# REFRAMING COMMUNICATION FROM A "MESSAGE DELIVERY STANCE" TO A "LISTENING/ LEARNING STANCE": TEACHING COLLABORATIVE RHETORIC FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

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In a deeply polarized political climate—when ad hominem attacks, evidence-free claims, Internet trolling, and a reductive sound-bite culture permeate public discourse undermining critical thinking and reasoning—how can we teach writing as preparation for dynamic, good-willed citizenship and deliberative democracy?[1] Is a rigorous rhetorical approach to argument that is focused on cultivating responsible readers, thinkers, and writers an adequate foundation for informed citizen participation? Many scholar-teachers (among them, Sharon Crowley in *Toward a Civil Discourse*) emphasize that teaching argumentation assists in the urgent project to counter our nation's risk of "citizen passivity" (The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement 1). In accord with Al Gore in *Assault on Reason*, moral philosopher Martha Nussbaum writes in *Not for Profit* that "[t]he idea that one will take responsibility for one's own reasoning, and exchange ideas with others in an atmosphere of mutual respect for reason, is essential to the peaceful resolution of differences, both within a nation and in a world increasingly polarized by ethnic and religious conflict" (54); and rhetorician James Crosswhite asserts that "[a]rgumentation is an ethically powerful way of using conflict to conduct learning and inquiry, and to create change and newness" (9). Clearly, the study of argument should play a role in

preparation for citizenship; however, in this article, I argue that students today also need substantial instruction in collaborative rhetoric.

As recent studies in political psychology have underscored, critical reasoning represents an incomplete model of the wiring and working of the human brain. Contemporary studies in political and social psychology and communication (see Jonathan Haidt's *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*) illuminate the unsettling realization that emotions, not reasoned argument, tend to drive people's civic and personal decision-making. Political psychologist Drew Westen concurs: "The political brain is an emotional brain" (xv); "humans are also motivated by values, emotion-laden beliefs about how things *should* or *should not* be—morally, interpersonally, or aesthetically" (82). Furthermore, the harnessing of emotion in citizen activism may actually threaten democracy.[2] In his article "From My Cold, Dead Hands: Democratic Consequences of Sacred Rhetoric," political scientist Morgan Marietta explains that civic participation is often driven by the power of "sacred rhetoric," the language of either religious or secular commitment to inviolable, absolutist principles that resists dialogue (for example, the sanctity of human life in the abortion debate; the intrinsic value of nature in environmentalism; individual rights in the gun debate). Immersion in "sacred rhetoric" undermines discussion, deliberation, revision of ideas, cooperation, and compromise, alerting us to the need as citizens to learn to grapple with our own and others' insulating adherence to "sacred rhetoric." These studies have reinforced my realization over the last twelve years of teaching argument, that even the most civic-minded course in rhetorical argumentation cannot provide the requisite communication tools for students to enter troubled public discourse responsibly.[3] So, how can we nurture the potential for dialogue?

In this article, I argue that writing/argument courses should help college students acquire facility with collaborative rhetoric and collaborative habits of mind to encourage dialogue. In her analysis of argument textbooks' fixation on argument as persuasion, A. Abby Knoblauch has called for an enlarged vision of argument that includes other kinds of communication. Taking this call further by

re-conceptualizing the teaching of argument, I propose that collaborative rhetoric no longer be considered mainly as a strategy for developing arguers' skills and their arguments. Instead, we should treat collaborative rhetoric as its own distinct, major part of courses on argument (and perhaps other writing courses as well). In this article, I present a framework for a collaborative rhetoric pedagogy focused on listening and initiating and sustaining dialogue. Distinct from argument and persuasion, this collaborative rhetoric teaches *different* communication practices for a *different* rhetorical situation, purpose, stance, and relationship between listeners/writers and their audience.

This collaborative rhetoric pedagogy synthesizes three theories[4] that locate listening at the center of collaborative communication: (1) the rhetorical adaptations of psychotherapist Carl Rogers' "empathic listening"; (2) feminist rhetorician Krista Ratcliffe's "rhetorical listening"; and (3) the Harvard Negotiation Project's "listening to learn," as explained in the book *Difficult Conversations* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. I first seek to fuse these theories into a theoretical base for a collaborative rhetoric pedagogy that teaches an alternative way to think about communication amidst conflict with the goal of generating genuine dialogue. Then I sketch a framework of principles for collaborative rhetoric that move students from what Stone et al. call a "message delivery stance" to communication as a "learning stance" (xxxii). Finally, I present an activity and assignment sequence that leads students to develop a collaborative habit of mind and rhetorical flexibility.

## Roots of a Collaborative Rhetoric Pedagogy: Rogerian Communication

Since the mid-twentieth century, psychotherapist Carl Rogers' transformative theory of listening has provided a foundation for an emerging collaborative rhetoric. In his famous presentation to the Centennial Conference on Communication in 1951, "Communication: Its Blocking and Its Facilitation," Rogers outlined key psychological principles of communication built on the premise that communication

between people (and also within the self) is blocked by our propensity to judge others, which intensifies "in those situations where feelings and emotions are deeply involved" (29). To curb judgment and improve communication, we need to "listen with understanding . . . to see the expressed idea and attitude from the other person's point of view, to sense how it feels to him, to achieve his frame of reference in regard to the thing he is talking about" (29), a practice Rogers calls "empathic listening." Rogers offers what has become known as the "saying back rule": "Each person can speak up for himself only *after* he has first restated the ideas and feelings of the previous speaker accurately, and to that speaker's satisfaction" (30). He specifies that listeners must genuinely engage with the speaker's ideas and feelings and that this restatement can be no simple parroting but rather a paraphrase that demonstrates nonjudgmental understanding and positive acceptance of what the speaker has said. Because listening in this way involves "[t]he risk of being changed [which] is one of the most frightening prospects most of us can face" (30), we don't apply it enough in communication. The prospect that listening with understanding can reduce emotional tensions, enlarge perspectives with the potential for mutual change, and clear a path for addressing problems collaboratively has inspired an expansion of argument theory by suggesting a way to manage rhetorical situations involving conflicts over values and views.

