nelson's (1994) fears about Asian students having difficulty with group work--successful group work undoubtedly means different things to students from different cultures, and our intervention in students' group processes will need to take this into account.
attempts to draw him out.\footnote{Note Min’s complete absence of contribution to the transcribed portion of the meeting in Appendix J.} The following interaction\footnote{transcribed from a tape of the group’s first consensus research paper meeting} between Min and Chiu-Ho, the group’s unofficial leader, illustrates Min’s reticence

CH: Any points ....
M: Mmm
CH: Anything you feel strongly about?
M: [long pause, looks over position paper outline (previous assignment brought to the meeting for reference)]
CH: [referring to the outline] Did you type it...how many hours?
M: Seven. [group laughter] I got a little faster than before.

This snippet of conversation reveals what was for me unexpected—the \textit{degree} of difficulty some students had with participating in their group discussions about substantive issues.\footnote{It also reveals the difficulty they can have keyboarding, something that is easy for me—and other writing teachers—to forget.} Because of this difficulty, these students simply do not get the conversation practice that more participatory students get. They do, of course, get input, and they do get
some opportunities for output, as we see when Min finally responds to Chiu-Ho’s question about the typing. (The question is a face-saving move, it would seem, a posing of a question Min can answer, since he has been unable to respond to Chiu-Ho’s substantive questions.)

Of course not all students were shy or dominated—many were quite vocal and participatory. There is no doubt in my mind that most students in this course had the opportunity to engage in more meaningful conversational interaction than would students in a similar composition course devoid of cooperative learning. In other words, I believe our course did at least provide more conversation practice than a standard 101C course, and certainly more context for the acquisition of strategies students might later need in order to influence the shape and substance of future group projects and papers. The fact that there’s such a low end to the range of verbal participation we observed, however, has important implications for our course design. These findings parallel findings by Jacob, Rottenberg, Patrick, and Wheeler published after I designed and conducted my study; for L2 learners in

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63 Interestingly, reticent students’ lack of verbal participation does not equal non-participation, even in group meetings. Min, for example, non-verbally carried out a “peace-keeper” role in his group, and his lack of verbal participation seemed to contribute to his ability to carry out this role—his very quiet presence sometimes seemed to anchor the group. In one interaction during the first planning meeting when the argument became heated and Yan Fang, the one woman in the group, was visibly agitated, Min gently touched her on the arm without saying anything. The gesture had the desired effect—Yan Fang calmed down a bit, and the discussion proceeded in a less heated manner. [As an observer, I had assumed from his gesture a certain level of understanding of why Yan Fang was so frustrated. Curiously, in a post-project interview, he did not express any underlying understanding of Yan Fang’s reasons for being upset, and indeed he had felt she was being excessively argumentative!] When Min did speak, he also could convey calm through his tone of voice and slow pace of speaking.
cooperative learning groups, they report, opportunities for language acquisition can be inconsistent and even entirely missed (1996).  

Issues related to structured academic controversy to consider during future course revision

Recognizing that, because of conversational reticence and conversational dominance, many of the students will not be participating in group discussion as much as others, we need to consider increasing teacher facilitation of group process, as well as increasing whole class feedback about group argument--feedback on the order of our class feedback to the position paper outline. (These possible changes are discussed below in the section describing changes in the collaborative writing in the course). In addition, we need to clarify the importance to our course of conversation practice and of improvement of our students’ spoken English, and alter (or not) our course accordingly. It is clear from my observations that cooperative learning in general and structured academic controversy in particular are not panaceas. Though structured academic controversy can engage students in activities involving a variety of skill areas (including reading, listening and speaking), it does not, when incorporated into a composition course, substitute for courses in these areas. If in the future I consider conversation practice one of the important objectives of the course, I will perhaps include more structured discussions on the order of the "advocating and refuting" session detailed in footnote 31, which required each student to speak for a specified amount of time, and

64 Jacob, Rottenberg, Patrick, and Wheeler looked at various input and output opportunities for acquisition of academic English during group work involving reading and filling out worksheets.
which specified time for open discussion only after each student had an opportunity to present his or her position. (As a result of my experience, I would emphasize even more the importance of timekeeping in these sessions.)

On the whole, though, I felt the structured academic controversy was a rewarding activity. I found it notable that despite the difficulty some groups and individuals had in engaging in substantive conflict during group meetings, there was much evidence of their having engaged in critical thinking during the course. I believe that much of the success in the course in the area of encouraging critical thinking was due to structured academic controversy's requiring students to examine and explore both sides of their controversial issue in reading, writing and listening regardless of how successful they were in doing so orally in group meetings. (Even those students who did not engage in verbal substantive conflict nevertheless wrote individually on both pro and con sides of their issue, read other group members writing on pro and con sides of their issue, researched material on their issue in the library, authored a portion of the group consensus paper, and showed up to group meetings and class presentations during which other students discussed their issue.) It's not at all clear that the kind of success we had in promoting critical thinking would have occurred with collaborative writing alone. The structured academic controversy in our course compensated a great deal for problems our students might otherwise have had due to difficulty communicating in group meetings [problems Allaei and Connor (1990) consider so potentially serious in the collaborative classroom]. Not only did it shift some of the students' load of critical examination of the issues to skill areas other than oral, but it also prepared the students for speaking in meetings by developing over time their background
knowledge of the pros and cons of their issue. Preserving structured academic controversy as an integral part of the course design I therefore believe to be essential in any future revision of this course.

Collaborative writing: The consensus research paper

Collaborative writing, as I predicted from the controversy in the literature over its benefits and drawbacks (and from my own experiences with it as a student), proved to be the most complicated element of the course, the one about which the students sent the most mixed messages. The range of student opinion about it was broad, and the stories the students told in their final exams, various evaluations, and e-mail communications with their instructors showed their opinions to vary over the course of the semester and with their current experiences of group writing. Below I investigate the reasons for the students’ mixed messages. First, I comment upon salient aspects of the students’ writing processes and written product, and then, against this background, I examine their attitudes, opinions and experiences in depth. In light of these, I then discuss possible changes in the course.

The consensus research paper: A closer look at product and process

One of the questions that the piloting of this course was intended to answer was whether our 101C students could indeed, in groups, write research papers. On that score, Phil and I were both satisfied—the answer was yes. All the consensus research papers did demonstrate that their authors had achieved a certain level of success at library research, and
a certain understanding of the principles of argument and counterargument, as well as a basic understanding of the principles of documentation of sources. However, logical cohesion and flow in the papers was a major problem, one which seemed to be exacerbated by the group writing process.

One of the groups which managed fairly well to create flow and cohesion in their paper was the embedded group whose process I studied—the gun control group in Phil's class. They did so by taking a round-robin approach to writing the paper, essentially passing the paper around and writing it from beginning to end, appending their comments to each other at the end of the working computer file. (They also had the advantage of having two very good individual writers in their group. For a more detailed discussion of their writing process, see Appendix G.) Some other groups used an approach of dividing up the parts of the paper, writing simultaneously, and then putting the paper together all at once. In at least one paper, though, this meant that synthesis of argument that ought to have occurred in the body of the paper occurred in the conclusion.

In addition to these writing product problems, problems which were purely problems of group process also manifested themselves. Furthermore, I found these problems to be far more complex in reality than they are as presented in the composition pedagogy literature. For example, if ingroup/outgroup problems existed in our groups, I did not find that the students discussed them as such. ( Granted, my survey instruments were not designed to elicit such discussion). However, cross-cultural differences definitely complicated the group writing process.

Sometimes these complications seemed to stem directly from matters related to
contrastive rhetoric. A Hispanic male student in one group—a student quoted later in this thesis as saying “I just hate work with somebody else”—may have encountered this variety of problem. I had noticed that during his position paper outline project, he had written a romantic introduction to an otherwise analytical paper (on interracial and intercultural relationships). The "romance" didn’t show up much in his group’s final product, however, and he may have felt stymied for this reason. It's quite likely that the differences in his writing style and that of others in his group had cultural roots.

Only one group out of the six seemed to me to be manifesting straightforward in-group/out-group difficulty. This was also the only group in which serious problems with "slacking" arose. Two Korean male students were perceived by the other two group members as non-participatory. (The participatory members were a Chinese female, Rue, and a Japanese male, Kozi, discussed below as having mixed feelings about collaboration. Kozi was the same student who collaborated successfully with Yan Fang on the position paper outline mentioned elsewhere in this thesis). The "slacking" caused the more participatory members a great deal of stress. Of course, I don’t know to what extent the "slacking" involved in-group/out-group dynamics; I do find it notable, however, that the two Korean students were indeed allies in the conflict.

Interestingly, this conflict was not evident in the students’ product—both of the non-participators did produce significant portions of text for the paper. Kozi pointed out in a note to me, however, that the "slackers" had produced text fraught with plagiarism. But had he not written this note, the plagiarism would have remained invisible to me: In the group's final product, Kozi and Rue appear to have edited it out (undoubtedly frustrating for them,
but a sign that they had learned about plagiarism, and a far better exercise than my searching for plagiarism while grading). Another interesting facet of this conflict is that one of the "slackers" reported on his time log that he had pulled an all-nighter to write his section of the paper. Obviously slacking doesn’t necessarily involve doing no work at all; other aspects of this student’s non-participation or non-involvement must have upset his peers, and these aspects might indeed have involved in-group/out-group dynamics.

Still, as I’ve already stated, this was the only group out of the six functioning in both our classes in which I noticed serious problems with slacking or in-group/out-group dynamics. So if this is at all typical of the level at which these problems occur, in and of themselves they hardly seem to outweigh the potential benefits of group writing projects for the ESL classroom.

Another problem I found complex, one not yet discussed in the literature, was what could be called the problem of the sensitive student. Often the literature discusses success of a group member in terms of his or her contributions to the group process and product, but this is not necessarily how I found students to define their success. Sensitive group members may make excellent contributions to both process and product--and indeed their sensitivity may make possible these excellent contributions--but they may still come out of their group feeling very negative about their experiences. Kozi, the student who had such

65 They probably learned more about plagiarism in the process, and they had the opportunity to learn about how to discuss this matter with their group members, who would then have had the opportunity to hear their fellow classmates’ concerns about it.

66 As his teacher, I believe he probably did do the work he reported. The all-nighter, of course, does not reflect carefully planned work, but work nonetheless.
difficulty in the problematic group just discussed, seemed to fall into this category. Yan Fang also seemed to fall in this category, even though there was no schism in her group comparable to that in Kozi's. She experienced great stress during her collaborative work, despite her excellent contributions to both process and product. By the end of the semester, she had the following to say about group work

*in her consensus research paper evaluation:*

I do not like writing the consensus research paper. It was indeed a hard and time consuming difficult job....it was difficult to collaborate in a group of four people who were so different in opinions, way of thinkings and backgrounds. Moreover, our style in writing were different. We have long discussions in writing the final draft. Nevertheless we were all satisfied with the final written draft after all.

*in her postclass interview:*

Maybe we are not good in communication....sometimes I feel that my ideas are not understood by [other group members].

Usually, when I want to brought up something most ninety percent of the time I got something back in the opposite way...disagreement. I only tried to convince them...if my point was good enough to convince them.

Usually they do not take it seriously. I'm not sure what actually was...I feel that all of what I say they do not take it seriously and...it was not good enough to spend time on it....They brought out disagreement without waiting for me to explain in details.

Kozi always speak gently to me but not the people in my group. They talk in very loud voice. Sometimes I raised my voice in order to catch the attention but I do not like that.

The types of problems Yan Fang experienced are certainly related to students'
differing "communication styles," which is one of the concerns of Allaei and Connor (1990), but note that Yan Fang’s style has more in common with that of a Japanese student (Kozi) than of a fellow Malaysian Chinese student in her own group (Chiu Ho)! So in this case, the differences may not have been cultural differences, *per se*. They seemed to me to have more to do with gender differences in communication, which have been discussed in the L1 literature by Lay (1989), and in the L2 literature by Crismore (1992). But notice, once again, how Yan Fang’s case defies simple definition. She herself points out her willingness to "raise her voice," and the transcript in Appendix J contains many examples of her willingness to play devil’s advocate. (Lay would probably term her communication style "androgynous.") Furthermore, note that her most successful collaboration in the course took place with a male student (albeit, one with what could also be termed by Lay an androgynous communication style). This is why, for lack of a better term, I have chosen

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67 Note, though, that Chiu-Ho had been educated in Singapore.

68 My take on the dynamics in the early conflict-ridden meetings of Yan Fang’s group is that while on one level she was succeeding in spurring on substantive conflict, on another, her criticisms were routinely discounted. She was perceived by the others as trouble-making while she herself intended to be helpful. Partly, this could be overt sexism, but this could also be misunderstanding related to gender-correlated differences in communication style. Yan Fang often leaves implied in her questioning of the others’ lines of reasoning the direct, critical implication for the shaping of their paper. Had she risen fully to the power move of making direct suggestions or directly stating the criticisms her questions implied to the point, she might have been *better* received. (Although she herself may have been avoiding upping the conflict by remaining indirect about her criticisms!) Indirect evidence in support of this interpretation includes how Chiu Ho turns to me twice in the meeting for clarification of Yan Fang’s argument. (See the transcript in Appendix J.) Additionally, Yan Fang may have had a slower agenda for developing the group’s argument than the others did; she discussed this herself in an interview in which she pointed out that she prefers to write at length first when she writes as an individual author, and to revise and edit her lengthy first draft into a much more succinct final version.
the label "sensitive" rather than "female" for students who contribute in ways I would consider very successful to group writing, but who develop negative feelings about what has transpired.

Indeed, because of her group's success at writing, had I not been closely researching Yan Fang's class and writing group, the sort of problems she experienced could have remained largely invisible to me, as they might to any teacher. Even if I hadn't completely overlooked her struggles, I might easily have just seen them as learning opportunities—which undoubtedly they were, but of a very challenging nature. The problems of the sensitive student beg the question, When are problems problems? When can they be set aside, and when do they constitute learning opportunities about writing and culture and self?

On the flip side of problems for students which are considered learning opportunities by teachers are problems from the teacher's perspective which are not perceived as problems by students. A case in point is the one I discussed above—the "homelessness" group in my class, which I considered to have problems with domination by its unofficial leader. Again, I took notice of this problem when listening to a tape of the students and when reading the

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To Phil's mind, Yan Fang's was a very successful group, producing a paper which he would have considered of good quality even if it had been submitted to him in English 105, ISU's second semester freshman composition course.

Phil perceived "a struggle for power" in the group in which "some individuals felt that they had to give up [power] to get together enough to complete the paper." But, he said, "that's exactly what I wanted them to learn....They were used to taking control of their destinies as students and now they had to rely on someone else." Phil perceived them as having "recognized early on...that they were each individually strong students. They recognized their own individuality, their strong personalities" (personal communication, June 1995).
leader's evaluation; evidence of it did not come out in the other group members' evaluations—in fact two of them had very positive things to say about group work. (To quote the final exam of one: "We had discussions on what, when and how we do for our essay. I also learn and enjoy the collaboration with someone who is from a different country. Our group work went perfectly.") This says to me that an expectation that a good deal of egalitarianism is necessary to a positive group work experience simply may not hold for some ESL groups.

Note that intervening to make a group such as this one more egalitarian may not be at all simple. Just making the dominant member aware of his domination of the group is not the solution—the leader of this group had identified himself as overly dominant. The leader's awareness of his overly dominant role didn't translate into improvement in the group dynamics; he didn't seem know how to take a less dominant role, or perhaps he felt an urgency to control the product which prevented him from relinquishing control of group process. Had he been able to share power, however, I strongly believe the group's process would have included more substantive conflict, which in turn might have improved their paper. (Theirs was one of the papers with problems with naive argumentation.) I am left wondering if the other students in the group, who came from Malaysia (two were ethnically Chinese, one was ethnically Malay) were not more comfortable with his authoritarian leadership than typical Western students might have been. Or perhaps they were simply less likely to voice their dissatisfaction with his leadership. (His much greater age may have figured into this).

The apparent satisfaction of the less vocal members with the group, despite its non-
egalitarian nature, would undoubtedly work against changes a teacher might encourage in its group process. At the very least, the experience of this group does problematize Carson and Nelson's (1994) fears about Asian students having difficulty with group work. Maybe they're just as likely to be successful as students from other areas of the world, but their success will take unique forms! Successful group work undoubtedly means different things to students from different cultures, and our intervention in students' group processes will need to take this into account.

