

WHAT FRESHMEN SAY--AND MIGHT SAY--TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THEIR OWN WRITING

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One of the greatest problems faced by the freshman writer is that writing does not seem real, that it seems to have little to do with what the writer wants and much to do with what the teacher wants. Consequently, many writing teachers have sought a way to turn writing--and the internal dissonance that leads to revision¹--over to the writer herself. Because dissonance has much to do with the relationship between writing and reading, whether the writer reads her own work or reads *as though* she were some remote audience, the goal of such teachers is to relinquish authority as evaluators and provide, instead, a context of readers and an environment of reading. Thus, their pedagogy involves asking students to write and then forming conference groups where the writing of each student is read and discussed. The underlying assumption is that the students (or "peers") will provide a kind of immediate readership, or audience, for the writing in process, and their feedback will foster the sort of dissonance that leads to self-sponsored revision. In this way, the group itself becomes responsible for process intervention. Because of the lack of obvious power relations in such a group, the writer is motivated to write for readers instead of the teacher/authority, and liberated to select and internalize the feedback most relevant to her own discourse.

However, those of us who use a group-based pedagogy often find that if we ask freshmen to talk to each other about their own writing, less than we expect actually is accomplished. Many times freshmen simply don't know what to do in such a group, and don't

know how to talk to each other about writing. This is not surprising, especially in cases where previous writing experiences involved listening to (or reading) teacher evaluations of completed texts instead of talking and thinking about writing in progress. We need to teach students to talk about writing--and the first step seems to involve establishing a procedure for saying things, a rich conversational script with a variety of roles from which to speak.²

The standard procedure described by small-group advocates encourages students to read the writing at hand, write comments on it or on a "conference form," and "respond." A teacher using such a procedure assumes, of course, that the group will respond out of its reading of the text as a kind of audience capable of talking back at the writer. But when I ask writing teachers using this procedure what they hope will happen because of group conversation, I get different answers:

- "I hope the writer will correct her mistakes."
- "I hope the writer will revise her paper so that it's more readable."
- "I hope the writer will respond to the needs of her audience by revising the paper."
- "I hope the writer will come to understand what she's trying to do, and revise accordingly."

Moreover, advocates of the small-group conference frequently disagree about--or seem confused by--the role of the group itself. In brief, there seem to be two underlying perceptions of the "readers who comprise the group":

1. The group members *are* the audience for the writing being considered.
2. The group members *might be* the audience for the writing--but, possibly, the writing is intended for a remote audience beyond the circle of readership provided by the group itself.

Obviously, both of these views presuppose that the group has, as its primary responsibility, reading and responding; however, since reading as a reader is very different from reading as an audience (as I will show), these notions about the role of the group need to be sorted out and clarified.

It is my intention in the rest of this article to develop an analysis of small-group writing conversation. This analysis will support a taxonomy of four roles that freshmen assume, or might assume, as they talk about writing: freshmen tend to talk as *evaluators* or as *immediate readers*; however, they might learn to assume the more sophisticated roles of *role-playing audience* and *helpful listener*. Arranged along a developmental line and along a compositional

stage-model line, the taxonomy helps explain the conversations we might expect among freshmen and how we might help freshmen talk more maturely and flexibly about their own writing. It will become clear that if we *prefer* one role over the others, we probably have a predisposition toward one of the pedagogical goals stated above. However, I will argue that what we need is a pedagogy that integrates all of the roles; such integration would foster internal dissonance leading to the kind of cognitive and textual revision responsible for an individual's total growth as a writer. There is, I believe, a simple procedure that can accomplish this integration and that can be taught to freshmen writers who talk to each other.

Four Roles--and Four Kinds of Writing Conversation

The following transcripts of conversational episodes were recorded among student writers discussing their own writing during group conferences. I carefully selected the four transcripts in an effort to illustrate general conversational tendencies I have discovered among freshmen in comparison to more sophisticated junior/senior writers. Thus, the first two transcripts were recorded among freshmen, and the second two among juniors and seniors in an advanced writing class. I do not wish to imply, however, that a writer who talks about writing assumes only one role at a time, or that juniors and seniors do not assume the "freshmen roles," or that freshmen never assume the more sophisticated roles. Instead, I am illustrating general tendencies that I have discovered during six years of listening to student conferences and from careful reading of transcripts.