While some scholar-teachers (see Ede, Lunsford, Kearney, among others) have contended that Rogers' psychological principles intended for interpersonal dialogue are incompatible with writing pedagogy[5] and unnecessarily extra-disciplinary, numerous others (Young, Becker, and Pike; Hairston; Bator; Coe; Corder; Baumlin; Brent; Teich; Hunzer) have applied Rogerian principles productively to argumentation as "at the least, a supplement, complement, or contrary to traditional argument and, at the most, an alternative rhetoric" (66), explains rhetorician Nathaniel Teich, in his influential book *Rogerian Perspectives: Collaborative Rhetoric for Oral and Written Communication* (1992). Initiating this integration of Rogerian ideas into written discourse in their seminal textbook *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (1970), Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth

L. Pike developed a rhetoric built on the affirmation of multiple perspectives and partial truths and on the goal of "discussion and exchange of ideas" (8) for "enlightened cooperation" (9). Young et al. applied Rogers' empathic listening to address the connection between personal threat and resistance to change by opening space in oppositional writer-audience relationships. Through empathic listening, exploring the contexts of validity for disparate views, and discovering common ground, they teach that writers can promote changes in perspectives (276-77).[6]

Advancing early adaptations of Rogers' ideas, rhetoricians and teachers have continued to explore how Rogerian listening nurtures collaborative rhetoric and collaborative habits of mind. Theorizing rhetorical situations that are distinctly different from forensic and adversarial rhetoric, Richard M. Coe has asserted that Rogerian rhetoric encompasses "all rhetorical strategies and structures that facilitate empathy, consensus, nonantagonistic communication, mediation of disputes, problem solving . . ." (96). Teich has focused on Rogerian communication's ability "to recognize and validate the affective as well as the cognitive dimensions of discourse situations" (6). Emphasizing its potential to foster ethical and imaginative inquiry and perspective-changing dialogue (see also Corder, Baumlin), Teich values creative extensions of empathy and "the willingness to change one's position in order to achieve solutions which are mutually satisfactory to those involved" ("Rogerian Problem-Solving" 52). Similarly, Doug Brent instructs "Rogerian rhetors" to imaginatively explore another's views and feelings to gain insight into their own and "what has caused them to think differently from others" ("Rogerian Rhetoric" 87). Interested in preparation for citizenship, "not only training in how to communicate, but also training in what communication is *for* . . ." in order to "make informed ethical choices" ("Rogerian Rhetoric" 89), Brent has used Rogerian classroom practices to "teach both a *technique* of inquiry and an *ethic* of inquiry" (74) for knowledge-making. However, despite these important, expansive explorations of the ethical and rhetorical potential of Rogerian empathic listening, Rogerian communication

has remained largely subsumed in argumentation and used to complicate and deepen arguers' perspectives.

## Krista Ratcliffe's Rhetorical Listening as a Rhetorical Stance of Openness

More recent developments in feminist rhetoric have shifted disciplinary conversations, reenergizing collaborative communication with social urgency and introspective depth. In her article "Rhetorical Listening: A Trope for Interpretive Invention and a 'Code of Cross-Cultural Conduct'" and her book *Rhetorical Listening: Identification, Gender, Whiteness* (2005), feminist rhetorician and teacher Krista Ratcliffe responds to Joyce Jones Royster's call for a transformation in the way we listen across racial difference: "How do we listen? How do we demonstrate that we honor and respect the person talking and what that person is saying, or what the person might say if we valued someone other than ourselves having a turn to speak?" (38). Ratcliffe's theory of rhetorical listening envisions "a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture" (*Rhetorical Listening* 1) to promote deeper dialogue and to engage difference. Ratcliffe affirms a feminist restoration of listening as a rhetorical art and act that can be applied to discourse, spoken and written, addressing a gap in the classical tradition: "Aristotle's theory never delves into how to listen" (*Rhetorical Listening* 20). In recasting the rhetorical arts of reading, writing, and speaking to give a prominent place to listening, Ratcliffe's concept of rhetorical listening invigorates collaborative rhetoric pedagogy in important ways.

First, Ratcliffe's theory contributes to collaborative rhetoric by both complicating and clarifying the work listeners need to do to participate in genuine listening conversations without judgment, particularly in cross-cultural exchanges. In her term "standing under the discourses of others," she theorizes listening with understanding as listening to multiple discourses, even that of the self, with responsibility, self-awareness and receptivity: "Standing under discourses means letting discourses wash over, through, and around us and then letting them

lie there to inform our politics and ethics" ("Rhetorical Listening" 205). The stance of receptivity that Ratcliffe proposes—"listening with intent to receive, not master" grants others the space to be heard (*Rhetorical Listening* 34). She believes that "these moves foster in listeners the critical thinking skills that may lay grounds for productive communication" (*Rhetorical Listening* 26). In rhetorical situations involving mutual respect, adopting a stance of openness to loosen the listener's perceptual frame is critical for cooperative communication.

Ratcliffe's theory also probes what blocks genuine listening and ethical communication. "Standing under" discourses necessitates ongoing self-examination and analysis of the "cultural logics" in which we and other speakers/writers are lodged. Ratcliffe defines a "cultural logic" as "a belief system or way of reasoning that is shared within a culture . . ." (*Rhetorical Listening* 10): for example, the cultural logics of equal rights; of patriarchy; of deep ecology; of the free market; of the commons; or of colorblindness. This concept of cultural logic also intersects with Marietta's concept of sacred rhetoric that is intertwined with our values and identities. So how do we listen without judgment in conflict situations when we ourselves are complexly immersed in value systems and discourses we might not even be aware of? Ratcliffe exhorts us to reflect on the cultural logics and personal resistance that we bring to difficult issues such as race, gender, and class. This grappling with cultural logic, identity, and values entails risk and potential threat, which, Ratcliffe admits, may be uncomfortable, even painful, to us when we hear others' stories arising from very different cultural logics (*Rhetorical Listening* 34). However, she claims that identifying others' cultural logics and "standing under" their discourses by acknowledging their reasoning (or the values behind their sacred rhetoric) can serve as "a starting point for questioning our own attitudes and actions" and as "function as grounds for negotiation and communication" (*Rhetorical Listening* 33). In agreement with Rogerian rhetoricians, Ratcliffe qualifies the rhetorical situation in which listening as collaboration can work, pointing out the need to engage in "genuine conversation" with "a desire in all parties to move

our understanding forward" (*Rhetorical Listening* 36). By foregrounding the mental, emotional, and ethical work listeners/readers/writers need to do to wrestle with our (possibly unconscious) layers of belief that complicate our dealing with social, cultural, and political discourses, Ratcliffe's theory of listening provides a foundation for dialogic, collaborative exchange.