After teaching this course, I understand better that even when collaborative group dynamics are not overtly problematic, they still can still be very complicated and sometimes downright paradoxical. Any evaluation of an instantiation of collaboration must take this complexity into account. One student's responses to the first two questions on his consensus research paper evaluation sum up the primary paradox of collaborative writing very well. Answering "What did you like about writing the consensus research paper?", he replied, "the 'substantive conflict.'" Responding to the next question, "What didn't you like?" he replied, "all the collaboration (an irony?)."

In many respects, he hits the nail right on the head. And because of this paradox, in evaluating collaborative writing we must ask not just "Did the costs outweigh the benefits?" but "How much of the pain is necessary for the gain?" The latter question begs another: Just what sort of gains do we desire that the students make? This metaquestion i

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71Phil had discussed the concept of "substantive conflict" with his class. (Note that this student's use of the term in his evaluation is a great instance of how ESL students can pick up even advanced vocabulary about writing in their writing courses.)
will save for the conclusion to this thesis. "How much pain is necessary for the gain," I take up later in this section by discussing potential changes to the course. But to more comprehensively present the students' perspectives on the pains and gains from collaborative writing, I examine next their reports of their attitudes toward group work and their attitude changes over the semester, and I present a synopsis of their consensus research paper evaluations.

**Student attitude and change in attitude toward group work**

The students' attitudes toward group work, as measured by the attitude surveys administered at the beginning and end of the semester, become on the average more negative (albeit statistically insignificantly so.) (As mentioned before, the mean score for the combined classes' attitudes toward the usefulness of group work dropped a statistically insignificant 0.6 points, from 8.4 to 7.8 points, out of a total possible range of 3-12 points.) Six students' scores became more positive, five students' scores remained the same, and thirteen students' scores became more negative. Despite some of the struggles I'd observed, I was surprised at these results, given what I considered to be the students' overall success at composing group research papers (papers quite beyond what is generally expected of them at this level).\(^72\) Phil, on the other hand, was not surprised that more students showed negative changes in their attitudes toward group work than positive changes. One of his

\(^72\)I was also surprised that of the four students showing drops of three or more points in their score in attitude toward the usefulness of group work, three were "A" students very successful in the course. I was not surprised that two of them came from the group I considered to have trouble with in-group/out-group dynamics
objectives, as I mentioned earlier, was to teach students "that collaboration is difficult" (personal communication, June 1995).

Some of the students, too, would have been unsurprised that few students were measured to have positive changes in attitude toward group work. Among them would be students whose lack of previous experience at collaboration gave them little on which to base their initially optimistic opinions about it. These students sometimes had sophisticated explanations in their final exams for why they expected their measured attitudes toward group work to not become more positive. For example, one student said,

I do feel more positive on collaboration work, but in this class I do not find it really helpful. If [there are] changes for the survey I will predict it will be in the factors of collaboration and group work. Still, I think that will not make a big different from the beginning of the semester because I do not get the benefit working in group--can divide the work--as what I expected.

In other words, this student went into the semester thinking group writing would be easier than individual writing because the students could simply "divide the work." He had had no experience with collaborative writing before. ("Most of the works in this class are collaborate with other classmates," he says in another part of his final exam. "[T]his is what I do not experience before in any writing class.") By the end of the semester, he had realized that collaboration was a much more complex process. Thus with this student, Phil's objective had been reached, and, ironically, this students less "positive" attitudes toward group writing may reflect a success, rather than failure, of the course. More realistic attitudes toward something can easily be seen as improved attitudes from a teacher's vantage
point. This student had developed a more sophisticated notion of what collaboration entails, and what benefits can be expected from it. One of the possible goals of including collaborative writing in the course—that of preparing students for future collaborative projects—was clearly met with this student.

So one reason a student’s score in attitude about the usefulness of group work may decrease after a course involving collaborative writing is that he or she may have shed naive notions about the nature of collaboration. Another complex sort of negative attitude change involves students’ negative experiences outweighing positive ones: the downturns in attitude score which result may mask the very real learning that occurs during both types of experience. For example, in his final exam, Kozi—along with telling his story of shedding naive notions about collaboration—predicts that frustrations in working with most of his collaborators will lead to decreases in his attitude scores on the factor of usefulness of group work, though he truly has enjoyed and learned from working with Yan Fang on the position paper outline:

I received so big dissatisfaction from our group works. A group project was much more difficult to organize...than I imagined. The reason why I agree with usefulness of group work in the first survey was that I liked to play with a group. Even in a sport, I prefer soccer or baseball to tennis or field games because group members can help each other. I like the word "one for all, all for one." But, this my concept was completely reversed by two group projects that I had. What I felt from these projects was disappointments, confusion and complaints. Especially, when I couldn’t gain any cooperation from my group members, it was nothing but pain form me. I don’t know how many times I was placed in a dilemma between keeping upset against partners and keeping the partners’ prides. Because I thought a group project means working with some members, not individuals’ job, I kept on asking my partner cooperation. (But, I was completely exhausted in the consensus group
Moreover, another difficulty of group work is, I believe, how we respect each person’s ideas. Because each person has different opinion, sometimes it is very difficult to organize different ideas from everybody. This situation made me really confused in the projects.

On the contrary, group work gave me happy, too. Fortunately, I had a wonderful member from my sister group in the outline project. She motivated me to do a job in my best. By her hard working, I received strong responsibility to my job, and I tried to accomplish the responsibility as much as I could. To have her as a partner was really excellent experience for me. But, although I enjoyed two group projects, my final answer form group work occurs dissatisfaction.

Of course, not every student who, by the end of the semester, had similar negative opinions about group work had such positive experiences of collaboration to balance them out. Even a mostly negative experience of collaboration, however, can carry with it some positive learning, at least according to one student with a negative attitude change who recognized the opportunity group writing provided him for intercultural understanding:

This is my first time working in group, I found that there are a lot disadvantages occurred. First, there was not easy for the students in my group to reach the compromise. Second, the works were distributed unequally. Finally, there were not easy to find a time for us to discuss the topic, every students seem have their own works to do and ignored the group work. These are the disadvantages of group work, but there also some advantages of it. For example, we can learn or understand better of the other cultures.

So a downturn in an individual’s attitude toward the usefulness of group work may mask positive learnings. Moreover, as the downturn in the mean score of the students’ attitudes toward group work averages in the scores of those students who actually had upturns in their attitude, it masks even more dramatically positive learnings. The following
story of one student's transformation in attitude toward collaboration, for example, is practically a testimony for collaborative writing:

I used to have an opinion that group work was only wasting my time. I would rather do it by myself than having a group work. I was wrong, the group work that I have in these class makes me changing my mind. I feel how a work group is really useful. It will take much time and energy if I work alone. It will really hard to finish the paper. Through the group work, I felt easier. We can share so many ideas and work together in editing and revising, and building transition words or sentences. We were helping each other.

Other students, despite having had some difficulties, by the end of the semester experienced group writing similarly, and also came to feel more positive about the usefulness of group work. One student, for example, commented that

[in] the group work, we decide the idea, procedure and portion for each other. Then, we collected and looked for information to discuss whose opinion or material are better for the issue. Sometimes, we had some arguments during about grammar organization, word choice and the other elements during the revision. But we still know "How to respect the other partner's ideas or suggestions." After finishing the group work, there is a kind of successful feeling.

(Interestingly, this student belonged to the same consensus research paper writing group as Kozi, the student above who had mostly negative experiences of group work, and he was considered by Kozi, as described below, to have been a "slacker." ) In the same vein, another student's final exam included the following story:

Now, our group wrote an eight page research paper. If we had no group work, I would not have learned so many strong arguments and I could not find so much good materials to support these arguments. I am very glad to
have this group opportunity. This is a good way to learn to write papers.

No matter whether writing English paper in a group or cooperating with others in our later work, this group work experience will be very useful to me. Although sometimes the group work was very difficult, we not only learned how to get more ideas about our work, but also learned how to cooperate and communicate with others. All of these will be a big benefit for the future. Based on this evaluation, my score on the "Attitude about the usefulness of group work" would be higher than before.

Back at the negative end of the opinion spectrum lay the following string of responses on one student's consensus research paper evaluation:

2) What didn't you like [about writing the consensus research paper]?
   Work with other persons

3) What would you change about the assignment?
   Work alone, because everybody have a different stile of writing.

6) What did you learn about working in groups?
   I just hate work with somebody else. But sometime is necesary. I learn to be patient.

7) What advice would you give to a 101C student who is about to work in groups for the first time?
   Try to work alone not in groups. If you have to do it, try to divide the work in order to work alone.

Such a broad range of opinion about the collaborative writing element of the course warrants a more detailed look at the sources of the variety, complexity, and occasional extremity of student reaction to this element. These sources become clearer in the following synopsis of
student feedback from the consensus research paper evaluations and the later discussion of the some of the students' group writing processes.

Synopsis of feedback from the consensus research paper evaluation form

In their consensus research paper evaluations, responses to the question "What did you like about writing the consensus research paper?" and positive responses to the request that students, at their option, provide one to four "I" statements about their experiences fell into rough categories: pride, satisfaction (mentioned by 6 students); more ideas, multiple perspectives (5); mutual assistance, shared responsibility (5) opportunity to argue (4); cooperation, conviviality (3); engagement in task (3); increase in topic knowledge (2); learning to use the library (2); general learning (2). The following list explains the students' responses more fully, and also includes matters mentioned by only one student.

Pride; Satisfaction--6 students
mentioned pride or satisfaction in a job well done, in all members "doing their job," in making "lots of effort in [the] paper" or class

More ideas, Multiple perspectives--5 students
mentioned getting different perspectives, more ideas, or good ideas; being exposed to other's opinions and having gaps in their own knowledge revealed to them; getting others "vision on writing"; engaging in "substantive conflict"

Mutual assistance; Shared responsibility--5 students
mentioned the help from others or the opportunity to distribute tasks; called the consensus research paper an easier project to do in a group than alone

Opportunity to argue--4 students
mentioned presenting arguments; arguing for a side they felt strongly about; stating their opinions
Cooperation; Conviviality--3 students
mentioned working together; having group discussions; becoming friendlier

Engagement in task--3 students
mentioned that their group "really worked on" the consensus research paper, "really work[ed] good," or "wor[ked] hard.

Increase in topic knowledge--2 students
mentioned learning a lot about the topic over the course of the semester; mentioned increased confidence in arguments and decreased confusion about the topic

Learning library research--2 students
mentioned the opportunity to learn about library research; mentioned finding sources or references

General learning--2 students
mentioned learning "a lot of things" or "many thing from other people and during the work"

Miscellaneous--1 student
mentioned each of the following: positive group mood because of respect for each other's ideas, ease of writing the consensus research paper (it "was easy after the essay paper and outlines"); learning new vocabulary; learning to use statistics convincingly; learning that academic writing isn't easy and becoming more serious about future study

Sample "I statements" about positive aspects of fulfilling the assignment included the following:

I felt the mood is good, when we discused the material of the composition. Because we could respect the others ideas.

I felt great because this is my first time doing a consensus research paper in an English class. Before this, I only wrote a paper that is without grammar checking or coments from the teacher and without a proper outline.

I felt very happy when we got the final version of our research paper because we made lots of effort in that paper.
I felt happy when we finish the paper because all the group members have done their job. I felt glad and relieve when we finally turn in the paper because I know that we have done our best.

I felt working in this group paper was easy than the outline group outline paper because it was done within the same class [it did not involve cross-class cooperation] and we divided what each people wanted to write on.

I felt that my group member had good ideas and work hard.

I felt comfortable when working with the group members because they all have their own specialty in their task.

I felt happy when we finish the paper because all the group members have done their job.

I felt that it was a good experience for me because I learned many thing from other people and during the work.

Frustrations with the consensus research paper project which were mentioned by more than one student fell into the following categories:

Difficulty with conflicting opinions, difficulty compromising or discussing issues--8 students
Insufficient time for the project--7 students
Difficulty cooperating or collaborating--3 students
Difficulty working with others due to conflicting writing styles--2 students
Fear of working in a group for the first time--2 students

Issues mentioned by only one student included the following: fear that the writing was ineffective, difficulty with research, difficulty with paper organization, difficulty deciding
what to use to support arguments, difficulty finding time to get together with other group members, boredom with topic, tiring of looking for data, difficulty with feeling "like a dictator" and wanting more participation from other group members, difficulty due to different ways of thinking and different backgrounds.

Sample "I" statements revealing negative feelings about problems or difficulties:

I was little afraid when I do this work because it was my first time of group work....I felt that it is hard work because a group have to help each other.

I almost felt loneliness because I couldn't get cooperation from two other group members.

I felt difficult when my group member had different opinion with me, because we need to write just one paper.

I felt unbearable when we, group members, had different ideas because I thought my idea would be better.

I felt a bit tense during discussing because we tend to have different opinion.

I felt not that good when doing the research assignment because I did not have that much time to spend on it.

I felt to look for information is not very easy when we try to find the statements. Because we are not very familiar procedures....I felt to make decision is hard when we decide what information is good to support idea. Because there are a lot of materials.
What did students learn from working in groups? (For those things mentioned by more than one student, the number of students mentioning them are in parentheses.)

Patience (2)
Willingness to change views, compromise (2)
consideration and respect for others' advice and suggestions, to listen carefully to others' opinions (2)

They also learned of the

usefulness of working in groups including complementarity of various members' contributions and efficiency resulting from division of tasks (6)
benefits of other's suggestions, ideas (4)
importance to the success of group work of being responsible
importance of "good attitudes toward work"
difficulty of "making one idea from many different ideas," "reaching the same idea" (3)
difficulty of finding a time when all group members are available
need for assertiveness
And some talked about learning

how to write a long paper

how to distribute tasks

how to work together, cooperation (5)

Advice from the students to future 101C students involved in group work included the following

*on sharing ideas and how to do so:*

Providing own idea to discuss with the other partners is a good way to accomplish consensus research paper.

Be very, very open minded. Accept all criticism with no question and if you are not satisfy, refute in a polite manner.

Please, don’t keep only your opinion. Remember that any time other person’s opinions could be better than those of yours. Accept other ones’ good ideas.

Try to accept the other members opinions and give cooperation.

Be patient, understand the different background of the members of the groups because, these backgrounds are related to the culture the member belongs to.

Use as much as possible cultural relativity and less ethnocentrism.
on cooperation and how best to cooperate:

Select the part in which he/she can do the best.

Make sure that all of your group members participate. Collaborate with each other. It will be interesting.

Take the responsibility. Because the work results are not only affect to one people but also everybody. If one people didn’t cooperate, it will make the group work harder.

Decide the work to everyone, it will be less working and more fair.

Try to finish the procedure of the assignment as soon as possible and let the instructor had a look into your procedure.

Do your best when you work with group.

Try to work alone not in groups. If you have to do it, try to divide the work in order to work alone.

Get involved! Don’t wait someone give anything to do! Make just move or initiative!

Don’t try to depend everywork on other students. A collaboration p[r]oject requires good team work.

Don’t be afraid. Try to cooperate with other people.

on other points:

Try to finish your part of the group project as soon as possible. Don’t wait until the last minute to do.

Narrow down the topic before wor[k] in groups. Don’t introduce new materials.

No pain to gain (sic); try hard and try your very best.

Group work is the way of the future.
Issues related to collaborative writing to consider during future course revision

In an important respect, our course used collaborative writing as a means to the end of introducing research paper writing to our students. In evaluating the collaborative writing element of the course, then, at a very basic level, there's the question of how well it served this "introducing research papers" purpose. We can't really know from this study the answer to this question, but we do know each student contributed something to the group writing of one research paper, and was present for at least some of the group discussions about the paper. It's not a far stretch to assume that this experience will prove useful as an introduction to research paper writing for those students who go on to writing research papers in their next semester. To confirm this utility for the students' written product, some sort of longitudinal comparison study could be conducted if this course were to be taught again: Students coming out of this course could be tracked along with similar 101C students coming out of the standard course, and their grades in subsequent composition courses and on position and research papers in those courses could be compared. 73 Of course, as results in this course have shown, externally and internally defined success can be two very different things, so a longitudinal study of student attitude might also be interesting. Conceivably, students going through this revised 101C course might write no better papers in freshman composition than their counterparts who've taken a regular 101C course, but they might nonetheless feel more comfortable about what they're doing, which might in turn lead to

73 Ideally they would be matched so that they each started at roughly the same level of English proficiency and so that they each subsequently were taking the same composition course or courses.
other forms of success for them down the road.