1. What freshmen say as *evaluators*:

TEACHER: Let's talk about Jan's paper--and then Steve's. What do you think?

Steve: I don't know--uh--I really thought it was good.

TEACHER: But if Jan changed it, what should she do? Mark, what did you write on--like we were supposed to--what she should do?

Mark: Well, uh, I thought it was good--but . . . I don't know . . . Isn't this, uh, second sentence . . .

TEACHER: Where?

Mark: . . . in the second paragraph. Isn't that a comma splice? She's got a couple of real long

sentences--and they just sort of keep going.
(Group laughter.)

I think she should fix long sentences. And the paragraphs are too long. That's maybe what I'd do.

This conversation was recorded among four freshmen meeting in a group conference for the first time. I had asked each writer to bring a "rough draft" about "a troubling experience during adolescence." Since this was the first group meeting, I attempted to force the conversation. Everything went wrong.

Although the transcript reflects some student talk about writing, it is clear that the talk is dominated by the teacher. Moreover, these freshmen only know how to respond in one role: as evaluators of a completed product. Such evaluation often takes the form of Steve's comment, but when a freshman is pressed to evaluate further, the comment can take the form of Mark's. Notice that Mark does not understand what a "comma splice" *is*. He is aware that formal features of Jan's text (length of sentence, length of paragraph) bother him, and he gropes for an error label that probably once was attached to his own writing.

The talking characteristic of this conference does not deal with the real problem the *writer* is facing: attempting to understand, through writing, a troubling experience. As Stephen North points out, evaluation that steals the writing away from both the writer and the reader, and centers on the text itself, is a kind of dictatorial "appropriation": having removed the text from the discourse between writer and reader, the evaluator is free to operate out of his own isolated sense of what good writing should be.

2. What freshmen say as *immediate readers*:

Sharon: I'm sort of confused . . . what does all this stuff in the beginning about her money and car have to do with anything?

WRITER: No, that's all kind of irrelevant, now that I think about it.

Dave: Unh, I don't know . . . Unh, you want to make your audience see the tension . . . You wanta show 'em the wealth, y'know, when you write . . .
I don't know how you'd do it myself.

It does sound like she's pretty wealthy; as far

as I know she has lots of wealth . . . and . . .
you wanna show how she's successful.

Joyce: Well. Y'know, there's--there *is* a way of
starting an introduction by--by sort of setting
an image of someone, um, or something.

And maybe that's how you could introduce her
to us--just by presenting this picture of her,
um, and then you could get all these details
about her person . . . her looks and her car
and all that . . . none of which seems to quite
relate with the rest of it for now . . .

WRITER: Yeah . . .

Joyce: . . . But might at least give us a picture of this
woman, right at the first, to focus us on her
. . .

Sharon: And then . . . you might move to, y'know, sort
of explaining why she's so fascinating:

She's an executive. I've never met somebody
like that and . . . uh . . . she's still a nice
person.

And that sets out what your--what your
paper's going to be about.

WRITER: But yeah, I could. That was kind of what I
wanted to do anyway, but I--I want to show her
first and then--kind of explain why she's so
different from her looks . . . I mean, so nice.

This transcript reflects a very different conversational structure, one that often evolves after freshmen have worked in groups for some time and learned to *read* the writing at hand, not as a formal artifact, but as a conveyor of content. Having learned that writing might involve change and revision, the group members are willing to see the writer's work as a rough draft, in this case his effort to "figure out" the wealthy woman executive who was his "boss."

Here, the turn of a group member (Sharon) elicits a turn on the part of the writer; the writer's turn elicits a turn from another group member; the teacher is silent. Moreover, group members talk to each other directly and elaborate extensively between the turns of the writer. Again, the conversation reflects an appropriation of the

writer's text, but the writer himself gets his text back.