## The Dynamic Contribution of Negotiation and Conflict Resolution Studies

Shaping collaborative rhetoric further into a communication practice in its own right, negotiation and conflict resolution offer a third major contribution,[7] as seen in the theory of listening in Stone, Patton, and Heen's *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*, itself a synthesis of the knowledge and practices from the authors' background in negotiation, mediation, and law and from psychology and social psychology; communication theory; and dialogue studies (xix). Although *Difficult Conversations* highlights face-to-face communication, its approach has dynamic explanatory power, providing pedagogically accessible concepts and vocabulary to help students develop pragmatic rhetorical tools and negotiating habits of mind to navigate complex rhetorical situations in their personal, professional, and civic environments.

Stone et al.'s most useful principle is their transformation of communication in conflict situations from a "message delivery stance" to a "learning stance" by listening to create "learning conversations" (xxxii). A "message delivery stance" describes the most basic rhetorical approach of classical argument when the speakers/writers express their views, making a case for their position to persuade or change the audience and perhaps motivate them to act in a desired way. In contrast, a "learning stance" eschews persuasion; it begins from the premise that no one has the complete perspective on an issue and that only listening to learn can possibly lead to resolving a problem. Stone et al. alter the stance of listeners/writers to one of seeking "what information they [those who disagree with us] have that we don't" (37) and of changing "our purpose from proving we are right

to understanding the perceptions, interpretations, and values of both sides . . . to move away from delivering messages and toward asking questions, exploring how each person is making sense of the world. And to offer our views as perceptions, interpretations, and values—not as 'the truth'" (10). Adopting this learning stance requires that listeners/writers listen with nonjudgmental openness.

Recognizing that emotional high-stakes disagreements make this stance challenging, Stone et al. instruct us how to listen nonjudgmentally/collaboratively amidst conflict. Their theory of the "Three Conversations," the "underlying structure" of all difficult conversations, teaches the necessity of attending to the Three Conversations going on within each participant. With the desire to persuade no longer the purpose, listeners/writers first tune into their "Three Conversations": "The What Happened?" (perceptions—how the facts look); "The Feelings Conversation," and "The Identity Conversation" (7-8). Rigorous self-examination involves addressing how our background and values shape how we interpret the facts of the problem; what feelings, perhaps unexplored, the conflict evokes in us that contribute to the riskiness of the situation; and the aspects of our values and identities that are at stake in this conflict. By confronting and monitoring our own internal "Three Conversations," we can expose assumptions and move beyond blame and judgment so that we can listen more openly for the "Three Conversations" of the other party, to acknowledge feelings, and to cultivate our own genuine desire to learn about others.

For Stone et al., the goal of collaborative communication is to put multiple perspectives side by side, to listen to each, with the hope of creating a foundation for ongoing conversation and problem solving: ". . . engaging someone in a conversation where mutual learning is the goal often results in change" (138). Stone et al. stress the desire to be heard and the mental loosening that takes place in both parties in the listening process when listeners employ open question asking, paraphrase of the other's ideas (resembling Rogerian "saying back"), and acknowledgment of the other person's ideas and feelings. Their concept of the "And Stance" frees us from having to relinquish our own values and views and thus removes the

pressure on the need to compromise. The "And Stance" accepts the value of each party's perceptions and feelings. In liberating participants from purposefully seeking a change of mind—ours or the other party's—listening opens the path for further discussion and problem-solving: "Now that we really understand each other, what's a good way to manage this problem?" (40). To promote listening to learn, Stone et al. recommend beginning communication from a nonthreatening "Third Story," which is a neutral description of the problem/issue of concern to both parties, and then listening to learn from the other party's story before sharing our story.

## Principles for a Collaborative Rhetoric Pedagogy

Borrowing from these three conceptually rich convergent strands of theory/praxis, I now offer a framework for a collaborative rhetoric pedagogy built on adopting a "learning stance" in discussion and writing. Within this overall frame, this pedagogy involves teaching four principles and practices.

### Collaborative dialogue should be grounded in preliminary and ongoing self-examination and reflexive inquiry.

To create the stance of open, nonjudgmental listening (listening empathically, "standing under" the discourses of others)—students (and instructors) need to develop a habit of self-reflection and reflexive inquiry, which Donna Qualley calls "a commitment to both attending to what we believe and examining how we came to hold those beliefs *while we are engaged in trying to make sense of an other*" (5). Regular self-examination and reflexive inquiry in writing enable students to tune into their internal "Three Conversations" (facts/ perceptions of reality; feelings; and values/identity) that are shaping their responses to others and to identify what cultural logics or adherence to unquestioned sacred rhetoric might be influencing them. Determining what is threatening and what is at stake for them is a key cognitive and affective move to enable them to keep the channels open to listen to others.[8]

**Collaborative communication involves establishing a genuine "learning stance."**

Developing the ability to adopt a "learning stance" by learning to "listen to, discern, and acknowledge this partial truth in everyone—particularly those with whom we disagree" (Hwoschinsky xii) is a challenging and crucial collaborative move. In this listening-to-learn stance, listeners/writers withhold judgment, "stand under the discourses of others," and try to see the world through the other party's eyes, letting the other party's views "wash over them" as Ratcliffe says ( "Rhetorical Listening" 205) to enlarge and recast their perception of the problem. Granting others space to express their ideas and acknowledging that others' stories have value and meaning represent responsible, ethical listening.

**Collaborative communication prioritizes learning to use open, respectful language.**

The collaborative rhetorical stance emphasizes the use of civil, respectful language to maintain a listening/learning mode focused on ongoing, open dialogue about a problem. Thoughtfully choosing words and using exploratory, tentative sentences and nonthreatening questions shape *both* the listener/writer's mentality and the audience's perceptions. When listeners/writers have begun with the "Third Story"—the general difference in how both parties view the conflict or shared problem—and listened to the other party's story, they present their perspective and contribution to the conversation—with diction chosen to suggest, offer, and invite. Dialogue remains collaborative when listeners/writers reframe the discussion using "I statements" and open "how" and "what" questions that invite more information and show genuine interest: "Can you say a little more about . . . ?" (Stone et al.172-77). This neutral, provisional language helps to foster dialogic exchange and a collaborative mindset.[9]

**Collaborative communication commits to deepening understanding and expanding perspectives—to ongoing listening conversations.**

Because collaboration is a stance, a method, and a goal, collaborative rhetoric seeks to pave the way for respectful relationship and ongoing dialogue. A collaborative rhetorical stance recognizes complexity and accepts provisional understanding as a (temporary) concluding position. Of course, perceiving similarities and finding a basis of agreement are important in collaborative rhetoric; however, I argue that pushing too early and too hard on finding common ground[10] actually warps dialogic exchange by forcing insincere, artificial identification and often shallow agreement.[11] Instead, through listening as discovery, as perspectives are laid side by side and mutual learning takes place, change as enlargement of views may lead to appreciation of similarities and problem-solving compromise. Stone et al.'s "Third Story" sketches the problem of mutual concern initially; respectful listening throughout the communication promotes the development of shared understanding.