Further studies are not entirely necessary, however, for some confirmation of our course’s success in teaching research paper writing: We do have some evidence in this study that suggests a certain meeting of the Vygotskian objective in our using collaborative writing to introduce the research paper genre to the students. Besides the mere fact that each group turned in papers meeting our minimal criteria for success, there is evidence during our course of lower proficiency students gaining the opportunity to contribute to a project that otherwise might well be beyond them. Of the three students who did not live up to my expectations for freshman composition level writing in their individual writing in their portfolios—the three who I judged to be at lower levels of writing proficiency than their classmates—only one had group members complain about his participation in his consensus research paper group, and he was in the group which, as discussed above, may have had complex in-group/out-group problems. The other two students were actually praised by group members: one for effort, and the other for his editing efforts. 74 This indicates a willingness on the part of the students in these groups to consider group members’ abilities when dividing up tasks and setting expectations, and it suggests a positive introduction for these lower proficiency writers to research paper writing.

As discussed above, though, many negative experiences of collaborative writing were mixed in with positive ones in this course. So if teaching cooperation is important to the goals of a revised version of the course, then the collaborative writing element certainly

74 The praise came in the form of comments submitted with participation grade suggestions.
requires more attention. And even if teaching cooperation is not a prioritized goal of the course, given the level of discomfort that some of the students experienced, modifying the course in order to deal with some of their problems is essential. My experience piloting this course, and the feedback I received from students during and after it, convinces me that collaboration is so new to most of the students, and often involves so much personal investment from them, that to treat it as primarily a means to the end of introducing them to research papers early in their curriculum is irresponsible. Of course, modifications which address some of the students’ problems are not going to be easy to make. Many of the suggestions in the cooperative learning literature boil down to suggestions that teachers simply encourage cooperative behavior—in a sense, that we become cheerleaders for cooperation. While I could perhaps have done more cheerleading when I piloted this course, my attempts during the course to actually teach students means of increasing cooperative communication in groups suggest that encouraging cooperative behavior is not at all a simple matter. For example, I taught the students a simple consensus decision-making procedure (handout in Appendix C), demonstrated it with the whole class, and then asked groups to use it to arrive at their consensus position for their research paper thesis. Circulating around to groups to try to help them use the procedure made it obvious to me that they could use the formal procedure only if I were present to facilitate discussion.

We can look at this glass as half full, however. The fact that, as a teacher, I can do much when present to facilitate discussion and cooperation could be capitalized upon. I did find while observing the embedded consensus research paper writing group that my mere presence at times seemed to stabilize the group and moderate conflict. Trying as I was not
to overly influence the process, I nevertheless did make spoken contributions on a few occasions when conflict became heated or when I was directly invited to respond. And this small amount of intervention seemed to do a world of good. Later, Yan Fang would express in her postclass interview:

In this particular group that I was in I need an instructor to sit beside me I felt that if you were not there the situation would be very much more tense... You can somehow help in many ways... We are all not sure about one thing. We need to have someone to look up to... This is very helpful to me to us to everyone... What you say you will be more listened to me and not mine... I'm not sure how. Do you remember? We have the education issue, discussed the points I made. They just don't expect it. With your qualification only then they start to think about it. I'm glad that you were there.

Appendix J contains a transcription of the incident of which she speaks, and of most of the last third of the approximately one and a half hour first group meeting. Yan Fang's gratitude for my contributions to group process suggests that just a little intervention goes a long way, so we need not feel overwhelmed when contemplating group facilitation. My experience with Yan Fang's group also supports what Duin (1984) says—that minimalist teacher intervention, with the teacher taking the role of consultant, may be successful, and

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During the first two-thirds of the meeting I merely observed group process; during the last third, I ask for clarification of phonology twice and I contribute substantively on four occasions. Twice I clarify Yan Fang's contributions to the other members, once I extend her contribution, and toward the end of the meeting I suggest that the students wrap up.
indeed advisable, when teachers facilitate cooperative learning groups.\footnote{Duin’s precise suggestion is the following: "Intervene only in the role of a ‘consultant’ who will suggest possible solutions to the groups’ questions, and ‘consult’ in a way as to help members learn the interpersonal skills necessary for cooperating" (1984, pp. 4-5). (As I am discussing, however, teaching these interpersonal skills is easier aspired to than accomplished.) A consultant role for teachers supervising collaborative writing groups seems especially appropriate in the L2 context, since, as discussed above with the oddly well-functioning "dominated" group, ESL teachers may interpret group dynamics very differently than their students, who come from very different cultures.} [Interestingly, I’m sure I would not have taken nearly as minimalistic a role had I considered myself to be in the role of teacher, rather than observer, of the embedded group I studied. Thus it is a serendipitous byproduct of my teacher research that I am now considering sparing intervention when managing low-level conflict in collaborative writing groups in my own classroom in the future.\footnote{Yan Fang, however, would have had me be more interventionist in her group. Asked if she would have preferred for me to have said or done more, she responded, "I’m very glad if you had done it more often" since she felt that her "points [were] not listened to" or "taken as equally as" the other group members’.}

Time constraints, of course, will not allow me to spend as much time with every collaborative group in my class as I did with the embedded group I observed from Phil’s class. I could, however, be present, for example, for each group’s initial planning session, a session I found to be crucial to the process of the embedded group I studied, and one in which I could facilitate the use of formal consensus decision making for group’s formulation of their paper’s thesis. I might cancel classes to make my presence at these group meetings feasible. Furthermore, if I were present during initial planning sessions, I would encourage students to narrow their topics, a crucial task our students--with the exception of those in the...
position paper outline gun control group discussed in Appendix G--almost entirely ignored, despite our encouragement of topic narrowing in made class and in the consensus research paper assignment sheet. (Students were even handed out, as a model, copies of the outline which successfully narrowed the gun control topic to issues relating gun control to suicide prevention.)

Instructor presence during the initial planning sessions might also help with a problem I observed in the embedded group: Critical thinking may occur, but due to such issues as communication difficulties and group politics, the thinking may not find its way into the paper. Presumably an instructor could encourage the group to hear and take into account key criticisms which they might otherwise ignore. To avoid becoming too interventionist, instructors might want to simply note critical points that were raised but not fully considered, and either discuss these at the end of the meeting, or simply give a copy of the notes to the students. When giving the group these notes, an instructor might tell them that later, when turning in the first draft of their paper, they will be asked how they addressed the issues raised. (Their answer could either be written or, in a conference, oral.) Though instructors may not often be able to observe students and take notes very often, a little bit of observation and intervention may go a long way to helping students truly negotiate the shape of their argument.78

Course changes like these would concentrate more time and attention on the shaping

78Nelson and Murphy make similar suggestions for teachers supervising peer response groups. Because the interactions in such groups can be "at times unpleasant with students being overly critical" they suggest that teachers can be included as part of peer response groups (1992, p. 188).
of the consensus research paper; they are related to changes I suggested above in the portfolio grading section involving switching to a multi-draft approach for the consensus research paper. Like some of the students, I feel that switching to a multi-draft approach to the group paper could greatly improve the quality of their product; this is important to me as a teacher since, as I mentioned previously, the transitions and forecasting in our students' research papers were rudimentary. If teaching these aspects of writing is considered a significant objective when this course is taught again, I believe leaving time after the group project for revision and editing is crucial. Classroom presentations and whole-class discussion during the drafting would also be helpful. Once again, however, the time factor looms large. The position paper outline assignment could be eliminated, but doing so would also eliminate a clarification of argument and a polarization of positions that I believe was useful. And even this probably wouldn't offer sufficient time for the sorts of changes I'm suggesting in the teaching of the consensus research paper assignment; significant and potentially costly changes in other parts of the syllabus would also have to be made.79

This brings us to the question I raised in the introduction to this entire section: Would I, if I were to teach this course again, just scrap the collaborative writing of the research paper, and retain the cooperative learning which built up to it? Ideally, no, I'd rather have another semester with my students to take them through a careful, thorough writing of their

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79 One possibility would be to de-emphasize research, pre-selecting materials on controversial issues from which the students could write their papers. Obviously this choice would significantly shift the nature of what was taught and how it was taught in this course. It would influence how much the students learn about research at this point in the curriculum, and it would limit their topic selection. If these are deemed less important than other considerations, however, this is one way to free up time in the course.
research papers. With that not an option, however, if I taught this course again, I probably
would go ahead and scrap the collaborative writing, but keep the other aspects of cooperative
learning. I would have the course culminate in consensus presentations on the order of those
the students gave when presenting their group position paper outlines; also, as I did for that
assignment, I'd probably have them turn in an outline of their argument. Additionally, I'd
have them turn in a reference page which followed APA or MLA guidelines.

I am led to this solution from my experience teaching the position paper outline
assignment, during which I learned that much that I wanted to teach--aspects of
argumentation, organization, documentation, introduction and conclusion--can be taught
without requiring the students to write a full paper. I graded the position paper outlines very
simply--assigning points for introduction, support (including statistical), reasonable tone, and
insightful analysis; I would do this again in grading a consensus paper outline and/or
presentation.\footnote{The students got one point each for the mere presence of an intro, support for the
position, and a discussion of possible refutation of the position. If the intro had an
interesting "hook," the students got an additional point. For the presence of numerical data
and statistical support of the position (something we were emphasizing at this point in the
course), students could earn up to eight additional points (one for each relevant use). The
remaining possible points, the only ones that required real judgment calls on our part, were
one to two points for reasonable tone and one to three points for insightful analysis. This
scheme made grading very simple, and made our expectations very specific.} A simple grading scheme such as this one offers a tremendous amount of
focus for the students and for the teacher. And though my experience suggests this simple
kind of grading doesn't offer a wide grade distribution, this can be remedied by not
weighting heavily the simply graded assignments when assigning final course grades. Again,
my experience is helpful; it suggests students may well concentrate on group assignments
even when they don't contribute very much to their overall grade in the course. (The position paper outline contributed only 7% to the overall grade, yet it was one of the course assignments which truly engaged the students.)

If for some reason I needed to teach the course again as is, including the collaborative writing, but not eliminating other activities to free up time for more supervision of it, I would make a point at least to take a triage approach to my intervention in the groups. I would look out for the most serious slacking problems, and I would emphasize to the students my willingness to help them work out big differences in their expectations of each other and of their paper. I’d make a point of checking in on the contributions of those students I’d identified as significantly less proficient at writing than the class average. I might even survey students early on about what other work and school responsibilities they had for the semester so that I could check in on the contributions of the most overbooked.

Interestingly, Phil would take a tack completely different from mine if he were to teach 101C again. With less concern than I have for preparing students to write freshman compositions, and more commitment to collaborative writing, he would essentially scrap the first half of our course and concentrate on the collaborative writing portion. He would experiment in 101C with a project which has been successful for him in other business writing and freshman composition courses he’s taught: a collaborative writing project involving traditional as well as internet research, and eventual posting of the projects on the World Wide Web (personal communication, January 1995).
CONCLUSION

Implications of and for the Course

In the final analysis, the piloting of this course resolved many issues. As I said in the Methods section, I had wanted my teaching and research to show that the capabilities of 101C students are currently underestimated in a way which leaves them less prepared than they could be for freshman composition. I do believe I went a long way towards achieving this goal. After the course was over, I was left with no doubt about whether 101C students were capable, with appropriate assistance, of fulfilling some assignments from English 104—those which asked them to share and argue from personal experience, and to summarize articles. By and large, I was also pleased with how the major course elements contributed to student success. (I summarize the study findings related to the course elements below.)

In retrospect, another major problem of which I am convinced is that we pushed our students a little too far in terms of the number and kinds of assignments we asked them to fulfill. I remain unresolved about whether it was a good idea to have our students writing long research papers. Stepping back and looking at the curriculum as a whole, I would like

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81 The goal was probably overstated: My study could only explore whether the students could, with scaffolding, write longer, more complex assignments. Followup studies would be needed to show that my course does indeed better prepare students than the standard course.

82 A few of our students were exceptions; my take on this, however, is that they are precisely the students who need to be flagged at this point in the curriculum as underprepared, and that a course such as this could be used to identify them.
to shift some of what we attempted in this course either down to the level of 101B or up to 104.

One of the reasons for the overkill in this course was that I felt a pressing need to prepare students for the research paper writing which is so suddenly introduced in 104. If, however, some of the elements of this course—a portfolio grading approach, for example, or a thematic assignment sequence—were adopted in 104, L2 as well as L1 students would no longer have to sink or swim when it comes to research papers, and 101C could presage rather than teach writing from sources. Regardless, however, of whether any of these changes are adopted in the curriculum, if I were to teach 101C again I would focus the course more, emphasizing either individual or collaborative writing, as I discuss below.

Summary and extension of implications regarding the course elements

Modified thematic assignment sequencing

Although more direct evaluation of this element is called for, I deemed the modified thematic assignment sequence in our course very successful, and I would certainly use it again. I consider it to have been an integral part of the scaffolding which enabled our students to write up to the standards of freshman composition. Based on the success of this element, I would encourage other ESL teachers to employ assignment sequences that allow their students to write about and research topics over several assignments. I would also hope in the future to see more materials published for teachers on implementing theme-based

83 arguing from personal experience, for example, or introducing structured academic controversies
Portfolio grading

Portfolio grading, like modified assignment sequencing, was integral to our students’ success. It was problematic, though, in that it created an end-of-the-semester time crunch. If I were to teach the course again, I would experiment with modifications to our grading approach which preserved between-draft feedback and the selection of assignments for revision and editing, but which staggered the due dates of the final drafts of the selected assignments. Nevertheless, based on my experience teaching this course (and other courses), I would highly recommend that other composition instructors consider very seriously the advantages of a portfolio grading approach, and that they themselves experiment with variations on it. I would caution them, though, against ignoring the importance of selection in creating focus for both teachers and students. I would also caution instructors against switching from a multi-draft approach toward grading individually authored compositions to a single draft approach toward grading collaborative writing.

Also related to portfolio grading and underscored by this study is the (unsurprising) finding that between-draft feedback on compositions is extremely helpful in teaching students how to avoid plagiarism. Lectures only teach academic notions of respect for intellectual property to some of the students, some of the time. Instead of just lecturing, we can first require our students to complete assignments that involve the use and documentation of sources, and then conference with them until their writing acceptably incorporates and credits source material. This way we can help students learn to avoid plagiarism in context, with
cues, and through trial and error. Wells (1993) has already implied as much, but she suggests that this intervention occur during writing support classes in writing-across-the-curriculum programs. The intervention which occurred during the pilot 101C course, on the other hand, exemplifies how this intervention can occur as part of regular ESL composition classes.

Cooperative learning

There's certainly more to cooperative learning than peer review and group writing. Structured academic controversy is very worth trying, and I recommend it to other instructors. I found it to facilitate both critical thinking and argumentative writing. I feel certain that it contributed significantly to our students' success at writing freshman composition level assignments. If I were to teach 101C again, I would continue to structure my syllabus by the phases of structured academic controversy.

It is not, however, a panacea, and course designers and curriculum planners need to keep this in mind. At ISU, for example, though I would like for those interested in integrating skills other than writing into 101C to take a look at the design of this revised version of 101C, I would also suggest they examine how the course played out in the classroom--in particular how some students failed to get as much speaking practice as others. For now, though, as an instructor, I am satisfied with the way this course provided a greater variety of both speaking and listening opportunities than is typical of 101C, particularly since providing speaking practice has not been explicitly stated as a goal of 101C. (I am not, however, satisfied with the group power dynamics which may have led to the uneven
distribution of speaking opportunities; possible interventions into group dynamics I take up in the next subsection.

Collaborative writing

It was in this course element I most felt the strain of trying to do too much in one course. Partly, no doubt, this was because the group writing came at the end of the course, but partly, I also believe, this resulted from the sheer complexity of group dynamics and group communications. In retrospect, I sincerely question my "product" orientation toward the group paper, and I would make many changes in how I taught this part of the course if I were to teach it again.

To start with, though, I would ask, pedagogically, how important is the teaching of cooperation at this point in the curriculum? If it's very important, I'd focus a great deal more on collaborative writing, attempting some of the interventions I discussed earlier. If it's not, I'd take the approach I advocate above, simply scrapping the consensus research paper and keeping the rest of the course intact. [This is truly an interesting "course development," given that I originally conceived of the collaborative research paper as the capstone assignment of the course!]84 So once again, my findings lead me to desire clarification from curriculum planners--clarification which is all the more necessary due to the relatively recent popularization of collaborative projects in higher education.