This sort of conversation is typical of group members who act as both readers and, because of their interest in the content of the text, the audience itself. Characteristic of such conversation is a contribution like Sharon's first response to the text: "I'm sort of confused . . ." Such a comment shows an effort to read and understand. Even more characteristic of this kind of lively and interested reading is extensive discussion, by the immediate readers, of what the text is about and what it should provide, or become: as readers, they have picked up some dissonance within the writer and cooperatively become writers themselves--often adding, deleting, substituting, rearranging content in an effort to meet their own needs. In so doing, they not only help the writer locate or confirm his own dissonance, but also revise his text.

3. What freshmen MIGHT say as a *role-playing audience*:

Beth: Who might you be writing this to?

WRITER: Well, I thought about it. I would like to write it to--you know--just the general public.

Seems to me like the general public is involved. That's who I'm trying to get the message across to. Parents, teachers, students . . .

Sondra: Seems to me it's more like the parents and the students that you're addressing.

WRITER: Yeah . . .

Beth: Which is why your advice to the teachers at the end startled me some. It seemed--sort of--added on.

Sondra: Because this paper is about the views of the teachers themselves.

The teachers already know--the teachers already have these views--so it seems to me that what you want to get across . . . You want to get it across to parents--people who should participate in schools other than the teachers--that they should be sharing this experience with the teachers.

WRITER: So maybe I'm trying to give parents the teachers' view of things.

This conversation occurred near the beginning of a conference among sophisticated junior and senior writers who, from the first conference on, had avoided instinctively a teacher-centered, evaluative interchange. They were discussing a draft that seemed relatively stable, and had already agreed that the writer's subject was clear: the tendency, in Arkansas, of parents to blame teachers for educational problems their children experience.

At first, the structure of this conversation seems similar to the one among immediate readers. However, these juniors and seniors know how to do something that many freshmen do not. As writers, they are capable of producing discourse for a remote audience, an audience beyond the immediate readership of the group. As readers, they are capable of assuming audience roles and speculating about the potential effectiveness of the text in reference to a possible reader, a reader not immediately present.

Thus, Beth does not assert a reading difficulty of her own; instead, she asks a question regarding the writer's intended audience. Underlying her question, of course, is an understanding that the discourse might not involve her directly and that perhaps the writer himself is facing the problem of determining audience. The writer, then, does not comment on what he had done *textually*, but states his own sense of audience and purpose. Sondra's response is not an appropriation of the text in any sense: it shows her sense of a possible audience for the text as it stands. She reads not as herself, but assumes the role of a remote audience. In so doing, she contributes to the narrowing and defining of that audience. The writer agrees with Sondra--and then Beth is able to say why she was startled by the conclusion: not because information seemed irrelevant to *her*, but because it seemed irrelevant to her as she assumed the role of the remote audience. Once the audience has been more sharply defined by the group's conversation, Sondra is able to appropriate the text itself, and make a suggestion for revision: she makes the appropriation, though, not as the audience itself, but as a helpful peer capable of reading as though she were someone else.

4. What freshmen MIGHT say as *helpful* listeners:

WRITER: Especially I've been reading the newspapers--and I did a lot last night--and I found out that personal feelings are not allowed, really, to get involved--to involve them in any cases are . . .

And that's just . . . And that seems like it'd be impossible to do.

Teri: So that--so they look at it like no matter what they feel they have to do their job . . .

WRITER: Yeah . . .

Teri: So you're not gonna be able to use the ethical end of it . . .

WRITER: Just the legal . . .

Glynis: So you might just have to go with the legal end of it . . .

WRITER: Everything that they think, sort of, that they find out something . . . whether it makes them believe that the defendant is guilty--or whatever--they pretty much have to bring that into trial what proves the client is, ya know, not guilty.

So it doesn't have too much to do with ethics . . .

I may have to revise my question again . . .

The juniors and seniors talking here were members of the same class as those talking as role-playing audience, but this time the conference situation was quite different: the writer came without a draft. Instead, he asked for help refining a "research question" he was about to answer in writing: do lawyers experience a conflict between the adversarial role they are expected to play and their own ethical notions concerning truth and fairness? By responding flexibly, the group helped him revise his plan.