## Theory into Practice: A Sample Collaborative Rhetoric Unit with an Assignment Sequence

The collaborative rhetoric unit I present here integrates this synthesized theory, teaching intensive and extensive application of these principles in discussion and writing. This pedagogy has evolved over twelve years of teaching my course, Advanced Writing: Argumentation (offered once a year) at my Jesuit liberal arts university. This course is required for the Writing Studies minor but is often taken as an elective by students from other majors—environmental studies, humanities for teaching, political science, pre-law, business, and history, among others. The argument-free zone of this approximately 4-week unit (out of a 10-week instructional quarter) is bracketed off from a study of formal argumentation (a rigorous introduction to classical argument principles, the Toulmin schema of argument architecture, the classical appeals, and stasis theory). Recently, for this civic-oriented course, I have used the inquiry theme of education

reform, with *The Flat World: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future* (2010) by Linda Darling-Hammond and current articles, mostly civic, to involve the class in problems in American education. Education reform issues for discussion and writing have included the school-to-prison pipeline; restorative justice disciplinary practices; the opportunity gap; standardized testing; trigger warnings; diversity and inclusivity policy; sexual harassment policy; voter education; environmental education; the charter school movement; student debt; free speech on campus—and other education issues affecting college students now or later in their roles as teachers, policy makers, parents, citizens, and voters. Rhetoric texts for this unit include *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*; "Chapter 10: An Alternative to Argument: Collaborative Rhetoric" from the 11th edition of *Writing Arguments* by John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson; excerpts from Marietta's article on sacred rhetoric and excerpts from Ratcliffe's article on rhetorical listening. Preceding the collaborative rhetoric unit, students have written a classical argument as a letter directed to a specific person or group (for example, the School Board from the student's former high school district).[12] The course concludes with a researched evaluation or proposal argument on an issue related to students' majors, home communities, or prospective careers. Thus, the collaborative rhetoric unit represents a pronounced rhetorical contrast and shift in purpose and rhetorical stance.

My teaching goals for this unit are to cultivate listening-to-learn habits and to expand students' rhetorical repertoire to facilitate collaboration amidst conflict. My learning objectives for the unit are that students will:

- Demonstrate self-examination and reflexive inquiry to explore their own perceptions, feelings, values, and identity (the "Three Conversations," cultural logic, and sacred rhetoric) at stake in a contentious issue;
- Demonstrate the ability to adopt a learning stance, employing empathic listening and rhetorical listening in discussion

and writing by careful attention to their listener's/writer's relationship to the audience;

- Demonstrate a consistent listening/learning stance and tone in discussion and writing through accurate paraphrase of ideas and feelings and such control of language as use of "I statements," neutral verb choices, and genuine open questions;
- Articulate for themselves the challenges and values of this approach to disagreement and suggest plans for future growth in collaborative rhetoric.

The key to developing students' facility with collaborative rhetoric (as other practitioners have discovered) is extensive hands-on experience, partly because this kind of listening requires keen attention and energy that can be tiring. My unit involves class exercises to practice collaborative listening in discussion and writing, regular self-reflective/reflexive low stakes writing, incremental assignments as scaffolding for the formal collaborative discussion letter, and a final reflection.

**Introduction to Collaborative Rhetoric**

While students are reading *Difficult Conversations*, they benefit from a strong start to this unit consisting of short reviews of concepts; focused, well-orchestrated class activities to help them distinguish between a "message delivery stance" and the listening focus of a "learning stance"; practice with reflexive inquiry; practice with listening to learn as they reflect on the ideas, feelings, and values they are hearing in another's discourse; and examples of collaborative rhetoric from the public sphere. Teaching mainly by experiential learning, I nevertheless begin by introducing the four principles of my collaborative rhetoric pedagogy and the key vocabulary from Rogerian communication, Ratcliffe's rhetorical listening, *Difficult Conversations*, and Marietta's sacred rhetoric. To initiate the practice of tuning into the "Three Conversations" underlying the "difficult conversation" as a responsibility of the listener/writer, I ask students

to examine their listening habits and their awareness of their own adherence to sacred rhetoric by responding to the questions in Figure 1.

**Questions for Self-Examination and Reflexive Inquiry**

1. When you are in the midst of a heated conversation involving clashing views and values, how would you describe your listening habits?
2. In discussions of controversial issues, how would you describe your awareness of the "Three Conversations" going on in you: your perception of facts of the issue, your feelings, and your values/identity at stake? Describe a conflict or disagreement when you recognized that your values and identity were involved.
3. Describe a communication conflict in which you became aware of your own cultural logic and/or the sacred rhetoric shaping your views.

Figure 1: Initial Self-Examination and Reflexive Inquiry

Early on, students need to gain experience distinguishing between a "message delivery stance" (argument) and listening in a "learning stance" with the goal of opening communication. For an opening exercise, I use two short contrasting videos: Tommy Jordan's inflammatory YouTube video "Facebook Parenting: For the Troubled Teen" and Oliver Heuler's short video talking back to it. (Other vividly contrasting examples would also work.)[13] Figure 2 explains this in-class activity.

As a follow-up to this in-class exercise, students practice nonjudgmental, respectful listening by writing a one-to-two page low-stakes response to either Tommy or his daughter. They practice using reflective paraphrasing of the other party's ideas (Rogerian *saying back*), acknowledging feelings and values, and using open questions as an invitation for more exploration and sharing of views. Students might experiment with establishing a learning conversation by beginning with the "Third Story" (problem at hand), reflecting Their Story (Tommy's or his daughter's), and sharing Your Story, a nonjudgmental contribution that invites more discussion. These responses, including one by the instructor, can be read aloud and discussed as part of the class' process of learning effective collaborative rhetoric moves.

**Introductory Exercise with Collaborative Rhetoric**

**Background:** The purpose of this exercise is to experience the difference between a "message delivery stance" and careful, nonjudgmental listening to learn. In addition to experiencing the difference in communication shown in two YouTube videos, we will conduct a discussion of these videos—about which we will likely have disagreements—by practicing "listening to learn."