84 Note that even this drastic solution would still leave the students with many experiences of cooperative learning and collaborative project work--just not of collaborative research paper writing.
Other findings of this study related to collaborative writing have implications which reach beyond the ISU campus. It is clear from my study, for example, that researchers need to examine "slacking," its complexities, causes, and remedies. This thesis also uncovered "the problem of the sensitive student"--the student who contributes greatly to his or her group, but leaves it feeling badly; further study of these students is warranted, as is acknowledgement that they can be either male or female. Additionally, in general, more studies which offer transcribed accounts of the teaching and learning of cooperation would be valuable. Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) repeatedly exhort teachers to instruct students in social skills; I'd like to read about instantiations of students applying these skills when they are engaged in collaboratively writing papers, and I'd like to see evidence that classroom instruction makes a difference in their ability to do so.

At the same time, I'm now more willing to experiment with teaching social skills in the classroom. Johnson, Johnson and Smith suggest that teachers construct "T" charts with their students, listing a social skill such as "encouraging" at the top and filling in what it "looks like" on the left and what it "sounds like" at the top. Afterwards, they suggest that teachers monitor groups and literally check off whether students are indeed applying the skills they operationalized in class discussion (1991, pp. 3:9-10). When I first heard these suggestions, quite frankly I found them hokey, and I was skeptical of whether these activities would help. I was worried about how I could possibly fairly assess whether the skills were being applied in my students' groups.

If I were to teach collaborative writing again, however, although I'd be aware of the fairness problem, I might experiment with implementing a monitoring system mostly for
show, meaning that I wouldn't weigh my checkmarks into students' grades in any serious way, but by my very concrete monitoring of their behavior, I would try to convey how highly I valued cooperation. [Johnson and Johnson (1994, p. 204), discuss assigning "bonus points" students can use for "special rewards" when teaching students social skills.] Though I'd like to see studies which demonstrate the effectiveness of the teaching of social skills in classrooms such as mine, I'm not going to wait until anything is proven to attempt to improve my own classroom dynamics. I suggest that other teachers of collaborative writing take the same proactive approach.

I also suggest that they consider how they might teach students to be sensitive to gender differences in communication, and I further recommend that instructors contemplate what sort of presence they want to have in the groups themselves. As for myself, if I were to teach collaborative writing again, I would experiment with canceling formal classes and attending initial meetings of writing groups in order to help them with their group dynamics and to assist them at productively working their early substantive conflicts into their papers. Due to my experience with observing the embedded group in my study, however, I would attempt to take a backseat rather than controlling role during these initial meetings, along the lines of the "consultant" role advocated by Duin (1984). My intuition is that more than any classroom discussions of social skills, or monitoring of groups for their practice of these skills, my direct presence along with minimal intervention in groups would actually

85 Of course, the students are much more likely to actually engage in substantive conflict in their initial planning meetings if their collaborative assignment is the culmination of either structured academic controversy, a thematic assignment sequence, or both.
improve the groups’ dynamics.\footnote{The risk I run in intervening, even minimally, in my students’ groups is in teaching them that they need a teacher in order to function effectively as a group. Analogously, Johnson and Johnson point out that traditional, authoritarian school discipline systems teach students that "adults or authorities are needed to resolve conflicts" (1994, p. 236). In intervening in groups in future classes, I need to evaluate whether I am assisting students to become better collaborators, or whether I am inducing in them some sort of dependency on instructors for conflict resolution.}

In sum, even though I am considering eliminating collaborative research paper writing from my syllabus for teaching 101C, I am still game for teaching it in other ESL contexts, and I am actively pondering ways I can do so effectively. After this, my first, experience of teaching collaborative writing, I am inclined to agree with Crismore (1992), who says "we have learned much about collaborative learning, but we still have much to learn." Like Jacob, Rottenberg, Patrick, and Wheeler, who studied cooperative learning and found it to be a mixed bag, I feel "cooperative learning is not a silver bullet; neither does it deserve to be one more innovation that is tossed out when it does not work. It is a potentially powerful instructional strategy that requires careful attention" (1996, p. 274).

I remain skeptical of the position of outright critics of collaboration, such as Carson and Nelson (1994), who claim that the "social situations in which [ESL students] find themselves at best...may provide a behavioral context that does not deliver anticipated social cohesion [and] at worst...may provoke resistance to the principal pedagogical technique being implemented for the purpose of developing their writing abilities." My findings suggest that, as in L1 composition classrooms, in the L2 context, though some of the expected benefits
of collaborative writing projects will not pan out, others will.⁸⁷ And whether we like it or not, as I have already pointed out, collaborative projects are becoming regular features of many college courses. Avoiding them entirely in our ESL classrooms may be unwise. It hardly makes sense to shield ESL students from collaboration in our classrooms if they are later going to be required to collaborate in the even more socially complex context of classrooms which integrate international students with Americans. This brings us to the curricular level again, and to decisions which could be made there to clarify whether the inclusion of collaborative projects is important in individual classes.

Indeed, in all likelihood, unless and until collaboration is made a priority at program and department levels, there will continue to be tension between new and old educational paradigms at the classroom level when individual instructors attempt to introduce it. For that matter, it is important to keep in mind that studies such as mine are not studies of cooperative learning or collaborative writing carried out in ideal contexts. At the very least, therefore, we should suspend judgment on these activities until they are implemented in courses which are taught in departments committed to them.⁸⁸

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⁸⁷ Speaking of collaboration in mainstream courses, Donald Stewart wrote, "It will work with certain students in certain contexts. It most certainly will not work with a number of students in a number of contexts" (1988, p. 80).

⁸⁸ Johnson, Johnson, and Smith, moreover, see the shift from competitive and/or individualistic learning as only one component of an entire educational paradigm shift which also includes shifts in assumptions about the roles of students and faculty and the nature of knowledge and teaching (1991, p. 1:6-7). Furthermore, Johnson, Johnson, and Smith envision the ideal context for cooperative learning as being a "cooperatively structured college" involving cooperatively reorganized faculty and administrations in addition to cooperative learning in classrooms (1991, p. 9:2). Utopian as this may be, I find it inspiring.
Unilateral, top-down decisions about including collaboration in courses are not advisable, however, as they could create more problems than they solve. Crismore reports that, despite annual roundtables promoting collaborative learning in her writing program, some teachers "are hesitant to try or to try again...to make use of collaborative learning or more varied use of collaborative learning" (1992, p. 13). Moreover, where collaboration would be prescribed, surely some instructors would be downright resistant. And given the difficulties inherent in collaboration, instructor resistance to it would almost certainly cripple its effectiveness in the classroom. My experimentation with it in my classroom leaves me inclined to proceed with it only in contexts in which I personally feel a commitment to both to the activity and to teaching it with intention and focus.

Reflections on the Study

The truth about the way this course developed

In many respects, in presenting my course rationale first, this thesis tells my course development story backward. The truth was much messier (as I discuss to an extent in Appendix F). I initially set out to do a case study of collaborative writing, partly because of the controversy in the literature about it. My commitment to teaching assignments modeled on freshman composition assignments came early and was largely an unexamined development out of my intuitions about what might improve my students' later success in freshman composition. Into this mix went my recent exposure in a graduate education course to structured academic controversy, so when I talked with Phil about the kinds of cross-class collaboration I'd be interested in doing with him, I hit upon the idea of using
structured academic controversy to build up to a major collaborative writing project. Thematic assignment sequencing had been modeled for me by Bonnie Irwin, whom I assisted in teaching the summer before; undoubtedly this experience contributed to my innovation in stretching structured academic controversy over the entire semester. At any rate, my decision to do so inevitably resulted in a semester-long single topic focus for my students.

So I designed the course and assignments creatively and intuitively, and it was only when I got around to having to explicate the process in writing this thesis that I came to truly understand the rationale behind what I had done. All of this is in keeping with Graves’ theories and teachings about course design. As she puts it,

The experience of developing a course is not always a clearly articulated, rational process. The approach one develops can eventually be articulated in rational terms, such as a series of steps or a framework. The rational look of a framework or plan is a later result of the process....The framework...evolves. Course development is a dynamic, ongoing process....There is a continuous interaction of practice and the reflection that shapes it and is shaped by it. Thus an approach that can continue to serve in developing one’s courses must be flexible. (1996, p. 6-7)

Perhaps not every teacher can stand so much openness and creativity in their course design process; as I mention above, coping with multiple innovations was a strain at times on both me, Phil and the students. But the payoffs in terms of student success were often big, and the lessons I personally learned will surely help me teach better in the future.
Further implications of the study

If I had been exposed to Graves’ work prior to writing the initial drafts of this thesis, I might have shaped it much differently; I might have concentrated more on telling my course development story than on laying out my course rationale. Nevertheless, my early thesis drafts did enable me to articulate my rationale, and I highly recommend studied reflection to any teacher attempting radical innovations in his or her classroom. One of the most important lessons I learned from my study, then, is that reflection combined with flexibility is key to successful classroom innovation.

In my case, I also found it to be key to my thesis writing process. Thesis writing, like course development, can be a very creative process, if it is allowed to be. Moreover, a little free rein, analogous to that I was given in redesigning 101C, can go a long way in ultimately encouraging the independent scholarly development of a student such as myself, and in keeping her interested in writing her thesis. Case studies, of course, lend themselves more to this creative process than do various other research methods.

But as far as case studies being do-able, neat little things that lend themselves to graduate student inquiry [implied, but not stated, by Nunan (1992, p. 88)], I found quite the opposite. Case study, taken seriously, is a method of inquiry which due to its unbounded nature can be time-consuming and overwhelming. What I did find, however, was that case study, being flexible, lent itself well to inquiry into course development and course outcomes. I recommend it to other teachers attempting to research and evaluate innovative courses. Furthermore, as a component of case study evaluation of innovative writing courses, I specifically would recommend Wallace’s Writing Attitude Survey, and especially
Ultimately, I think that as course development comes to be seen as Graves would have it, as a creative process, our means of inquiring into and evaluating courses will also become more creative. The instruments we use, and our interpretations of the data we collect with them, will be influenced by our new model of the course.

This thesis has offered a glimpse into that future. I hope that, in addition to suggesting that ISU's ESL students are capable of more than is currently expected of them, it also shows that instructors, including teaching assistants, being closest to students and highly invested in course design, can contribute invaluably to course design and evaluation. Administrators, by allowing TAs and instructors to introduce significant innovations into their classrooms and by being open to flexible means of evaluation of innovative courses, can tap the creativity essential to course, and ultimately, curriculum development. Schlumberger and Clymer have already set forth a similar position. "We have found it benefits our program," they say, "if [TAs] have a role in instigating as well as implementing curricular changes" (1989b, p. 156). Citing and extending remarks by Bruffee, they claim that "collaborative learning naturally challenges the traditional basis of the authority of those who teach, (Bruffee, 1984, p. 649)" as well as "those who design curricula" (Schlumberger & Clymer, 1989b, p. 156). One wonders whether indeed my realizations, like theirs, were linked to my active engagement in collaboration and cooperative learning, whether my choices to teach collaboratively were bound up somehow with my developing in this thesis an articulated challenge to ISU's curriculum and its development.
APPENDIX A

THE NEED FOR CHANGES IN 101C
Community-Specific Issues

Changes in ISU's ESL program have previously been suggested by Wolford (1994, p. 69), who wrote a thesis evaluating the program. She believes it could use some "restructuring," as well as "possibly ... dramatic changes in the curriculum." She suggests many improvements, including greater coordination of ESL courses with ISU's freshman composition courses [coordination of English 101B and 101C with English 104 (Freshman Composition I) and English 105 (Freshman composition II)].

My first semester of teaching as a teaching assistant, along with my experience teaching both 104 and 105, led me to agree with Wolford. Elsewhere, I have argued for various changes in the ESL curriculum (Golliher, 1995). Providing students with more community-specific instruction in argumentation and writing from sources, however, I consider to be key to the kind of curriculum coordination which Wolford recommends. Indeed, even if our students were not bound for a freshman composition program which emphasized argumentation and writing from sources, this curricular change might be advisable. The ESL composition literature is full of suggestions for ESL teachers and programs to provide students with instruction in writing arguments, in supporting arguments with source information, in avoiding plagiarism, and in using a university library (Campbell, 1990; Deckert, 1993; Leki, 1992, pp.71-72; and Reid, 1993, p. 251). ESL students need to practice--or at least be introduced to--not only the research paper in general (Reid, 1989) but "the synthesis of information from multiple sources, selection of data, and connection of theory with data" for essays that are argumentative (Reid, 1989; Reid, 1993, p. 77).

Instruction in these areas is critical, though, for ESL students bound directly for a
freshman composition program such as ISU's. Both English 104 and 105 culminate in source
paper or research paper assignments which require students to "interweave sources into their
writing to support their ideas" (Instructor's Manual for English 104-105, p. 8). Further
evidence of the priority the program places on argumentative writing can be found in the
descriptions and the rationale behind their sequencing. "English 104 introduces students to the
fundamentals of academic writing," while "English 105 focuses on the most intense forms of
rhetoric--argument and persuasion--as a way of preparing students to participate in the academic
life of the university" (Instructor's Manual for English 104-105, 1994, pp. 5-6).

Clearly, an emphasis on academic writing, especially argumentative academic writing,
is what Johns would call an important "community-specific issue" in this context (an issue
prominent, of course, in many other freshman composition contexts as well). This issue is all
the more relevant to the design of English 101C since aspects of the ISU freshman composition
context make learning academic writing during freshman composition particularly problematic
for ESL students. Students in English 104-105 are generally taught by teaching assistants (and
sometimes temporary instructors and professors) who know little of the cultural basis for the
resistance some ESL students have to Western styles of argumentation--teachers who may be
ignorant of the degree to which many ESL students lack a cultural basis for understanding what
constitutes plagiarism.\footnote{This is changing, to an extent, with the advent of a 50/50 program which allows many ISU ESL students to enroll in courses composed of half international students, taught by TAs and temporary instructors who are interested in teaching ESL students and who are supported in their efforts by a 50/50 program coordinator. This provides ESL students with some sheltering during freshman composition; however, their instructors' expectations are at times still typical of the expectations of instructors in the regular freshman composition program.} English 104 students are instructed only briefly in formal methods of
documentation during English 104, and they are expected to know documentation by the time they are in English 105.

As I have already mentioned, English 101C is intended to prepare ISU’s ESL undergraduates for the research and argumentation they will do in freshman composition, yet 101C assignments are typically much shorter than assignments in freshman composition, and thus offer much less opportunity for students to develop arguments and counterarguments, and less opportunity to understand argumentative writing in general. Furthermore, the short research essay sometimes suggested by 101C teaching mentors is often not included in the syllabus. At times, the research essay is not even considered for inclusion—some TAs and instructors consider the research essay beyond the level of 101C students. Other times the research essay is included and then eliminated because of time constraints; being typically the last assignment on the syllabus, it is commonly cut when (often inexperienced) teaching assistants and instructors fall behind in their semester schedule.

**Task-Specific Issues**

Probably few instructors in the ISU ESL program at ISU would deny that 101C students could be better prepared for the argumentation and writing for sources they will later do in freshman composition. They might, however, be at a loss about what sorts of changes in 101C could really make a difference in their degree of preparation in a single semester. Looking closely at the tasks students perform in freshman composition, however, points out many possible avenues.

Some of these are not assignment tasks per se, but are nonetheless tasks for which many
ESL students need training. Word-processing, for example, is practically mandatory in ISU’s freshman composition program. With increasing frequency, so is the ability to participate in synchronous discussions through Daedalus Interchange software. ESL students at ISU also often need to be able to work with writing center tutors in order to pass their freshman composition class: they need to know where it is, how to make appointments, what to expect from the tutors by way of assistance, and how to prepare for tutoring sessions in order to benefit from them.

Freshman composition assignments themselves, however, present some of the most daunting task-specific hurdles for ESL students. Freshman composition assignment handouts tend to be long and wordy. Many assignment expectations are not explicitly taught and/or are not explicitly stated. For summary writing, for example, many conventions are unexplained or inadequately explained—conventions about nutshell statement writing and about referring to authors by their last names. For research essay writing, many component skills are also assumed by assignment handouts and freshman composition instructors. They may suggest, for example, that students use statistical evidence to support arguments, but they generally do not walk students through the process of asking for reference books from the reference librarian, reading complicated statistical tables, or using computerized statistical databases.