From the beginning, it is clear that the writer is still inventing, trying out his question against what he knows, his own sense of the world; here, it is the writer who must do most of the talking. In response, group members fall into a pattern of either repeating or paraphrasing what the writer has just attempted to say. Because the group members encourage the writer to continue, refuse to appropriate prematurely the writer's exploration, and free him from the complexity of his own last utterance, the writer is able to resolve the problem that is keeping him from beginning to write. The feedback provided by these helpful listeners might be called "Rogerian."³ Interactive in nature, and characterized by flexible paraphrase and a mature refusal to direct the writer's struggle, the feedback elicits clarification of intention and prepares the way for drafting.

Several Views of a Taxonomy of Group Roles

The taxonomy presented below attempts to capture the characteristics of the four roles discussed above. At its highest level, the taxonomy shows the relationship of the group member to the text itself. "Evaluators" tend to view the text as a formal linguistic artifact, devoid of semantic and pragmatic interest. "Readers" are less aware of the linguistic form of the text, and more aware of the problems of extracting and understanding semantic content and pragmatic goals: specifically, the "Immediate Reader" relates to the text as if it were her own, something intended for her; the "Role-Playing Audience" is aware of the text as a discourse between the writer and an audience not necessarily present in the circle of readership provided by the group. "Helpful Listeners" are capable of dealing with a non-text, or a text that is not pragmatically and semantically stable: they would be mainly concerned with helping a writer with invention.

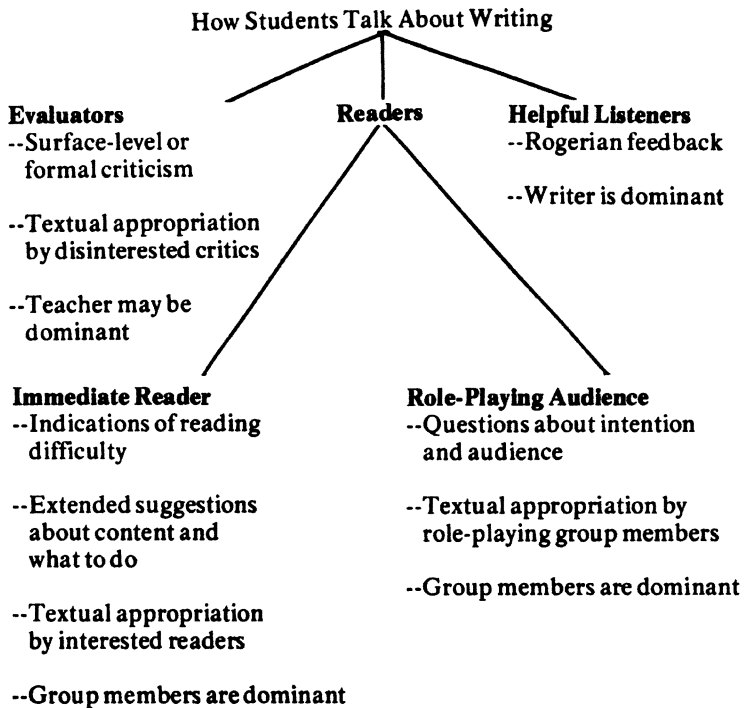


FIGURE 1: A Taxonomy of Group Roles

As I mentioned earlier, however, there are different perspectives from which the taxonomy can be viewed. The first is a cognitive-developmental perspective, suggesting a general movement from self to other-centered roles:

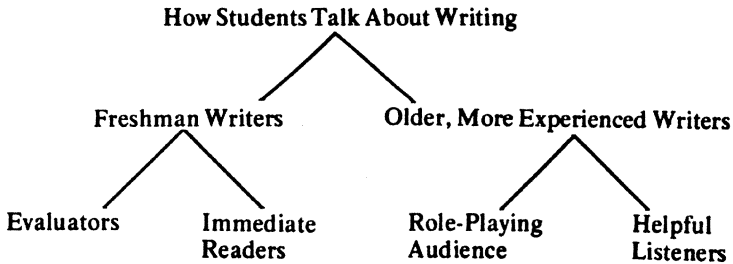
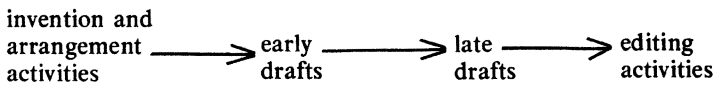