**Part 1:** After watching the video "Facebook Parenting: For the Troubled Teen," freewrite for five minutes, thinking about the speaker's purpose, rhetorical stance and primary audience, the facts, feelings, and values expressed in the message, and the effect on both the target audience (Tommy's daughter) and the secondary audience (other viewers of this video) as well as your personal response.

**Part 2:** As a class we will conduct a collaborative rhetoric discussion of this video in which you share your responses while practicing careful listening and collaborative contributions as we follow these rules:

1. With everyone listening intently, the first speaker to respond to the video begins by briefly summarizing the message of the video. After laying this foundation, this speaker adds a 1-4 sentence comment about the video that emerged during freewriting.
2. Each successive speaker begins by paraphrasing the ideas and feelings of the preceding speaker. When you are the summarizer, if the preceding speaker accepts your paraphrase, you may move to your own comments. If not, you need to rephrase your summary so that that speaker does accept it. The best new comments relate to, build off of, find congruence with, or respectfully diverge from the points made by the preceding speaker.[14]
3. In addition, you may refer to the points made by other speakers, but you have to paraphrase them accurately first before adding your own commentary.

**Part 3:** After watching the YouTube video "Responding to Parenting on Facebook" by Oliver Heuler, freewrite about the speaker's purpose, rhetorical stance and primary audience, the facts, feelings, and values expressed in the message, the effect on both the target audience and the secondary audience, and your response.

**Part 4:** Again following the practices of collaborative communication, we will discuss our different responses to this video, including its impact on Tommy Jordan and you. Your comments might explore what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of Oliver Heuler's rhetorical stance.

Figure 2: Class Exercise Introducing a Collaborative Rhetoric Discussion

Early in this unit, students benefit from seeing examples of collaborative rhetoric from the public sphere to reinforce their grasp of collaborative

concepts. Carl Rogers applied his empathic listening model in conflict resolution sites involving opposing groups such as health providers and health consumers; Catholics and Protestants in Belfast, Northern Ireland; and leaders from Egypt, Israel, and the U.S. at Camp David (Rogers and Ryback). My collection of examples includes E.O. Wilson's much reprinted "Letter to a Southern Baptist Minister"; excerpts from Carol Hwoschinksy's *Listening with the Heart: A Guide for Compassionate Listening*; the numerous examples of discussion amidst conflict in *Difficult Conversations*; Bill Keller's dialogue with Glenn Greenwald, "Is Glenn Greenwald the Future of News?"; examples from human rights educator Loretta J. Ross's op-ed piece "I'm a Black Feminist";[15] and the C-Span exchange between lawyer Heather C. McGhee, the African-American distinguished senior fellow and former president of the progressive think tank Demos, and a white male caller recounted in Heather C. McGhee's editorial "'I'm Prejudiced,' He Said. Then We Kept Talking" (see Figure 3).

**Example of Collaborative Rhetoric Using Empathic Listening**

[from McGhee's editorial]

One morning in August, when I was a guest on C-Span, I got a phone call that took my breath away.

"I'm a white male," said the caller, who identified himself as Garry from North Carolina. "And I'm prejudiced."

As a black leader often in the media, I have withstood my share of racist rants, so I braced myself. But what I heard was fear—of black people and the crime he sees on the news—not anger.

"What can I do to change?" he asked. "To be a better American?"

I thanked him for admitting his prejudice, and gave him some ideas—get to know black families, recognize the bias in news coverage of crime, join an interracial church, read black history.

[from Colby Itkowitz's interview with McGhee]

"**You were so poised while the caller spoke. What was going through your mind?"**

"In some ways it was what was going through my heart, which was a sense of connection to his vulnerability. He was someone who is swimming against a tide of racist images, narratives, stereotypes that is as old as our country and has taken new shape today, but have always been used to justify the lower position of black people in our society."

Figure 3: Example of Collaborative Rhetoric Using Empathic Listening

Over one million people have subsequently viewed this exchange on the Web. In this example, which illustrates listening across differences in culture, race, and class, students can readily recognize how Heather McGhee demonstrates empathic listening to the caller's "Three Conversations"—facts, feelings, and identity—and can perceive how her appreciative, nonjudgmental stance encourages further dialogue and change.

## Cultivating Listening-to-Learn Habits of Mind and Use of Collaborative Language

After these collaborative rhetoric experiences, I focus on practice with the concepts of cultural logics and sacred rhetoric, which often block listening to learn. For class discussion, I assign excerpts from Morgan Marietta's article and Ratcliffe's article with study guide questions. We then incorporate these concepts to enhance students' reflexive inquiry, and we analyze the sacred rhetoric and cultural

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"In some ways it was what was going through my heart, which was a sense of connection to his vulnerability. He was someone who is swimming against a tide of racist images, narratives, stereotypes that is as old as our country and has taken new shape today, but have always been used to justify the lower position of black people in our society."

logic in our unit's readings. I have found the following listening interaction exercises helpful to students.[16]

**Exercise 1:** Watch or read an example of discourse that expresses a clear cultural logic and uses sacred rhetoric. Some suitable examples are recent political speeches; the short YouTube videos by Annie Leonard, *The Story of Stuff* and *The Story of Bottled Water*; speeches by environmental advocates (Paul Hawkins; Maude Barlow; Bill McKibben; Adrianna Quintero (executive director of Voces Verdes/ senior attorney at the Natural Resources Defense Council); and Katharine Hayhoe (associate professor in the Department of Political Science/director of the Climate Science Center at Texas Tech University, also an evangelical Christian); controversial articles or videos about the diversity/inclusivity or free speech discussions on university campuses; and position statements from advocacy Web sites, for example, the Heritage Foundation on the DACA Program. Students should identify their own cultural logic (value system, often pertaining to an issue [the environment, immigration, individual rights, race, etc.]) and sacred rhetoric that make it difficult or easy for them to listen with understanding to this text and then identify the cultural logic and/or sacred rhetoric that shapes the text.