Personal experience writing, which starts the syllabi of some 104 sections, brings up other difficulties for ESL students. Though instructors assume it will be easier for students than argumentative writing, it introduces many complicated matters—both cultural (some ESL students are entirely unfamiliar with writing personal essays for an academic class) and practical (for many ESL students, dialogue writing involves a whole set of unfamiliar conventions).

Furthermore, many aspects of freshman composition assignments students learn better
(or only) with between-draft feedback (this can be especially true for those ESL students who have difficulty understanding classroom discourse). And between-draft feedback is notoriously lacking in 104 and 105 classes: with eight essays to be graded in sixteen weeks, when following the standard syllabus, teachers have very little time to do anything but assign final grades and scrawl endnotes on papers.

Suggestions

English 101C instructors have a unique opportunity to address some of these problems. We can see to it that our students are oriented to the computer lab, the writing center and the library. We can present our students with 104- and 105-like assignment handouts, and then teach them to interpret them. We can guide our students through multiple drafts of compositions so that they have the opportunity to negotiate with us what is and isn't expected of them, and to learn what matters are not negotiable. (Plagiarism, for example, is easier to learn about in a conference rather than in a note appended to a failing essay). And when we guide our students through multiple drafts of an assignment they are going to face in freshman composition, then we provide them with the very rich context for understanding that assignment later when they have only a one-shot opportunity at fulfilling it.

In so doing, we are choosing, not to give our students a chance to succeed at simpler compositions, but to give them the chance to face writing challenges they might otherwise not face until later, in a context where they have the opportunity to make mistakes, and learn from them.
APPENDIX B

ASSIGNMENTS
English 101C
Diagnostic Essay

What I hate the most about English classes
OR
What I hate the most about writing

Choose one of the above topics. Use examples of events, people, writing assignments or class activities to illustrate what you hate and why you hate it.

Audience
Your instructor

Purpose:
• To demonstrate your ability to write at the 101C level
• To inform your instructor about difficulties you have had in previous classes, in order to help him or her understand your learning style.

This essay will not be graded, but later in the course you may choose to revise it and include it in your portfolio as an example of a personal experience essay.

Basic expectations:
• Provide some sense of a beginning, middle and end to your essay
• Demonstrate that you understand paragraph structure and the need for paragraph breaks. (Sentences in each of your paragraphs should be somehow related to each other.)

Advanced expectations:
• Fulfill the basic expectations
AND
• Provide vivid details that will allow your instructor to recreate your experience in his or her mind. Describe sensory experiences: sights, smells, tastes, sounds, touch. Recreate or invent dialogue. Integrate these details into the essay: use them to support any general statements that you make.

After you have completed your essay, write a short note telling your instructor whether you tried to fulfill the basic or the advanced expectations.
Exploratory Writing Assignment  English 101C, Black and Golliher

Background
You have now been assigned a group, and a "polarized" issue—one which has two sides. In your next essay, you will explore one of those sides in writing, and you will support your claims with evidence from personal experience. You may also use ideas and details from the America Now reader, as long as you attribute those ideas and details to the author who originally wrote about them. (One way to do this: According to so-and-so, such-and-such. Remember to put quotes around words that you borrow directly.)

Your paper should be either a narrative essay followed by an analysis of your main idea, or an essay which alternates between ideas you have and examples which explain those ideas. Make your examples vivid through the use of dialogue and/or description. Tell about things which have happened to you and people who you know personally, and tell how these have affected your thoughts and feelings about your issue.

Procedure
Within your group of four, two students should write about the pro side of your issue, and two about the con side. For example, two will write in favor of gun control, and two against it. Write your papers individually. Later you will write collaborative papers, but not now.

For this assignment, you may want to choose the side that is easiest to write about based on your own personal experience. Keep in mind, however, that you will have to switch positions for the next assignment. (If you are writing in favor of gun control now, you will be writing against it for the next assignment.)

What is Exploratory Writing?
Exploratory writing allows you the freedom to explore ideas without the discipline of rigidly organizing a paper and researching its topic. Basically, you should explore your side of your issue from your perspective. You may want to explain how your perspective has been shaped or affected by your culture and experiences abroad. You can use your paper to answer questions such as "Why do I feel this way about this issue? "What do other people think about this issue?" (both in your home country or commonwealth and in the (mainland) USA.)

What is a Narrative Essay, and why are you asking me to include narrative in this essay?
Narrative is story-telling. By putting events from your life into words, you can learn a lot about your own thoughts and beliefs. And you can encourage readers to see things from your perspective.

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1 credit
2 "So-and-so" is an expression indicating some person; "such-and-such would be an idea.
3 See Grammar Troublespots for more information on how to avoid plagiarism.
While narrative currently does not play a large role in academic writing, it is usually required at the beginning of English 104. And later, when you are writing more typical academic essays, you may want to use narrative introductions, examples, or conclusions. Or you may want to "free write" about events in your life as a pre-writing activity before you write an academic essay.

And who knows? Someday, you may want to reach a broader audience through a newspaper, newsletter or magazine. Essays in the popular media often incorporate narration, so learning about narrative writing now can prepare you to express yourself to the public in the future.

What will I gain from this assignment?
You will begin to discover what you know about your topic. You will uncover some of the stereotypes and slogans that Bauman suggests you “break” in your writing. In other words, you will start the process of becoming an expert on your topic. And you will generate some material you may use in the later position and (consensus) research papers.

You will also discover what you don’t know about your topic—what you need to know more about in order to become an expert on your topic. This will give your later research direction.

What’s next?
You won’t have to become an expert all on your own. After you write your exploratory essay, you will share it with your “position partners”—those students in your group and in your sister group who are defending the same position. Then you will face the opposition within your group in a discussion in which you advocate your position and try to refute their arguments. In the process, you will learn a great deal about the complexities of your issue.

Some things to keep in mind
Your essay should include

- a beginning, middle and end
- well-constructed paragraphs
- 500-1000 words
- dialog and/or descriptive passages
- thoughtful analysis

For your portfolio, you will be substantially revising and editing either this essay or your diagnostic essay (What I Hate Most About Writing/English).

Hint: Use a couple of Bauman’s “brain teasers” to get started.
Background
You have now reversed positions on your issue, and searched the library for sources which will support your new position. In your next assignments, you will summarize two of the articles you have found. You will be sending copies of your summaries to everyone in your group and in your sister group. This will allow you to become very well informed about your issue; after reading each other's summaries, you will know about eight current articles on your issue. This, in turn, will better prepare you for the Position Paper Outline and Consensus Research Paper assignments.

Assume that your readers have never read the articles you are summarizing, and that they want quick access to the information in them. Write the summaries so the readers will be able to understand the thesis and main ideas of the articles. You will eventually choose one of your summaries for inclusion in your portfolio, and you will be revising that summary for structure and style.

Pre-Writing
Read the article you are summarizing carefully. Skim it again to refresh your memory. Analyze the structure. How does the author begin the essay? Is the thesis in the first paragraph or the last? Or does he or she merely imply it? Ask yourself these questions in order to get the "gist" of the article.

You may want to go through the article paragraph by paragraph, restating the main idea of each paragraph in your own words. This will help you figure out what the thesis is, and what the main ideas are. Your aim is to identify major sections of the article, separating main ideas from examples and secondary, supporting ideas. Remember that main ideas are often contained in topic sentences.

Writing
Present the thesis first, in a nutshell statement. (Remember that a nutshell statement also includes a reference to the author's full name and the title of the article, in quotation marks.) Follow the nutshell statement with your restatement of the main ideas. If the author has emphasized some examples, you may want to briefly mention them. You will not necessarily follow the author's organization, and you should not simply list author's ideas. Write in complete paragraphs, with appropriate transitions.

The repetition of key phrases in the article and the amount the author writes about each idea should give you clues about what points are important to include in your summary, and how much you should emphasize them. Remember, however, that examples are sometimes elaborated in detail for the purpose of engaging the reader. In other words, the amount of space that an author devotes to any particular example may or may not be proportional to its importance—especially if the example is used in an attention-getting "lead."

You may quote key words, but avoid long direct quotations. Strive to put the author's ideas in your own words. Put quotation marks around any borrowed phrases longer than two words, as a general rule. Paraphrase, don't plagiarize.
Conventions of Summary Writing
Make sure to use "tag" phrases occasionally to remind your readers that the ideas you are presenting are the author's, not yours. In other words, periodically use phrases like "According to (the author)____." Or end a sentence with an "attributive tag" like "_______ s/he says" (claims, points out, asserts, etc.).

Use the present tense for verbs referring to the author's saying something in the article.

After your first reference to the author's full name, refer to him or her by pronouns or by his or her last name. American readers often consider it disrespectful to refer to a published author by his or her first name.

For example: In "Why I'm Sick of Seeing Cows Everywhere," Phil Black explores his dissatisfaction with living in a small city in Iowa. His dissatisfaction extends far beyond his boredom with the Iowan landscape. Black is annoyed with his hometown's lack of cultural events, the distance of his neighbors, and the narrow-mindedness of his colleagues....

Revising
Later, when you revise one of your summaries for your portfolio, you will work to produce a clear and smooth style. You will concentrate on complex sentence structure and fluid transitions.

Some things to keep in mind

Your summary should include

- a nutshell statement
- well-constructed paragraphs
- restatements of the author's main ideas
- smooth, logical transitions
- 200-350 words

Due dates for first drafts

1st summary--Friday (tomorrow)
2nd summary--Monday (this Monday)

Turn in a copy of the article you have summarized with the summary. Your wording will be compared with the author's wording as a check on plagiarism.

1 not "explored"
2 not "Phil"
Outline Assignment

Background
The creation of an outline is the first step in many writers' writing process. Some create very detailed outlines, some only create scratch outlines. Others don't use outlines at all: they shape their papers through multiple drafts, or through cluster diagrams or other methods.

For group writing assignments, however, outlines make it possible to assign the drafting of different sections of the paper to different group members. Outlining can be an important part of the group writing process.

For this reason, and because we want you to think consciously about the structure of argumentative essays, we would like you to create a fairly detailed outline of your current position on your topic (the position you switched to after your exploratory writing essay).

Procedure
Consult Ideas and Details, pages 194-197, for a basic model for structuring a persuasive essay; for some other variations on this model, see the handout you have been given on "Outlines for Arguments." Start by working with your position partner in your own group; come up with a scratch outline and annotate it with sentences explaining the content you would include in each section. Send that outline to your position partners in your sister group. Students in the gun control and homelessness issue groups in Ms. Golliher's class may want to start by reading the outlines from their sister group, and just suggest modifications and additions.

You will need to communicate back and forth with your sister group at least twice before coming to consensus on your final outline. One way to go about this would be the following: 1A-propose outline; 1B-propose modifications and additions to that outline; 2A-respond to modifications and additions; 2B-respond to group A's response.

What will I gain from this assignment?
Doing this assignment should help you organize future argumentative essays, and it should give you ideas for how to organize your consensus research paper. It will also teach you about working on group projects and coming to consensus. Ultimately, it is intended to help you prepare for collaborative projects in your future.
What’s next?
When you have completed your outline, you will be expected to present it to your class, and explain what you would have included in each section of the paper, had you been required to write it. Your classmates will give you feedback on your outline’s organization and your paper’s proposed content.

Some things to keep in mind
Do not expect your collaboration with your sister group to be easy; conflict over ideas can be very productive in getting you to examine those ideas. But do try to be civil to each other, and try to learn from the difficulties you encounter when collaborating.

Your outline should include

at the minimum, introduction, support, refutation, and conclusion sections
annotations which explain the content of each section

As Bauman says, “adopt a reasonable, honest tone” in your support and refutation sections. In your introduction, mention what “hook” you would use to get the audience’s attention. Throughout the outline, work in facts and statistics which provide background or support arguments.

Grading
Your outline will be graded! It will determine 8% of your final grade in the course.

Intro: 1 pt; intro with interesting “hook” 2 pts
Support: 1 pts
Refutation: 1 pts
Reasonable tone: 1-2 pts
Insightful analysis: 1-3 pts
Numerical data and statistical support: 1 pt for each relevant use of a statistic up to a maximum of 8 pts

Evaluation of group process: 1 pt; evaluation with reasonable tone 2 pts; evaluation with reasonable tone and helpful suggestions 3 pts

Presentations begin on Friday
Due Date: Monday, July 18—E-mail submissions to Phil; Paper to Roberta
Consensus Research Paper

Background
We have now gone from developing topic ideas for individually written essays to writing the essays to collaboratively outlining ideas for essays to this assignment: collaboratively writing an essay.

Collaboration is difficult. As you may have already learned, the simple act of "getting everyone together" can be a difficult undertaking. Once the group is together, there is then the arduous task of dividing the work among the group members, doing the work, and finally agreeing upon the final draft. Nonetheless, collaborative work is called upon in many different employment settings.

Don Clore, a 1991 graduate of the University of Missouri at Kansas City says that all of his work is part of a team project. At Microsoft, Don, a software engineer, tells us that one of the criteria for hiring programmers is that they are able to work in teams. Don goes on to say that in addition to being able to work as a team member, an employee must also be able to collaborate without actually seeing his fellow teammates for periods of time. Employees at Microsoft are allowed to pick the hours that they work; therefore, Don says that much of the collaboration - and communication about the collaboration - is done via electronic mail (Clore).

Richard Jaime, a technician at Best Buy in Kansas City, Missouri says that the company has switched over to an in-house e-mail system. This was done partly because of the inability of technicians to catch technicians at other facilities by phone and partly to save money on phone bills. Richard says that the company actively encourages e-mail and discourages face-to-face or phone conversations (Jaime).

Both of these cases point to the need for college graduates to be able to work as part of a group and to do so via an electronic medium. Teachers in the ISU English department have recognized this need and have begun employing collaborative techniques in their classes, including English 104 and 105, using both electronic and non-electronic media.

We consider that it is imperative that we introduce you to collaboration, electronic and non-electronic, so that when you are presented with a similar task in English 104 and/or 105, you will not have to overcome the barriers of both learning to collaborate AND dealing with English as a second language.
The Assignment
In each class, there are four of you who have been working on one topic. For example, there are four people in each class who have addressed the issue of whether or not we should provide homes for the homeless. However, during the last assignment, this group of four individuals was divided into two people “for” the issue and two people “against.” The “for” people worked with the “for” people in the other class and the “against” people worked with the “against” people in the other class.

We would now like you to form a group composed of both the “for” and “against” people in your home group and for your group to work together to reach some consensus on your issue. While your group may want to contact the people in the other class for helpful ideas, the consensus research paper is to be done by the four people in your home group only.

By “consensus” we do not mean that you must all agree to argue “for” or “against.” A consensus is usually a compromise which includes a little of both. Take for example the current topic of health care in the United States. President Clinton has said that he wants universal health care for all US citizens. Senator Dole has said that we cannot afford universal coverage. Many members of Congress seem to fall in between somewhere. Recently, in a speech to state governors, President Clinton indicated that universal coverage might mean 95% to 98% of the population. To some this means he is changing sides, while to others, such as Representative Foley, this means that they are closer to a consensus [italics added] (CNN).

Narrowing the Topic
Your group may find, as some have already, that your topic needs to be narrowed. It is good that you do this--most 104 and 105 instructors expect you to write on narrower topics than we have been discussing up until now. They find them more interesting--more “doable” in 5-7 pages. But get our approval if you narrow your topic. There’s not much time left in the semester and we can let you know if we find the new narrowed topic sufficiently interesting and controversial.

Initial decisions
1) Decide on how you will be graded for individual participation in the project. After discussing the issues, use a formal consensus decision-making procedure. E-mail a note to
your instructor about the grading procedure you have selected.

2) Come to consensus on the position you will defend in your paper--your thesis. Once again, discuss the issues then use a formal consensus decision-making procedure to decide exactly what the position will be.

3) Decide formally what decision-making procedures you will use for later "big" decisions. You may want to switch at this point to a voting or hierarchical mode. E-mail a note to your instructor about the decision you have made, and why you made it.

Step two: devising a plan
Consider how you will organize your paper and divide up the writing tasks. E-mail a note to your instructor about your plan. Consider using a Rogerian outline--see your outline handout for more details.