FIGURE 2: A Cognitive-Developmental Perspective

One implication of this model is that we might be content if freshmen learned to help each other as “immediate readers,” certainly a more desirable role than “evaluator.” But another implication is that our pedagogical goal might be one of inviting freshmen to “talk older,” that is, to talk as “role-playing audience” and “helpful listener.”

Perhaps a more helpful perspective is the one provided by a stage model of composing. Although most composition theorists now see composing as a recursive process, it has proved necessary, from a pedagogical standpoint, to preserve the linear model. Such a model might be presented in a number of different ways, but I will use the terminology and division I use with my own students:



I prefer this linear model because it does not label any particular stage as “revision.” Implicit is the notion that revision is happening throughout the process. The model is still problematical, though; obviously, invention, arrangement, and editing are also happening recursively throughout the process. Nevertheless, an effort to state such a model can help the teacher--both in terms of understanding what he is doing, and in explaining his own responses, questions, and suggestions to his students. In terms of the taxonomy, we can arrange the categories along such a compositional line:

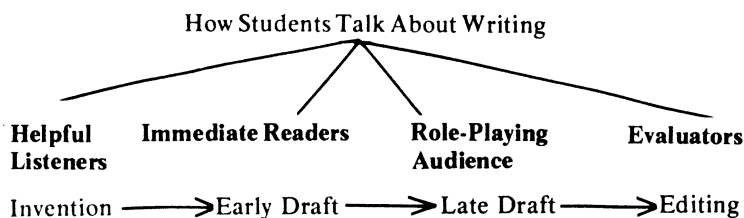


FIGURE 3: A Stage-Model Perspective

The stage-model arrangement implies that a particular *kind* of feedback might best serve the writer at a particular point in her own composing process, or during a particular writing activity. Thus, a writer with nothing to say needs to be encouraged to talk and invent--by a *helpful listener* providing the following kind of characteristic feedback:

So you really are trying to say . . .
 Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think you're saying . . .
 Can you say that one more time?
 What else do you think?
 So tell me more . . .
 ETC.

A writer with a rush-write or a rough draft needs feedback about content from an *immediate reader*:

Huh?	So what? (What am I supposed to make of this?)
I'm lost here.	What gives you the right to say this?
This makes me mad.	Interesting--I'd like to see more.
Boring.	I agree completely.
Prove it.	ETC.
Show me.	
What does this have to do with anything?	

A writer with a draft, but without a definite rhetorical sense or contextual framework, would benefit from the kinds of questions a *role-playing audience* tends to ask:

What is this piece of writing supposed to be? (Memo, letter, essay, what?)
 Why is this piece of writing organized as it is? For whom is it organized?
 Do you think your audience really needs all of this information?
 Who are you writing for/to? What are the needs of that audience?

What are you trying to *do* with this piece of writing? This paragraph? This sentence?
ETC.

A writer preparing to finalize a product needs help from an *evaluator*, needs to begin to consider the text as a formal artifact:

You need to break up this paragraph--too long.
Bring your main point "up front."
You really have two sentences here: use a semi-colon.
Don't use so many "ands."
ETC.

Such an arrangement no longer devalues the evaluative--but merely moves it down the compositional line, puts it in its place, so to speak. There probably is a time and a place for every kind of writing feedback, depending on where the writer is and what she's actually trying to do.