**Exercise 2:** Conduct a collaborative discussion of a controversial video, reading, or issue; I have used articles on charter schools and on trigger warnings in college classes and YouTube videos of slam poetry from GetLit.org. Use the method of linked contributions (see the exercise in Figure 2). This exercise requires intense listening and accurate nonjudgmental use of language in response to provocative texts. The discussion can focus on student's response to the artifact itself or to the artifact's issue.[17]

**Exercise 3:** Conduct a role-playing exercise to practice "listening to learn" conversations on a controversial issue with multiple stakeholders. Divide the class into four or five groups, each representing a stakeholder, with one group functioning as facilitators. Facilitators begin the discussion from the "Third Story"; as each group shares its stakeholder's perspective on the issue, facilitators monitor the exchange to insure that it avoids "message delivery" and remains a learning conversation; facilitators can stop the discussion if speakers

use judgmental language: for example, "Pause. Could you please rephrase that assertion as an open question?" After all have spoken back and forth, facilitators sum up the discussion, perhaps using the "And Stance" and suggest a possible direction for further discussion and problem solving. Some articles that easily generate scenarios with multiple stakeholders are these: Geoffrey L. Collier's "We Pretend to Teach, They Pretend to Learn" (an editorial questioning higher education and antagonizing all the stakeholders—professors, students, administrators and voters); Greg Lukianoff and Jonathan Haidt's "The Coddling of the American Mind" (on trigger warnings); other editorials, blogs, advocacy position statements. This exercise could extend over several class periods.

Any of these exercises can become a low-stakes writing assignment as preparation for the exercise or debriefing of it. Students could write informally about their own investment in the issues, generate open questions for discussions, write a collaborative response to a stakeholder, author, or student participant, or analyze the communication challenges of the exercise.

### Preparing for a Formal Writing Assignment: A Collaborative Discussion as an Open Letter

My collaborative rhetoric unit culminates in the writing of a collaborative open letter about an education reform issue. The traditional Rogerian letter includes typical moves—an opening that introduces the writer's and audience's interest in a problem; a "saying back" summary of the audience's views that shows empathic listening; a search for common ground component or section that demonstrates listening with understanding; and a respectful contribution of the student writer's ideas in a spirit of collaboration. I have reconstructed this assignment (see Figure 4) to help students establish the purpose and tone of a genuine listening-to-learn conversation.[18]

**Writing Assignment**: This project asks you to write a collaborative discussion as an open letter addressed to a real person who has written a controversial article, editorial, blog post, or position statement on a Web site expressing a perspective that clashes with your views and values. Imagine that your open letter will be published in a specific forum, perhaps the one in which your writer's piece appeared. Choose a text on an issue that relates to your major, personal education experience, or an area of interest.

**Purpose**: Your purpose in this written discussion is to establish and invite a "learning conversation" with the writer of the article. Your rhetorical stance should show genuine interest in this audience's perspective through your nonjudgmental listening to your audience's ideas and your invitational sharing. Acknowledge your audience's ideas and feelings/values and share your own using collaborative language: paraphrase to show that you are listening to learn (perhaps even quoting your writer briefly); think collaboratively by using open questions and respectful language.

**Form:** To conduct a collaborative discussion, you might find a "Third Story, Their Story, Your Story" pattern helpful; however, try to replicate dialogic exchange with some back and forth, listening to each perspective, and concluding with an invitation for further exploration. Resist any desire to argue; assume that if your primary or larger audience senses a "message delivery stance," they will stop reading your letter. The "And Stance" may enable you to reframe the discussion and fully engage with another's perspective, without compromising your values. Your conclusion should recognize the learning that your listening has helped you experience (the perspective gained through "standing under") and invite further collaborative discussion toward ongoing sharing of perspectives.

Your collaborative discussion open letter should be between 1200-1500 words.

Figure 4: Formal Assignment—Collaborative Discussion Open Letter

My version of this assignment (in Figure 4) calls for a more loosely conducted collaborative discussion captured in writing and presented as an open letter with both a primary audience (the addressee) and the larger secondary one (the readers of the publication where the open letter might be published). At this point in the unit, students have practiced moving from face-to-face collaborative discussions to employing collaborative rhetoric in short informal writing. For this assignment, my students have chosen to respond to controversial articles on guns in schools; free speech on university campuses; a free-market Uber model for public education; the use of public funds for emotionally disturbed students' alternative schooling;

pervasive standardized testing, and other issues related to education reform.

For scaffolding for this formal writing assignment, I use reflexive inquiry and invention exercises (see Figure 5).

To prepare to write their letters, students might try a version of the "From Debate to Dialogue" exercise used in Compassionate Listening workshops. Paired with a classmate who holds a clashing view (perhaps the perspective in the article), students conduct a short exchange in which they listen to this opposing speaker's ideas and feelings, mentally tune into their own "Three Conversations," and try to reframe the potentially heated exchange as a collaborative discussion, resisting argument. This exercise can alert student writers to their personal and rhetorical challenges in their letters. (See Bator and Brent for versions of this exercise.)

Because collaborative rhetoric represents a new way of thinking and communicating for most students, they benefit from peer review of their letters in pairs or groups and from revision with a follow-up cover letter, commenting on their challenges. Peer reviewers can draw attention to the writer's progression of ideas and control of prose to maintain a "learning conversation" and collaborative tone.

The following excerpts from students' revised open letters (Figures 6 and 7) demonstrate many of the features and goals of collaborative discussion: beginning from the "Third Story"; recognition of identity and investment in the issues; effort to maintain a

**Reflexive Inquiry as Preparation for Writing a Collaborative Discussion Open Letter**

***Directions:*** This exercise functions as brainstorming for your collaborative discussion open letter as you prepare to write a collaborative response to a specific person's (or organization's) writing on a specific issue. Answer these questions as thoughtfully as you can by freewriting responses.

1. Examine your own perspectives, feelings, values.
    - What do you know about the issue and why do you care about it?
    - How has your background shaped your perception of the issue?
    - How are your own feelings and identity engaged in this issue and specifically in this piece of writing?
    - What cultural logic (value system) and/or attachment to sacred rhetoric (absolute principles) of your own should you acknowledge as you approach discussing this issue?

2. Examine what you know about your primary audience (letter recipient).
    - You might have to do some Web searching to get some background information. (Is she/he/they a professional journalist, CEO of a company, public intellectual, a regular blog commentator, a concerned citizen, or an advocacy organization?).
    - How will you acknowledge that you have an understanding of this person's or organization's identity?
    - What can you conjecture about your audience's values, cultural logic, and emotional investment in the issue? What instances of sacred rhetoric and absolutist thinking do you see in the text you are responding to?

3. For your outreach to your specific audience (primary recipient) of your letter
    - Sketch out an opening to your collaborative discussion that begins from the "Third Story" (your common interest in and general difference on this issue or problem).
    - How will you demonstrate nonjudgmental language and an interest in exploring your audience's "story"?
    - Where will you use invitational language and questions to conduct a learning conversation
    - How will you offer "your story," your contribution, using "I" statements, questions, exploratory language, and avoiding "message delivery" declarations, assertions, and judgments?
    - Will you need to employ the "And Stance" to handle how your views clash with your audience's?