Be sure to present the issue in a reasonable tone, to discuss obvious objections to your position, and to document your sources in MLA style. Try to get one section of your paper to flow into another; to do this you may decide to write some sections before others, and you may want to appoint someone to revise the paper for "flow."

The assignment is due on August 3; however, we will allow some class time to work on your project and will be available then for help. As usual, you may contact the equivalent group in the other class for help and of course you may contact us via e-mail.

Things to keep in mind
The research paper should
- be 1,250-1,750 words long
- be logically organized
- present a position
- present obvious objections fairly
- use a minimum of five sources
- use MLA documentation
- have an effective introduction and conclusion

Spacing and Font: You choose. Many teachers expect essays to be double-spaced. For this assignment, you may choose the spacing as well as the font but you should consider the effectiveness of your choice and ask yourself if the paper is easy for the readers (us) to read, is there enough space, or are the subtopics clear? Students sometimes try to get too fancy with the use of fonts or graphics and in doing so, make the paper hard to read or they make it look "amateurish." Remember, we will be reading several of these, so your purpose in choosing the physical appearance of the essay is to make it easy for us to read while also

Due Date
making it reflect your "professionalism" as writers.

Grammar mistakes will only lower your grade if they make it difficult for us to understand what you are saying. So edit your paper, but don't focus on editing. We also have decided that we won't expect grammatical perfection of your argumentative writing sample in your portfolio. (We will still grade your personal experience and summary portfolio choices for correctness, however.)

Grade Percentage

The group projects determines 35% of your total grade - 8% is the Outline Assignment, 20% is the Consensus Research Paper, and the remaining 7% is the evaluation of individual participation.

Works Cited


Final Exam  
English 101C

Topic  
Early in the semester you took a survey about your writing attitudes. You have just taken the same survey again. For your final exam, write about whether you think your attitudes have changed. Predict what the results of the survey will be: which of the attitudes do you think have changed, in what direction, and why? If you don't think there will be any change, explain why not.

State your prediction about your attitudes as a "controlling idea" or "thesis" somewhere early in your essay. And don't try to please your teacher by saying your attitudes have changed if they have not! Instead, try to honestly and intelligently explain how and why your attitudes have changed, and how much you think they have changed.

More background  
Over the course of the semester you have explored both storytelling (in personal experience essays and sometimes in narrative examples and introductions) and academic style writing (summarizing and arguing). The final essay you write should be academic in style, with clearly stated main points and supporting ideas. (You may choose to use dialogue or sensory description to introduce it or to illustrate a point--but don't feel like you have to!)

Procedure  
You will receive your attitude profile from the beginning of the semester. It discusses your scores on seven "factors." Groups of related questions measure "factors." Remember, your scores are not "good" or "bad"--they just reflect your attitudes. They don't measure how good a writer you are.

The Factors

- Writing Apprehension
- Belief that writing ability is a gift
- Sense of control about writing
- Attitude about the usefulness of collaboration
- Student involvement in class
- Desire for teacher control of class
- Attitude about the usefulness of group work

Before writing, mark the ones you think have changed and try to think of specific reasons why you think they have changed. If
you don't think your scores on any factors will have changed, mark the unchanged ones that you think would be most interesting to discuss. Try to discuss at least three factors.

You may want to use "clustering" to think of the reasons for changes or lack of change in your attitudes. You may also want to create a scratch outline to put your points in order.

What will I gain from this assignment?
You get a chance to think about how your attitudes and learning are related, and a chance to tell your instructors about what changes have happened--or haven't happened--as a result of 101C.

Grading criteria

Your essay will be graded on the following:

• whether you state a controlling idea
• whether you support your controlling idea with a discussion of at least three factors
• how well your support illustrates the points you are making

Try to be as specific as possible, and discuss particular events, classes, assignments or activities which come to mind when you think about particular factors.

We will not expect grammatical perfection. But try to make sure your meaning is clear. If you want, you may have a classmate read your essay and make suggestions. However, your classmate should not write any sentences for you.

Good Luck on the final and next semester! We've enjoyed having you as students.
APPENDIX C

OTHER HANDOUTS: COURSE POLICIES, PORTFOLIO GRADING SYSTEM, INSTALMENTS OF SYLLABUS, CONSENSUS DECISION-MAKING PROCESS
English 101C
Roberta Gollinher, Instructor
Office Address: 108 Landscape/Architecture Building
Office Hours: To be announced
Office Phone: 294-6527   Home Phone: 232-7177 after 11:00 AM

E-Mail Address: roberta

Required Texts:
  Ideas and Details: A Guide to College Writing  M. Garrett Bauman
  America Now: Short Readings from Recent Periodicals  Robert Atwan

Optional Texts
  Writer’s Guide to Microsoft Word  Robert Boston

Objectives
  • To prepare you for English 104 and 105
  • To increase your awareness of your writing process
  • To instruct you in the various uses of computers in writing
  • To provide you with experience in collaborative writing
  • To offer you opportunities to revise and edit your writing

Requirements/Percentage of Grade
  • Individual assignments  45%
  • Group projects  35%
  • Final examination  10%
  • Homework and in-class writing  10%

Assignments and Projects
Throughout the semester you will have several individual and group writing assignments, including position papers, summaries, responses to essay exam questions, and writings from personal experience. Some of the group work will involve electronic collaboration with the students in the other section of 101C. As assignments are made, you will be given an assignment sheet which will explain that assignment in detail.

Individual Assignments will be collected into a portfolio and graded at midterm and at the end of the semester. You will receive a handout explaining the portfolio grading system.
Attendance

Each time you are absent you should consult the instructor to find out if there is any in-class work that you need to make up. If you are working on a group project, you should also contact the other group members to find out what you need to do to catch up on group work.

You also are required to write a position paper (on any topic EXCEPT your other class position paper). The number of pages is in proportion to the number of days you have been absent up until that point in the semester. If, for example, you have been absent three days, your paper would then need to be three pages long. Papers are to be typed and double spaced with a font size of 12 points. If you fail to fulfill this requirement you will not be allowed to pass the class.

I will notify you if I make any changes in the above policies.
Course Portfolio

A writing portfolio is basically a collection of a student's written work—it is similar to an artist's portfolio. Your portfolio for English 101C needs to have:

One personal experience essay. Choose between
- the essay based upon the diagnostic essay you wrote the first week ("What I Hate about English Classes") OR
- the exploratory writing on the topic of your collaborative work

One summary. (Choose between the two you have written.)

One sample of "academic" writing. Choose between
- a part of the consensus research paper which you individually drafted -- submit the whole paper and indicate for which portion you were the primary author.
- your written evaluation of the group work—we'll tell you more about this later.

Include not only the final draft of each essay but also all previous drafts that have received either peer or instructor comments. Also include any related peer review sheets.

Your portfolio should also include

One writer's note which explains, for each writing sample
- what you tried to accomplish in writing it
- what you like about it (you may want to compare it with the sample you did not choose)
- what you are still dissatisfied with and what changes you would make if you still had time

Due Date: Thursday, August 4

Background

Portfolio compilation usually includes two elements: 1) selection and 2) revision and editing. These two elements are closely related.

1) Selection: You are allowed to choose, to some degree, what writing you wish to have included in your portfolio—what writing you want to have graded. In deciding which of your writings is best, you take a large step toward understanding what makes your writing good.
These are the same criteria used in grading essays in 104-105. Each one of these is made up of many components. For a better understanding of these criteria, consult the ESL Composition Profile. If you still have difficulty understanding them, don’t despair! Just use the profile to recognize that writing is highly complex, and be proud that you are able to tackle such a complicated task—in a second language, no less! And use the profile to understand how difficult it is to grade writing—no wonder it seems that different teachers are always emphasizing different aspects of it. There are so many!

Your portfolios will also be evaluated on whether they

- show evidence of revision and editing.

The easiest way to get a bad grade in this course is to turn in writing which shows very little evidence of revising and editing. Make sure your instructors can tell from your drafts that you thought about how you might improve your writing assignments and that you attempted to improve them.
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<tr>
<th>Day/Date</th>
<th>Assignment/Activity</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Read chapter 3 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Wednesday 6/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/21</td>
<td>Read nutshell/summaries</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Submit topic preferences</td>
<td>Wednesday 6/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/22</td>
<td>Discuss chapter 3 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapter 9 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Thursday 6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Begin personal experience essay</td>
<td>1st draft, Monday 6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/23</td>
<td>Discuss chapter 9 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receive group assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapter 7 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Friday 6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-response of the week</td>
<td>Friday 6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Respond to attitude survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/24</td>
<td>Discuss chapter 7 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Peer review of personal experience essays</td>
<td>Tuesday 6/29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/27</td>
<td>Revise personal experience essays</td>
<td>(by end of class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Finish revision and e-distribute to partners</td>
<td>end of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/28</td>
<td>Read chapter 12, <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Wednesday 6/30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Day/Date</td>
<td>Assignment/Activity</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 6/21</td>
<td>Read chapter 3 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Wednesday 6/22</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read nutshell/summaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 6/22</td>
<td>Submit topic preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss chapter 3 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapter 9 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Thursday 6/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 6/23</td>
<td>Begin personal experience essay</td>
<td>1st draft, Monday 6/27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss chapter 9 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Receive group assignments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapter 7 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Monday 6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-response of the week</td>
<td>Friday 6/24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 6/24</td>
<td>Respond to attitude survey</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss chapter 7 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>In class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 6/27</td>
<td>Turn in your current draft to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer review of personal experience essays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revise personal experience essays</td>
<td>Tuesday 6/29 (by end of class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 6/28</td>
<td>Finish revision and e-distribute to partners</td>
<td>End of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read chapter 12, <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Wednesday 6/30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day/Date</td>
<td>Assignment/Activity</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Read pages 233-236 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td>Tuesday 7/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/5</td>
<td>Discuss chapter 12 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-response of the week</td>
<td>Thursday 7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Library day - meet in lobby of library</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/6</td>
<td>Read handout on writing summaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Receive and discuss summary assignments</td>
<td>1st summary, Fri 7/8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/7</td>
<td></td>
<td>2nd sum., Mon 7/11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Send summary no. 1 to position partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>REMINDER: 2nd summary is due on Monday, 7/11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer review of 1st summaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Peer review and send to position partners summary no. 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/11</td>
<td>Receive position paper outline assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Read pages 229-232 <em>Ideas and Details</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Work on and send outline to position partners</td>
<td>Wednesday 7/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/12</td>
<td>(Look for areas of needed support)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Library day/fact finding - meet in lobby of library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Report facts found to position partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/14</td>
<td>E-response of the week</td>
<td>Friday 7/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Send/present outlines to classmates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day/Date</td>
<td>Assignment/Activity</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7/18</td>
<td>Communicate with position partners in sister group (Phil’s class responds to Roberta’s class and vice versa) Presentations in Roberta’s class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 7/19</td>
<td>Communicate with position partners in sister group (Phil’s class responds to Roberta’s class and vice versa) Presentations in Roberta’s class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 7/20</td>
<td>Presentations in both classes Wednesday evening: last chance for correspondence and collaboration</td>
<td>Outline due Thurs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 7/21</td>
<td>Outline due Receive consensus research paper assignment E-response of the week Receive portfolio compilation instructions</td>
<td>Friday 7/29 (tentative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 7/22</td>
<td>Turn in working portfolio for evaluation (personal experience and summary) Create group work plans for consensus research paper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7/25</td>
<td>Work in groups and conference individually and in groups with instructors</td>
<td>Monday 8/1 (tentative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 7/29</td>
<td>Receive grammar log and grammar exercise assignment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simplified Consensus Decision Making

"I'd like to propose that____________________." 

"Are there any questions?" Discuss what you mean, and if there are changes suggested that you like, say 

"Ok, the new (or the amended) proposal is __________." 

"Are there any objections?"

If not, restate the final proposal—for example:

"Ok, so we'll ______________." 
"Ok, so we agree that______________." 

If there are objections, discuss them... make changes if the objections suggest changes that are acceptable

Say "Are there any more objections?"

"Ok, so we'll ______________." 
"Ok, so we agree that______________." 

This process is intended to allow all to participate in the decision, and to ensure that everyone knows in the end exactly which form of the proposal stands.

If you find yourself remembering agreements differently from other group members, or if you feel left out of agreements

USE THE FORMAL PROCESS!
APPENDIX D

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH REVIEW INFORMATION
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects
Iowa State University
(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: Second Language Writing: Attitude and Attitude Change

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roberta Gollieher</th>
<th>6/16/94</th>
<th>Signature of Principal Investigator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typed Name of Principal Investigator: Roberta Gollieher</td>
<td>Date: 6/16/94</td>
<td>Signature of Principal Investigator: Roberta Gollieher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>206 Ross Hall</th>
<th>232-7177</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Campus Address</td>
<td>Campus Telephone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Signatures of other investigators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Relationship to Principal Investigator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6/16/94</td>
<td>major professor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)

- Faculty
- Staff
- Graduate Student
- Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)

- Research
- Theses or dissertation
- Class project
- Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (check all that apply)

- # Adults, non-students
- # ISU students
- # minors under 14
- # minors 14 - 17
- Other (explain)

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects:

Students in two writing classes will complete pre- and post-writing attitude surveys and reflection summaries. Also all students participate in a collaborative writing project and discuss their group's process orally and/or in writing. Selected group work sessions will be taped either on audio or video tape, and portions of these tapes may be transcribed and analyzed. Case study interviews may be conducted with selected students and with the instructors.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:

- Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
- Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)
- Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

Names will be used only to match students' data (e.g., surveys and final grades). After the scores have been matched, students' names will be removed.

Students who decline to participate will not have any of their interactions with other students reported; those who choose to participate will be referred to by pseudonyms in any reports of the research, unless they specify in writing that they prefer that their real names be used.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

There is no risk of physical or psychological discomfort involved in this study.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

- A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
- B. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
- C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
- D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
- E. Deception of subjects
- F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or
- G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
- H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A - D Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

Item E Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item F For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items G & H Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. [ ] Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. [ ] Consent form (if applicable)

14. [ ] Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. [ ] Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

   First Contact

   June 13, 1994

   Last Contact

   November 18, 1994

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   December 12, 1994

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

   Dale H. Roe

   6/6/94

   Department or Administrative Unit

   English

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

   [X] Project Approved
   [ ] Project Not Approved
   [ ] No Action Required

   Patricia M. Keith

   Name of Committee Chairperson

   6/9/94

   Signature of Committee Chairperson
Writing Attitude Study

Purpose of the Research
The purpose of this study is to better understand international students' attitudes about writing and writing classes, and to consider how these may affect learning. The study is exploratory in nature, so there are no hidden manipulations, no experiments, and no control groups.

Data Collection
Several kinds of data will be collected: attitude survey data, limited demographic information, final course grades, tapes of group interactions, and case study interviews.

Voluntary Participation
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Although the participation of the whole class will strengthen the study, you may decline to participate. If you decline to participate, you will still need to complete the survey and group work, because they will be necessary for other class activities; however, we will not use any of your data in reporting the results of the study.

Protection of Anonymity
If you agree to participate in this study, your anonymity will be protected. Neither your name nor any other identifying information about you will be revealed in reporting the results of this study.

I consent to participate in this study. I understand that my anonymity will be protected, and I give permission for my survey results, my final course grade, and my placement scores to be used in this study and in articles and presentations reporting its results.

____________________________
family name, first name

____________________________
signature

____________________________
date

You will either score your survey yourself, or you will receive the results of your survey from your instructor. You will have the opportunity to write about whether you consider the results to accurately reflect your attitudes toward writing and writing classes.

_________ Case Number
APPENDIX E

DESIGN OF THE CASE STUDY
The design of this study best fits what Yin's single-case, embedded-unit category (Yin, 1994, p. 42): "embedded-unit" because I focused the study on one of the writing groups as well as on the classes as a whole, "single-case" because our two sections of 101C functioned in many ways as one unit—the assignments, course policies, and syllabi were the same for both, and Phil and I collaborated on developing class activities. At times, the boundaries between our classes were quite blurry indeed. The prime example of this occurred while our students worked on their outline assignment, and Phil's eight students collaborated with eight "position partners" from "sister" groups in my class. However, Phil and I generally graded our students' work separately, and we independently conducted our classes, except for one class of Phil's which I led on consensus decision making. But for reasons of manageability and in order to increase the pool of subjects for statistical analysis, I have treated most of the data as though it came from a single case.