Some Underlying Assumptions About Audience and "Rhetoric"

Those who have a theoretical interest in rhetoric and composition may have already noticed that some important assumptions underlie the taxonomic description I am proposing. Most important are those assumptions I have made (through the labeling of categories) about "audience." Clearly, by dichotomizing readers into "immediate readers" and "role-playing audience" I have implied that a reader is somehow different from an audience. This distinction is an important one if we are to sort out what goes on in the group conference. If, as Walter Ong argues, the audience is a rhetorical fiction that transcends actual readership, then we might begin to wonder if it is possible to use the group readership ("immediate readers") to foster any sort of *rhetorical* dissonance, revision, and growth toward competency. On the other hand, a writer needs supportive readership as much as she needs a sense of a fictional audience. Although reasoning about writing without some sense of rhetorical context may be impossible, a reader not directly included in the context can still provide vital feedback about the depth, clarity, and readability of the text itself. Too, such a reader can often help with further invention of content, provide another perspective, etc. What we need to do, I think, is encourage the reader to learn to assume the role of a remote audience--and to read *as though* she were included in the audience. Thus, I am proposing here a unification of both reading roles--of two kinds of talk: as readers, students must always respond to the text at hand, but they must grow toward an understanding that the text might not be *meant* for them.

One final dichotomy is implied by the taxonomy. I am thinking of the division, this time, not between the two reader categories, but between the "role-playing audience" and the "helpful listener." If one examines, carefully, the different assumptions about discourse underlying these categories, one can see that the categories might be aligned with opposing rhetorical theories. I mean, simply, that the first type of conversation reflects concern with traditional rhetorical matters (especially the relationship between audience and the text as it stands), while the second type of conversation reflects less interest in the text (mainly because the text does not yet exist). If we speculate about the telos of a "role-playing audience" conference, we can predict that it might be revision aimed at transforming the text at hand into one more needed by the audience, more acceptable to the audience, and more effective for the audience. The telos of a "helpful listener" conference would be invention, or discovery, of meaning--and a change in the writer's cognitive sense of things. Even if the writer in the second case had started with a notion of audience, he would still be inventing and exploring the content to be given over to that audience. Followers of rhetorical theory will see that the dichotomy I have in mind is the "Aristotelian/new rhetorical."⁴

Aristotelian rhetoric is usually seen as a rhetoric of accomplishing things--or doing things--with language. Because it is argumentative in nature, it has as its goal the effectiveness of a text: since the writer has already formed his ideas, he wishes to impart them in such a way that they become a part of his audience's thinking and acting. The "new rhetoric," on the other hand, is dialectical in nature: it seeks discovery *between* writer and audience, and cooperative compromise. Underlying the new rhetoric is the assumption that the text has not yet been made--but that it will be constructed through a negotiation between writer and audience. Many rhetorical theorists see these two rhetorical stances as being antipathetic--and, in many ways, they are very different. However, as Andrea Lunsford effectively argues, the two rhetorics need not be seen as irreconcilable. Believing that both effective argumentation *and* discovery need to be joined together in a unified rhetoric, she writes: "And we should also be reminded that, for Aristotle, rhetoric and dialectic are intimately related: dialectic helps us to achieve knowledge; rhetoric helps us to put that knowledge into action by persuading others of its efficacy" (150). I agree with Andrea Lunsford here: a rhetor--and a freshman writer--must not only learn to participate in a Rogerian dialectic of discovery; she must learn, too, to revise her discoveries so that they can be conveyed, effectively, to audiences remote and near. What would this "unified rhetoric" mean in terms of freshman conference groups? Simply this: freshmen need to learn those conversational roles that promote both discovery of meaning *and* consideration of the rhetorical implications of what they write. Thus, they need to learn how to talk both as "role-playing

audience” and “helpful listener.” It is the developing and crossing of all roles for talking about writing that will promote the growth of appropriate internal dissonance, cognitive and textual revision, and proficiency at thinking and writing.

Helping Freshmen Say the Right Things at the Right Times

In my views of the taxonomy, I suggested that there are two strong pedagogical implications that arise from a study of how freshman writers talk:

1. *A cognitive-developmental implication:* a freshman needs to be moved away from a focus on evaluation and brought into reader roles; possibly, by assuming higher-level roles, a freshman writer can begin to talk about and think about rhetorical concerns, and engage in a Rogerian dialectic of discovery.
2. *A compositional stage-model implication:* a freshman in a group needs to learn how to be responsive to the intentions and composing stage of the writer; unless she can select, in cooperation with the group, the appropriate conversational role (role-playing audience, for example, if a writer has brought in a draft, but has no sense of audience), chances are she will confuse or even hinder the writer (by correcting fragments, say, before the writer has revised for her audience).