Figure 5: Questions for Reflexive Inquiry and Preparation for Writing a Collaborative Discussion Open Letter

**Excerpt from Student #1's Collaborative Discussion Open Letter**

Dear Russ Whitehurst and Katharine Lindquist:

As an aspiring teacher and current mentor of middle schoolers, I am intrigued by the fresh outlook on standardized testing you present in your article, "Test More, Not Less" on the Brookings Institute website (28 July 2016). With the appointment of a new, inexperienced Secretary of Education and the poor academic performance of American students in comparison to many other Western nations, the future of standardized testing is perhaps simultaneously more uncertain and more important than ever before. Having only just begun engaging in the contentious debate over the pros and cons of testing, I would love to better understand the views you have developed on the subject through many combined years of experience in the field of education policy. Below, I will lay out my interpretation of your perspective on standardized testing and then share some of my own experiences that we might establish a conversation on the ideal role of testing in our nation's schools. . . .

Prior to reading your article, I must admit I held a thoroughly unfavorable view of standardized testing, but you have helped me to realize that I had not considered the issue from the governmental accountability perspective and that many of my reservations are not about testing itself but concern the way it is used to determine students' academic futures. I am curious, therefore, to hear your thoughts on the evaluation and tracking of students, particularly prior to high school, using their standardized test scores. In my experience, placing students in different class levels because of their performance on standardized tests does more harm than good. At WMS, I work primarily with students in remedial and grade-level classes. These classes generally confirm studies on tracking, which have found that "students placed in the lowest tracks or in remedial programs tend to experience instruction geared only to rote skills" (Darling-Hammond 55). In this way, the students I work with who are at or below grade-level often face the additional obstacle to their learning of thoroughly uninspiring subject matter. It can be very challenging, for example, to motivate students past thinking they hate math when I too would hate doing decimal long division and multiplication every day for weeks on end.

Figure 6: Student's Collaborative Discussion Open Letter to Educational Researchers Grover Whitehouse and Katherine Lindquist on the Value of Standardized Testing

respectful listening/learning conversation with their audience; use of the "And Stance"; collaborative sharing of perspectives and values; and use of contextualized "I" statements, questions, and invitational requests, and a nonjudgmental word choice and tone.

As I have increased the scaffolded listening/discussion and writing activities over the last four years, my students' collaborative discussion open letters have confirmed that students will accept the challenge of collaborative communication. They gradually develop confidence in identifying where cultural logics and sacred rhetoric block listening,

**Excerpt from Student Paper #2's Collaborative Discussion Open Letter**

As a student who is extremely invested in his education and intellectual development, I share many of the values you are concerned with. . . . As a philosophy major, I am familiar with critical thinking about difficult issues, whether they be issues regarding race and gender, competing economic systems, the status of rationality, or difficult normative ethical questions. I could not imagine an education that did not expose me to these issues, and I recognize the great contribution of professors who knowingly and constantly challenge students to think about hard topics. . . . The most impactful classes not only made me think differently, but also feel very strongly. . . . This reaction tells me that the material—whether it be material regarding poverty, sexual violence, or racism—is important to know for myself and for those I care about. . . .

When you ask "are we encouraging today's students to insist that everything be modified in order to be in reach?" I agree that we ought not to make everything *that easy*. . . . The real world is difficult, complex, and sometimes ugly. However, I would ask you to consider that . . . trigger warnings might, in some cases, keep some information within a reasonable reach while not just handing information to students without proper context. Is it possible that when a student has recently committed suicide, the student's classmates should be heavily forewarned about content that even slightly refers to the subject of suicide? I know that this is not the everyday case, but I bring up this point to open up the possibility that some trigger warnings may be appropriate. This class in which students were not warned about the suicide-related content in a short story was unable to learn and have meaningful discussion for two reasons: (1) they were not helped into the right mindset because their situation had not been acknowledged and (2) they felt they could not trust the professor. . . . this was my experience with some of my peers in a particular class. . . .

Reading your article provoked a deeper exploration and self-reflection for me on trigger warnings, the general efficacy of different educational practices, and the desirable purpose of education. You helped me identify some of the main issue areas within the subject of trigger warnings that you and I continue to face, ponder, and criticize. . . . I am hopeful that our shared commitment to the great potential and proper function of education will lead us to better understand the best possible way to create and sustain educational environments that are productive, mature, and filled with curiosity.

Figure 7: Student's Collaborative Discussion Open Letter to Professor Gina Barreca on Trigger Warnings

and in employing respectful, invitational language to facilitate learning from others, laying the groundwork for problem solving. Although some students, in their final reflections, have expressed a preference for the directness of a "message delivery stance," describing collaborative rhetoric with its demanding listening as slow, "arduous and time-consuming," many have commented appreciatively. One student wrote, "I think that collaborative communication has put an emphasis back

on problem solving for me"; another said "I think the concept of 'opening an ongoing conversation' has made the biggest difference for me"; one mentioned "the value of truly examining an issue from all sides"; and several students shared that they were already starting to use these concepts in dealing with conflicts with friends, teammates, or family members, noting, as one student said, that "these collaborative rhetoric concepts are easily transferable to other parts of life and writing."

## The Ongoing Project of Developing Our Collaborative Rhetoric Pedagogies

While teaching a collaborative rhetoric unit takes valuable instructional time, our students today need an enlarged model of communication attuned to the affective and cognitive domains and focused on good will, sincere listening, learning, and cooperation. To engage in public discourse responsibly and constructively, they benefit from a practical understanding of the emotional dimensions of conflicts and from communication skills to address these rhetorical situations. This understanding nurtures student's collaborative habits of mind and facility with collaborative rhetoric, preparing them to be effective communicators as they move beyond the classroom into community service, internships, careers, and citizen participation. Collaborative rhetoric is in fact a growing movement as exemplified by "Listening for a Change" used for restorative justice practices in schools in lower grades; the critical-dialogic model of intergroup dialogue, explained by Kelly E. Maxwell et al., used on university campuses (for example, in the Global Scholars Program at the University of Michigan); Judi Brownell's business course and text in developing attitudes and strategies for listening at Cornell SC Johnson College of Business; and the work of societal conflict resolution groups such as the Compassionate Listening Project and the Essential Partners' Public Conversations Project. Clearly, developing our collaborative rhetoric pedagogies offers a worthy response to contemporary need. Ratcliffe reminds us that "rhetorical listening is another way of helping us continually negotiate our always evolving

standpoints, our identities, with the always evolving standpoints of others" ("Rhetorical Listening" 209). As writing instructors, we have the opportunity to fashion collaborative rhetoric pedagogies to promote deliberative democracy, to help our students and ourselves grow as ethical, self-aware collaborative communicators.