As I have mentioned in the previous section, a multiple-case study design would have made for more compelling conclusions. However, our case was unique, and as such, a single-case research design was justifiable (Yin, 1994). At the time of the data collection, even if I had had the resources to conduct a multiple-case study, no other cases existed of ESL courses being taught as we were teaching ours. In some respects, however, this study does have features of a multiple-case study: a two-case study. The biggest "two-case" advantage this study offered me as a teacher-researcher was the opportunity to observe Phil's class as a more detached observer than I might be of my own class. This was particularly important with respect to the embedded unit that I studied in order to observe group interactions and processes that I might have missed if I examined only whole class data. Some of these were interactions and processes
I would have not been able to observe at all if I were studying a group in my own class: I would have been too busy conducting class! In addition, as I was not the instructor of the students in the collaborative group I observed, I undoubtedly caused less interference with their group process. (If I had been their instructor, they may have been more nervous and/or concerned about how what I might observe might affect their grades.)

The embedded unit which I studied was the "gun control" group, so-named for its writing topic. I chose this group in particular because the students in it had diversity of national origin: one was from Korea, one from Singapore, one from Malaysia, and one from Guatemala. The other group consisted of members who were all ethnically Chinese; I assumed it would not be typical of an average (multi-cultural) 101C writing group, since it would deal with fewer issues related to inter-cultural communications and differing culturally-based writing styles.
APPENDIX F

ORIGINAL DESIGN OF THE CASE STUDY
In actuality, my original intent in designing my study and collecting my data was to be conducting a case study of merely the collaborative writing in the course, to investigate the factors which enabled and those which hindered the students in writing co-authored papers. I designed my initial study on the model of David Wallace's studies of collaborative planning (of individually authored papers) in freshman composition courses he has taught. However, in consultation with Carol Chapelle (my original major professor), I came to realize that my revised 101C course, which originally I'd seen as just the vehicle for my teaching and study of collaborative writing, was a course so radically different from other ESL composition courses that the results of my study would be almost uninterpretable unless I also explained and evaluated other aspects of the course. Thus, my broader focus on evaluating the whole course and its various elements in addition to the collaborative writing element was a focus I established after having taught the course and collected my course data.

On the one hand, this flies in the face of classic research design. Research questions are supposed to be posed first, and investigations are supposed to be undertaken via methods which will best address the questions posed. So ideally, I might have treated the teaching and research I have written up in this case study as a pilot study. I might have allowed this pilot study to provide "conceptual clarification for the research design" (Yin 1994, p. 74), and I would have selected "specific technologies for the final data collection" as a result, then conducted a more refined study evaluating the course as a whole.

On the other hand, it is possible to justify my writing up my research with the new focus even though I didn’t return to the drawing board, or the blackboard, as it were--I didn’t redesign
my study, re-teach my course, and re-collect my data.\(^1\) One justification is that my case study report can just be viewed as the write-up of a pilot case, in which shifts of research orientation are appropriate. As I see it, a pilot study is sufficient in and of itself to the requirements of a master's thesis. And in my case, being a graduate student, I really didn't have the chance to follow up my "pilot" study: I had neither the time to teach and research my course again, nor the opportunity to, as I was not reassigned to teach 101C. For these reasons, then, I had to do the most I could with the evidence I had collected.\(^2\) (The one sense in which I could be faulted is in not concentrating more of my report on the articulation of lessons "for both research design and field procedures" (Yin, 1994, p.76); I do some of this, but I attend to other concerns far more.)

My other primary justification for going ahead and writing up my case study report is that even had my original focus been as wide as my final focus, I would indeed have collected much of the same data (my students' course evaluation forms, for example, and their portfolios).

\(^1\)Some researchers into second language learning, such as Donald Freeman, who have rejected classic research design in their own studies, flagrantly engage in this sort of research "redirection" (1992, p.57). "Many projects which examine how people use language in classrooms," according to Freeman, have "started out with one focus and ended up with another" (1992, p.57).

\(^2\)Note that historical case studies are a legitimate variety of case study, since as Yin puts it, "case studies and histories can overlap," with "the case study's unique strength [being] its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence--documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations--beyond what might be available in the conventional historical study" (1994, p.8). Certainly after I had conducted a semester of pilot case study research on the revised version of 101C, this full range of evidence was available to me to bring to bear when evaluating the course.
(See the next section for details on what data I collected.)³ Serendipitously, thus, I had the opportunity to evaluate my course as a whole when that became necessary.

Especially serendipitous was the naturalistic sort of evaluation I was forced to do since I only widened my focus after I had finished teaching the course. I consider this to have been fortunate since, had I known from the outset that I was going to evaluate the whole course I might have tried to force myself, in a traditional fashion, to articulate course goals and objectives before designing and teaching the course and to evaluate, after teaching it, how well they had met. Instead, in a sense, I snuck up on myself; as a result I was able to collect evaluation data on a course I designed and taught more normally and less self-consciously than I would have if I'd known my thesis was going to involve broad course evaluation as opposed to a more narrow case study.⁴

³Granted, I would have collected some additional data--responses for example, to questions I could have included on the course evaluation form regarding the modified thematic assignment sequencing. (This is a change I discuss later in what I would do if I researched the course again.)

⁴With foreknowledge of my eventual research aims, I might have gone about setting up the course and trying to evaluate it "the right way," however different this might be from my usual, more creative way. Despite my usual divergence from it, a rigid, naïve model of course development and evaluation did persist in my mind as an ideal until I wrote this thesis; it might indeed have negatively affected my teaching and research had I called it into play. I might, for example, have tried to create a complete course syllabus at the beginning of the course; in retrospect, I realize this would have been disastrous. Our three-installment syllabus was much more appropriate and workable given the experimental nature of our course.
APPENDIX G

THE EMBEDDED GROUP
Interview Methods

Interviews with the students in the embedded group (pre-, mid- and postclass) were both open-ended and focused. The interviews were focused in that I asked each student a core set of questions; they were open-ended in that I allowed myself to ask additional follow-up questions when a student’s comments left me curious about a matter related to the study. See Yin (1989, pp. 84-85) for a brief discussion of the differences between open-ended and focused interviews.

Initial interviews I audiotaped and summarized. I audiotaped all subsequent interviews as well, and I took computer notes as I conducted each one. I found the latter method more practical than the summarizing method, because it allowed me to finish the interview in one step, and because it provided me with written copy of the students’ answers in roughly their own words. The most significant advantage, however, was that the computer note-taking method allowed me to visually confirm with the students my comprehension of their answers, because the computer monitor was visible to us both. This was a very important advantage given that I frequently had difficulty comprehending their speech, and given that they sometimes had difficulty comprehending mine. At times, they read the display on the computer monitor in order to understand my questions, or in order to confirm that I had correctly understood their answers. The students showed patience with the process, and willingness to help me understand clearly what they were saying. I had a sense that a side benefit of the interviews for the students was the conversation practice--practice which gave them immediate and clear feedback about the degree to which their speech was comprehensible. I highly recommend that other researchers who orally ask open-ended questions of ESL students consider combining, as I did, auditory and visual channels when asking questions and confirming students’ answers.
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The Consensus Research Paper

Group Product

Both Phil and I felt the collaborative writing group that I observed succeeded quite well in meeting the requirements of the collaborative research paper. These expectations were, according to the assignment handout, that the paper should have a length of 1250-1750 words, logical organization, and a minimum of five sources; that its authors should use MLA documentation; and that they should present a position and deal fairly with obvious objections to that position. Though there were some problems with transitions and flow in the paper, and some naivete to the argument, the paper demonstrated that the students had developed depth and breadth in their understanding of gun control issues. Furthermore, the paper showed that they had successfully carried out and incorporated into their writing library research.

Group Writing Process

The group took a "round-robin" approach to writing the paper: they wrote a section and then passed it along to another group member, who continued the writing. As a result, this paper did not display discontinuity to the extent of some of the other groups' papers. (But still I found some argument that individual authors may have "thrown in" which the group as a whole might not have included.) The final work on the paper involved mostly two members, Chiu-Ho (ethnically Chinese male student from Singapore) and Yan Fang (ethnically Chinese female student from Malaysia), who worked on editing and "smoothing" the paper out, but did not substantially revise for content.

One method the students used to ensure some continuity of argument was to append
comments and suggestions to the end of the computer file before passing the disk on. They did the bulk of their planning in a single initial planning session during which they discussed matters of content and organization. But this discussion was problematic for them: Yan Fang was viewed by the others as raising objections for the sake of raising objections, and as blocking the process. On the other hand, Yan Fang, who had conducted the most extensive research of any of the members, viewed herself as engaging in argument which would be useful to the development of the paper, and she felt stymied. At one point in her discussion she brought up the matter of her writing style, which is to write at length and pare down later. The group showed no interest in adopting her practice.

The group was also closed to certain suggestions from Phil and me. Though formal consensus decision making procedures had been explained and demonstrated for them in class, they did not use them (see handout in Appendix C). In addition, they failed to discuss--much less adopt--patterns of organization presented in a Rogerian outline handout they had received. They did, however, discuss paper organization in terms of support and refutation for argument, two terms emphasized heavily in the previous position paper outline assignment.

As mentioned in the main text, one of the group members, Min, a Korean male student, participated only in a limited fashion in group meetings. Phil, as his instructor, didn’t know whether to attribute this to his "shy" personality, or to his possibly feeling less capable than the other group members. It is interesting, however, that his limited participation involved more than just a reluctance to speak--he also took fewer notes, and attended fewer revision and editing sessions (aspects of participation hidden from Phil but accessible to me because of my direct observation of group meetings).
Min's "background" role had been foreshadowed in his previous position paper outline group, in which he had taken on the "typist role." In this role he spent many hours at his job, but it was a job that did not require critical thinking. He did, however, dutifully draft his portion of the consensus research paper.

Overall, interestingly, the group seemed not to mind that Min participated only in a limited fashion—as though there were some unspoken understanding and acceptance of reasons behind his limited role.

Yan Fang was particularly interesting as a group member. She was always a very hard worker, and she had the respect of the group as the authority on the gun control literature. This did not, however, translate into a position of power for her in terms of shaping the argument in the paper. Her initial role as devil’s advocate shifted later in the process to an ally role, as she and Chiu-Ho teamed up in some matters of shaping and editing against Umberto, the final group member, a Hispanic male. Throughout these conflicts, though, the group members seemed to maintain a sense of humor, a realization of cultural differences, and an understanding that all of them were learners of English, not experts in it. If there was any serious frustration expressed by Yan Fang and Chiu-Ho, it seemed more with Umberto’s willingness to accept a lower standard for the final product. (Umberto had revealed in an early interview a concern with group projects taking excessive time; clearly these are related matters.)

Despite Yan Fang’s role shifting by the end of the project to that of an "ally" to Chiu-Ho, the group leader—an ally with power in the shaping and editing of the paper—she nevertheless expressed a great deal of disappointment in group work by the end of the semester, and her interviews pre- and postclass reflected this disappointment. Indeed, group work for Yan
Fang was something of a roller-coaster ride over the course of the semester. Her initial cross-class collaboration had started out sour, as she had difficulty in contacting her position partners in the sister group and in setting up a meeting with them. Once these problems were ironed out, however, she found in Kozi, a Japanese male student, a willing, sensitive, hard-working helpmate, and soon she was extolling the virtues of group work to me over e-mail.

Indeed, Yan Fang’s group’s position paper outline was superior—their process carried them to a point of realizing the importance of narrowing their topic, and they produced a focused work that argued that suicide prevention should be figured into the debate over gun control. (The suicide rate in the US is high, guns are a common method of committing suicide, certain types of gun control would affect the availability of guns to suicide attempters and/or lengthen the time necessary for them to obtain guns, and therefore the time for possible suicide intervention. A related argument: suicide attempts by gun result more frequently in death than suicide by other methods; gun injuries allow less time for intervention than other suicide methods.) The outline made an excellent classroom example.

So by the end of the position paper outline project, Yan Fang was quite sold on group work; this was likely due to the degree of control she had in the position paper outline group over the final product. By the end of the consensus research paper project, however, she felt negatively about group work again: she had not succeeded in convincing her group to narrow their topic, and she had not been given much control over the content and organization of the paper. See page 108 for some of her comments on group work from her postclass interview and consensus research paper evaluation.
APPENDIX H

WALLACE'S WRITING ATTITUDE SURVEY: SURVEY, SURVEY SCORING KEY, ATTITUDE PROFILE FORMS, RANGES FOR PROFILES
Directions

Respond to each of the following statements about by circling the appropriate letter(s) to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the statement applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers; answer honestly in terms of your own experiences in school.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Writing Attitude Survey

1. SA A D SD I avoid writing.
2. SA A D SD My major concern when I begin a paper is coming up with enough things to say.
3. SA A D SD When I have a writing assignment, I like to talk to someone about it before I write.
4. SA A D SD Discussing writing with others is an enjoyable experience.
5. SA A D SD Planning is something writers do only before they write, not after they start writing.
6. SA A D SD People can give me useful advice about what I’m going to write.
7. SA A D SD I enjoy writing.
8. SA A D SD I waste a lot of time when I write because I don’t know what I want to say.
9. SA A D SD When I have a problem writing, I like to bounce ideas off other people.
10. SA A D SD Writing is a lot of fun.
11. SA A D SD When I start writing an assignment, I have no idea if I will succeed in saying what I mean.
12. SA A D SD Telling a friend about my ideas for writing helps me write better.
13. SA A D SD I’m no good at writing.
14. SA A D SD No matter how much time and effort I devote to my papers, they all seem to turn out about the same, as far as quality goes.
15. SA A D SD It’s a waste of time to talk with other students about my writing.
16. SA A D SD Good teachers can help me become a better writer.
17. SA A D SD When I write, I never know if what I write says what I mean.
18. SA A D SD Good writers are born not made.
19. SA A D SD Some people have said, “Writing can be learned but it can’t be taught.” I believe writing can be learned.
20. SA A D SD I believe writing can be taught.

Classroom Style Preference Survey

1. SA A D SD Working in small groups with other students is an effective way of learning.
2. SA A D SD A teacher’s primary job is to present information to students.
3. SA A D SD I feel comfortable asking questions when I don’t understand something.
4. SA A D SD I’d rather figure something out for myself than work with others in a group to figure it out.
5. SA A D SD Good teachers retain complete control of the content of a course.
6. SA A D SD I feel comfortable contributing to class discussion.
7. SA A D SD When students are paired or grouped in class activities, it’s like the blind leading the blind.
8. SA A D SD Even when teachers want students to “come to their own conclusions,” they should still indicate which answers are best.
9. SA A D SD I feel comfortable voicing complaints about a class to the teacher.
10. SA A D SD Teachers should always control class discussion.
11. SA A D SD A teacher’s main responsibility is to make sure that he/she covers all the course material.
12. SA A D SD I enjoy participating in class discussions.

---

**Demographic Questions**

All information will be kept strictly confidential; no names will be used in reporting this data.

1. How many semesters have you been enrolled in college classes (include current semester)?
2. What other writing classes have you taken in the U.S., and where did you take them?
3. What is your gender? female male
4. How long have you been in the U.S.?
5. What country or countries are you from?
6. If you are from more than one country, how long did you live in each and how old were you at the time?
7. If you consider yourself to be a member of an ethnic group within your home country, please explain your ethnicity. (For example, you may be Indonesian, but ethnically Chinese, or you may be Argentinian, but your mother may be from Germany and your father from Italy.)
8. What language was spoken in the home in which you grew up? (If more than one language was spoken in your home, list each language)
9. What language was spoken in the schools you attended before college/university?
10. What is your age? under 18; 18-21; 22-24; 25-29; 30 or older
11. What was your TOEFL score? (if you are unsure, give your approximate score and put a question mark after it.)
12. If you did not take the TOEFL, what was your ACT verbal score? Or your SAT verbal score?
13. What grade did you receive in your last college writing course or high school English course? (If you don’t remember, give your approximate grade and put a question mark after it.)
Survey Scoring: Key to Categories and Question Scaling

Categories: WA=Writing Apprehension; N=Sense of Control; C=Belief in the Usefulness of Collaboration (Collaborative Planning); G=Belief that Writing Ability Is a Gift; GW=Belief in the Usefulness of Group Work; TC=Desire for Teacher Control of Class; SI=Student Involvement in Class

Writing Attitude Survey

Respond to each of the following statements about writing by circling the appropriate letter(s) to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the statement applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers; answer honestly in terms of your own writing experiences in school.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

1=SA  2=A  3=D  4=SD  5=neither  Ø

WA 1.  SA A D  SD  I avoid writing.
N 2. - SA A D  SD  My major concern when I begin a paper is coming up with enough things to say.
C 3.  SA A D  SD  When I have a writing assignment, I like to talk to someone about it before I write.
WA 4. - SA A D  SD  Discussing writing with others is an enjoyable experience.
N 5. - SA A D  SD  Planning is something writers do only before they write, not after they start writing.
C 6.  SA A D  SD  People can give me useful advice about what I'm going to write.
WA 7. - SA A D  SD  I enjoy writing.
N 8. - SA A D  SD  I waste a lot of time when I write because I don't know what I want to say.
C 9.  SA A D  SD  When I have a problem writing, I like to bounce ideas off other people.
WA 10. - SA A D  SD  Writing is a lot of fun.
N 11. - SA A D  SD  When I start writing an assignment, I have no idea if I will succeed in saying what I mean.
C 12.  SA A D  SD  Telling a friend about my ideas for writing helps me write better.
WA 13.  SA A D  SD  I'm no good at writing.
N 14. -SA A D  SD  No matter how much time and effort I devote to my papers, they all seem to turn out about the same, as far as quality goes.
C 15. - SA A D  SD  It's a waste of time to talk with other students about my writing.
G 16. -SA A D  SD  Good teachers can help me become a better writer.
N 17. - SA A D  SD  When I write, I never know if what I write says what I mean.
G 18.  SA A D  SD  Good writers are born not made.
G 19.  SA A D  SD  Some people have said, "Writing can be learned but it can't be taught." I believe writing can be learned.
G 20. -SA A D  SD  I believe writing can be taught.
Classroom Style Preferences Survey

Respond to each of the following statements by circling the appropriate letter(s) to indicate how strongly you agree or disagree that the statement applies to you. There are no right or wrong answers; answer honestly in terms of your experiences in school.

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

21. ∘ SA A D SD
Working in small groups with other students is an effective way of learning.

22. ∘ SA A D SD
A teacher's primary job is to present information to students.

23. ∘ SA A D SD
I feel comfortable asking questions when I don't understand something.

24. ∘ SA A D SD
I'd rather figure something out for myself than work with others in a group to figure it out.

25. ∘ SA A D SD
Good teachers retain complete control of the content of a course.

26. ∘ SA A D SD
I feel comfortable contributing to class discussion.

27. ∘ SA A D SD
When students are paired or grouped in class activities, it's like the blind leading the blind.

28. ∘ SA A D SD
Even when teachers want students to "come to their own conclusions," they should still indicate which answers are best.

29. ∘ SA A D SD
I feel comfortable voicing complaints about a class to the teacher.

30. ∘ SA A D SD
Teachers should always control class discussion.

31. ∘ SA A D SD
A teacher's main responsibility is to make sure that he/she covers all the course material.

32. ∘ SA A D SD
I enjoy participating in class discussions.
ATTITUDE PROFILE SHEET FOR

There are no right or wrong answers to the survey questions; therefore, you should look on your scores not as a value judgment but as a general description of how your attitudes about writing and classroom talk compare to other students' attitudes.

ATTITUDES ABOUT WRITING

WRITING APPREHENSION—High scores indicate general discomfort with writing or talking about writing. Usually, people with high writing apprehension scores tend to avoid writing whenever possible. Lower scores indicate you are comfortable with writing.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 5 to 20

In comparison to other students' scores, your score is _______________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?

BELIEF THAT WRITING ABILITY IS A GIFT—High scores reflect the belief that people are either born with the ability to write or they aren't. Low scores indicate the belief that writing can be learned and that it can be taught.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 4 to 16

In comparison to other students' scores, your score is _______________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?

SENSE OF CONTROL ABOUT WRITING—Unlike writing apprehension, high scores for this factor indicate that a person generally feels in control of his or her own destiny when writing—that extra effort will produce good results. In contrast, a low score for this factor usually means that a person has little faith that increased effort will pay off in better writing.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 6 to 24

In comparison to other students' scores, your score is _______________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?
USEFULNESS OF COLLABORATION FOR ONE'S OWN WRITING--A high score indicates that a person finds talking with others about his/her writing helpful. A low score indicates that a person would prefer to work alone on his/her writing.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 5 to 20
In comparison to other students' scores, your score is ____________________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?

ATTITUDES ABOUT CLASSROOM TALK AND ACTIVITIES

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT--A high score indicates that a person enjoys participating actively in class discussion. A low score indicates that a person would rather not talk much in class.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 4 to 16
In comparison to other students' scores, your score is ____________________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?

TEACHER CONTROL OF CLASS TALK AND CONTENT--High scores generally indicate a preference for teachers who strictly control class discussion, ensuring that content is covered sufficiently. Lower scores suggest that a person is comfortable with teachers who allow students to explore topics in class discussion even at the risk that students might not know what the teacher thinks the "right answers" are.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 5 to 20
In comparison to other students' scores, your score is ____________________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?

USEFULNESS OF GROUP WORK--A high scores indicates that a person finds group work (including collaborative projects) a good way to learn. A low score indicates that a person tends to find working with other students a waste of time.

Your score: __________ Possible range of scores: 3 to 12
In comparison to other students' scores, your score is ____________________.

Do you think your score is accurate? Why or why not?

Any other comments?
Profile Sheet for

Attitudes About Writing

Writing apprehension: *High* scores indicate general discomfort with writing or talking about writing. Usually, people with high writing apprehension scores tend to avoid writing whenever possible. *Lower* scores indicate you are comfortable with writing.

"before" score: _____ (5 to 20)  "after" score: _____ (5 to 20)

Belief that writing ability is a gift: *High* scores reflect the belief that people are either born with the ability to write or they aren't. *Low scores* reflect the belief that writing can be learned and taught.

"before" score _____ (4 to 16)  "after" score _____ (4 to 16)

Sense of control about writing: *High* scores for this factor, unlike high writing apprehension scores, indicate that a person generally feels in control of his or her own destiny when writing—that extra effort will produce good results. In contrast, a *low score* for this factor usually means that a person has little faith that increased effort will result in better writing.

"before" score _____ (6 to 24)  "after" score _____ (6 to 24)

Usefulness of collaboration for one's own writing: A *high score* indicates that a person finds talking with others about his/her writing helpful. A *low score* indicates that a person would prefer to work alone on his/her writing.

"before" score _____ (5 to 20)  "after" score _____ (5 to 20)

Attitudes About Classroom Talk

Student involvement: A *high score* indicates that a person enjoys participating actively in class discussion. A *low score* indicates that a person would rather not talk much in class.

"before" score _____ (4 to 16)  "after" score _____ (4 to 16)

Teacher control of class talk and content: *High* scores generally indicate a preference for teachers who strictly control class discussion, ensuring that content is covered sufficiently. *Lower scores* suggest that a person is comfortable with teachers who allow students to explore topics in class discussion even at the risk that students might not know what the teacher thinks the "right answers' are.

"before" score _____ (5 to 20)  "after" score _____ (5 to 20)

Usefulness of group work: A *high score* indicates that a person finds group work (including collaborative projects) a good way to learn. A *low score* indicates that a person tends to find working with other students a waste of time.

"before" score _____ (3 to 12)  "after" score _____ (3 to 12)
Wallace's "Ranges for Profiles" based on ISU undergraduates

**Writing Apprehension**
mean = 11.6 , s.d. = 3.3,  
possible range of scores = 5-20

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**Usefulness of Collaboration**
mean = 14.4 , s.d. = 2.5,  
possible range of scores = 5-20

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<td>17.5-19.5</td>
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<td>Average</td>
<td>12-17</td>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>9.5-11.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>9 or lower</td>
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**Belief that Writing is a Gift**
mean = 7.7 , s.d. = 1.9,  
possible range of scores = 4-16

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<td>10-11.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6-9.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5.5 or lower</td>
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**Student's Involvement in Class Talk**
mean = 11.1 , s.d. = 2.4,  
possible range of scores = 4-16

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**Sense of Control**
mean = 15.3 , s.d. = 2.9,  
possible range of scores = 6-24

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<td>9.5-12</td>
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<td>Very Low</td>
<td>9 or lower</td>
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**Teacher Control of Class Talk**
mean = 12.5 , s.d. = 2.3,  
possible range of scores = 5-20

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<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>8-9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>7.5-5.5</td>
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**Usefulness of Group Work**
mean = 8.5 , s.d. = 1.8,  
possible range of scores = 3-12

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<td>4.5 or lower</td>
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APPENDIX I

COURSE EVALUATION FORM
This questionnaire gives you the opportunity to evaluate this course. The results of the evaluation will not be available to your teacher until after the final grades have been turned in. A member of the class will be asked to collect the materials, seal them in an envelope, and return them to the English Department main office (203 Ross) as soon as possible.

This questionnaire will provide your teacher with information for improving the course. It will also be part of the material used by faculty committees which make recommendations about rehiring, promotion, awards, and tenure for teachers. Therefore, you should try your best to answer the questions thoughtfully, fairly, and informatively. If a question does not apply, do not respond to that item. In the answer box on the righthand side of this page, mark the response circle which fits your judgment according to the following scale.

1 = Strongly disagree  2 = Disagree  3 = Agree slightly  4 = Agree  5 = Strongly agree

1. Throughout the semester the class met regularly and for the entire period.

2. You were prepared for class and attended regularly.

3. If you needed to, you could confer with the teacher during office hours or by appointment.

4. The teacher responded appropriately to students' questions.

5. The teacher clearly explained the objectives and procedures for each writing assignment.

6. The writing assignments were distributed over the semester.

7. The teacher's comments on your writing assignments were clear and specific.

8. Your grades reasonably reflected your performance on the writing assignments you completed for the course.

9. The portfolio grading method gave you the opportunity to revise and edit your papers.

10. The teacher presented material to the class effectively.

11. Class discussions and activities helped you improve as a writer.

12. The course helped you learn how to go about revising your writing more effectively.

13. The course helped you organize your writing more effectively.

14. The course helped you use details to support your main ideas.

15. The course has raised your awareness of standards of acceptable English writing.

16. The teacher showed an interest in teaching writing.

17. You were glad you had this teacher.

18. By the end of the semester you improved your writing skills.

19. The instructor accepted students regardless of their cultural backgrounds.

20. You preferred the portfolio grading system to receiving grades on regularly turned in assignments.
Please respond in writing on this sheet to at least two of the following questions. These discussion questions are especially important, so please explain your opinions as clearly, fully, and specifically as you can.

A. In what ways have you improved as a writer this semester?
B. How well have you learned to revise your writing through studying under the direction of this teacher?
C. How well did the teacher achieve the stated purpose of the course?
D. How do you rate this teacher in comparison with other teachers at ISU?
E. What other things would you like the teacher to know, either about the course or about the teacher's performance?
APPENDIX J

TRANSCRIPTION OF A PORTION OF THE FIRST CONSENSUS RESEARCH PAPER MEETING OF THE EMBEDDED GROUP
R (to YF): I understood what you were saying up until the point where you were asking...the first point was, is it practical, do we have the time, do we have the money, to do this thing in the schools, and the second one was, um, why are you talking about doing this thing from kindergarten, and (addressing YF) how did you get from there to talking about the smoking campaign? What is your point about the smoking campaign?

YF: I'm just referring to, to, to the, to this case, to the gun control case, with the smoking.

R: And with that you are saying why can't we do...we should do what we do with smoking with everybody, that kind of education?

YF: Yes, this is what I want to clarify, have clari, clarification from them, they told me that educate in the, since kindergarten and then they told me that they educate the public...

R: mhmm

YF: ...how how how how are the ways? (states, doesn't ask the question)

R: mmhm. So you want to know more about the specific ways.

YF: Yes.

R: Um...um ok.

(Unintelligible whispering in background)

U?: Ca, Can I say,

CH?: What, just go ahead

U?: (Later I mean)

YF: And one thing is that I, education must be practical I would like to say that is it practical? econ. economically done, and will it be effective, if ahh related to the money and time we spend. Of course it will help, it will help, in certain sense, certain a sense...yeah. But, in what ways?

E: mm Well
E: I have to say something, well. I, I know what you are trying to say and you have a, a good basis (flips pages in her position outline), for example, that it can cost more money and everything but I guess that the main place, uh, to begin with education is the family, the family, by your friends, and later in a in a second

YF:

U:...place the school.

CH:

YF: Yeah, just now you told me that

CH: I’m going to (unintelligible) what Umberto said. I think we have to clarify this thing. The, the first thing I’m going to say is the kind of education we’re talking about is an informal education. In other words, it’s not, we’re not going to spend money, spend time on education...

YF: (muffled laugh)

CH: ...but it’s just going to be a traditional just be education at, for example, this teacher knows that, for example, ok, let’s give a very, very, very crude example which I think is workable, just like in the Christian school, every morning you pray...

U: Ah, in the church...that’s other source, that’s mainly...

CH: ...every morning you pray, every single morning you pray, it’s not just every morning, every single morning you pray. So perhaps you can just tell, tell them by, by sort of, say every morning, you say "Ok children, no guns today." The second day, "Ok children, today we shouldn’t have guns." Another day you say, "No guns, remember that, there shouldn’t be guns around." And third day you say, "Do you have any guns? We’re going to have a spot check." That kind of education, I mean, that kind of propaganda, that kind of spread of ideas, that kind of public education of education in school, everything else, that kind of education we’re talking about here. There is, I say there’s no money spent, no, ok, time probably, but no money spent definitely economic (unintelligible)

YF: Nothing is done without money.

CH: OK you are the principal. Just going to spend a few minutes down there telling the students, how much money you spend?
YF: I don't get you (laughs softly).

CH: Ok, let's, let's say you are the principal.

YF: If, if you... yeah (laughs)

CH: Am I, am I going the right direction?

YF: If, if you...

CH: Am I going the right direction as to what, what she's trying to (unintelligible).

R: There are so many directions you could be going with this that it's hard for me to say. I don't think there's one right direction.

CH: Because she's, you know she's, she's saying that education, as in we're going to spend a lot of money on that...

R: Let me challenge you though, a little bit...

CH: Yeah, sure.

R: ...um, a principal's time is money, a principal spending just a few minutes with one teacher, times however many teachers, does become money. So... do think about that.

U: Well I guess that

CH: But how?

R: His salary is paid to him for the work that he does over the course of the year...

?: But he's

R: ...if he spends a portion of his time and attention on that, um

CH: But it's important.

U: I guess that, well, if we are talking about, about money, I guess that can suggest or give our point that the government, instead of spending more money, ah, to buy, ah, guns, it should give ah, that money, or part of that, to gun...

YF: yes

U: ...ah, education. Because last year the amount of money was just amazing. Was more money for guns instead of education. And there are statistics about this, so we can use those statistics in our favor.
R: You're saying, statistics that, how many guns the US is buying for military purposes?

U: Uh huh.

CH: Mm hm.

U: That's a good point.

YF: But the policy I think is...

U: We want to change (the score?) but it's just a paper.

YF: No, I know, but I want to uh give some opinions is that, uh, one, some of my opinion is that government, uh, in the United States having some kind of changing their policy from international military attention towards domestic. We can see how argument about health coverage recently, they are arguing about health coverage, that they are discussing this matter. So, it's, the gun control is another thing that takes, uh, some money. They, they are now discussing the health. (It is?) more important because guns already existed since a long, long time ago.

R: Since guns already? (a clarification of phonology request--I didn’t understand what she had said.)

CH: Existed, existed

[YF: already existed in society since the very beginning]

U: So I guess that we should get that data about how many millions of money that the government is spend...

YF: It's not data, we just observe forever around we can see even the health has trouble to have ninety of percent of coverage. How bout the gun control gun controlling which needs some money to put aside from those things.

U: That's what I'm, I'm trying to tell you that we, we should get that data to be basing, to give an example and then say that, that part of that amount of money that isn't spent in, for buying guns in the military, that one part of that money should, should be used for educating the children against gun use. Because you, you, you said, you said that ed, that education can't exceed use that money and it's true because children

YF: ah, ah

U: because teachers ask for wage (ways? waves?) to give, that's true
CH: Waves?

U: Wages, ok

CH: We’re lost, I lost

YF: No I mean with this education They will consider the budget

CH: Actually, I don’t understand what you are saying....
REFERENCES