**Notes**

[1]I acknowledge Amy J. Wan's analysis problematizing the vague, often unexamined appropriation of "preparation for citizenship" as a curricular goal ("In the Name of Citizenship: The Writing Classroom and the Promise of Citizenship" and *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times*). However, I and others believe that concepts of effective communication and engaged rhetoric support informed civic participation. In exploring collaborative rhetoric's potential to promote important cognitive and emotional growth, I follow the approach that Eric Leake takes in "Writing Pedagogies of Empathy: As Rhetoric and Disposition."

[2]Morgan Marietta outlines two theories of democracy: participatory democracy manifesting in direct political action often motivated by shared values, and deliberative democracy seeking dialogue and revision of ideas. According to Marietta, "[t]he ideal of civil society depends on both cohesion and compromise—on citizens holding beliefs that inspire them to engage with other members of society, and on these same citizens nonetheless maintaining their ability to tolerate others' beliefs that conflict with their own" (777). Echoing the values of deliberative democracy, The National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement stresses "effective listening and oral communication, creative/critical thinking and problem solving, the ability to work effectively in diverse groups, agency and collaborative decision making, ethical analyses of complex issues, and intercultural understanding and perspective taking " (11).

[3]In *Toward a Civil Discourse: Rhetoric and Fundamentalism* (2006), Sharon Crowley calls for a more complex embrace of rhetorical argumentation to engage the ideological entanglements of contemporary public discourse in order to preserve democracy. I agree but think we also need to teach a new approach to communication.

[4]Peter Elbow is also a leading theorist and practitioner of collaborative rhetoric. His concept of transforming our perspectives as readers and listeners through "believing" or listening to unfamiliar or threatening ideas, by "dwelling with" and "dwelling in them" (388) has expanded rhetoric and substantially shaped most writing pedagogies for decades, including my own teaching of argument. Already infused with Elbow's ideas, the disciplinary discussion benefits, I think, from a revisiting of Carl Rogers and from explorations of new contributions from Ratcliffe and negotiation and conflict resolution studies.

[5]Most Rogerian scholars (Hairston particularly) address the application of Rogerian principles from spoken dialogue to writing. Brent reminds us that print itself is "dialogic" ("Young, Becker, and Pike's" 464).

[6]Maxine Hairston, in her article "Carl Rogers's Alternative to Traditional Rhetoric" (1976), also recognized the potential of Rogers' psychological insights to ground a different rhetoric that could be applied in tense emotional situations "when most conventional strategies fail" (373) to reduce threat by respectful acceptance shown through listening and use of measured, courteous language. For Hairston, the provisional, open-minded stance of Rogerian rhetoric in writing gains value "because the *attitude* is transferable" (376). Similarly, Paul Bator has sought to cultivate "Rogerian writers" through writing assignments in which writers devote considerable time to establishing "certain attitudinal conditions" ("Aristotelian and Rogerian Rhetoric" 428) of understanding and acceptance through "analyzing the subject from the audience's perspective," exploring values and views to find common ground and a basis for cooperation; and establishing a progression of ideas to encourage "ongoing discussion of the subject" (431). This rhetorical stance has crystallized for Rogerian teachers in the assignment of a letter addressed to a real person (Young, Becker, and Pike; Hairston; Coe; Brent).

[7]According to Joy Arbor, who participated in a conflict resolution trip to Israel, the Compassionate Listening Project offers important "rhetorical concepts for listening: (1) a concrete and active method for attending to emotions and resistance in listening across difference and (2) a multilayered theory of listening as an intervention for social change" (218).

[8]Instructors should find ways to practice these collaborative communication principles. Teaching collaborative rhetoric requires instructors to learn along with their students in order to demonstrate this stance and use of language in action.

[9]In her workshops, writing, and TED talk, Louise Evans, a global business consultant trained in nonviolent communication, teaches people to change their thinking and behavior from judgment to curiosity and seeking connection with others. She emphasizes our language choices and offers exercises in replacing judgment language with observation, description, and interest in others.

[10]The typical Rogerian letter assignment includes a common grounds section that maps conditions under which the other person's views might be valid. (See Young, Becker and Pike, and Bator.) My students have often commented that placing too much emphasis on common grounds feels forced, fake, and unproductive.

[11]My de-emphasizing of finding common ground accords with Peter Elbow's and John Duffy's ideas. Elbow distinguishes his own approach to argument from Wayne's Booth's seeking "acceptance or agreement." Elbow says, "I tilt just a bit toward disagreement, divergence of opinion, difference, the ability to see differently, and the individualist dimension (perhaps because I focus more on preparation or exploratory activities and not on a conclusion)" (392). Rhetorician and teacher Duffy writes "[d]issensus . . .

acknowledges that conflicting positions may frustrate compromise and elude the search for common ground. And while consensus implies closure—the group having agreed to a position is now free to move on—dissensus speaks to continuing conversation, ongoing negotiation, and perhaps, evolving points of view over time" (133).

[12]They have also given a group presentation as a classical argument with the purpose of selling an innovative idea to the class.

[13]I am indebted to Chidsey Dickson who introduced me to these two videos after an informal exchange about Rogerian rhetoric at the 2012 CCCC Annual Convention in St. Louise, Missouri.

[14]To promote careful listening, I tell students initially that I will call on volunteers; however, everyone in the class must speak.

[15]Ross's "Speaking Up Without Tearing Down" also includes examples as does her forthcoming book, *Calling In the Calling Out Culture: Detoxing Our Movement* (2019).

[16]These collaborative rhetoric class exercises teaching engaged listening resemble the best practices in student-centered learning, "authentic dialogue," and "dialogic interaction" explained in *Including Students in Academic Conversations* by Rossen-Knill and Bakhmetyeva, pp. 87-113.

[17]A version of this exercise appears in "Chapter 10: An Alternative to Argument: Collaborative Rhetoric" in *Writing Arguments*, 11th edition.

[18]Bator recommends assignments in which students write to "real audiences" (a specific person) from whom writers "solicit actual responses to their writing" ("Aristotelian" 431); Teich asks students to "choose realistic problems for which there could be a solution proposed for the mutual satisfaction of both parties" ("Rogerian Problem-Solving" 57). He first assigns an essay imaginatively laying out the views of both sides and empathically presenting the views with which they don't agree (57).

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