How, though, would we go about teaching all of the roles to our freshmen who participate in conferences? If it is true that they need to know all of the roles, and at the same time need to know when to use them and when to avoid them, the teaching task seems infinitely complex. There is, however, a simple underlying procedure that can structure the conference, and the learning, in an elegant and powerful way. This procedure entails, simply, asking the writer to talk first, and then each member of the group, and then the writer again. Such a procedure is capable of generating the different conversational scripts presented earlier. This is because the procedure immediately eliminates the teacher, gives rise to group interchange, and ultimately leads to fluid writer and group interchange. The writer begins by talking about her own sense of the discourse, the writing stage, and the writing problems she's facing. After hearing from the writer, the group is asked to match the writer's spoken contribution against the text they are reading, and respond to the fit or lack of fit between what

the writer says and the text itself. If there is no text, the group must elicit more talk (thus, more invention) from the writer. Finally, the writer is asked to incorporate what the group has said into her own thinking, planning, and revising--and asked to articulate how her thinking has changed and what she will do to change the text.

But of course, the procedure alone is not enough: talking about writing involves, as I have shown, not just following a turn-taking structure, but assuming various roles: evaluator, reader, audience, and listener. Below, then, I provide a few more pedagogical strategies to move freshman talkers toward more sophisticated roles:

1. *Hold mock conferences with the entire class.* It might be a good idea to model all four roles. To do this, first bring in a draft of your own, arrange the class in a circle, and ask them to "criticize" the draft; you might, when the conference is over, tell your critics that you suddenly got a new idea for the entire paper, and that the sentence and paragraph-level editing was done for nothing. Next time, bring in the same draft and tell the class you are having trouble understanding what, exactly, you are trying to say (probably the truth if you really bring in a rough draft). Ask the class to carefully *read* the draft and help you figure out what to do with it.

You can see the drift, here. For the third conference, you would want to bring in a draft that had very little to do with the students in the class (perhaps some of your own academic writing), and then help them formulate questions about audience, purpose, etc. For the fourth conference, you might show up with nothing but an idea for a piece of writing--and ask the class to help you invent content: if they are unfamiliar with Rogerian feedback, you might want to model it, perhaps by turning the tables and using it to elicit and develop an idea of one of the students.

2. *Provide the class with short lists of comments they might make during a conference (such as the list on p. 226 & 227) and questions they might ask recursively.* I always provide my students with a list of what I call the "sacred questions": The list is *short* and easy to internalize. It is designed to encourage students

to assume the role-playing audience stance:

- So what? (A thesis question)
- Who cares? (An audience question)
- What are you trying to *do* with this?
(A purpose question)
- What do *you* have to do with this? (A
point-of-view question)
- What are you really writing here?
(Letter? Memo? Article? What?)
- What gives you the right to say so? (A
question about authority)
- How do you know? (An epistemic
question having to do with
authority)

Students soon discover that these questions can be posed at different textual levels (whole text, paragraph, sentence), and that such questioning can lead to consideration of the rhetorical implications of the text at hand. If you teach invention heuristics--the pentad or particle/wave/field--these, too, can be incorporated into the conference: especially, they enable the "helpful listener" to augment Rogerian paraphrasing with questions about content.

3. *Come to the group as a model, not an authority.* It's OK to participate in the group yourself. In the beginning, especially, freshmen need the presence of the teacher. But the teacher need not be--should not be--an authority figure. Indeed, it suffices for her to set in motion the procedure discussed earlier, and participate as a group member, not a teacher. If you wish to model the immediate-reader role, say, you might respond to the student's draft with comments like "I'm confused here" (instead of "This sentence has a consolidation error: fix it"), and participate in the group's discussion of the content and its presentation. To invite students to act like readers, the teacher herself needs to act like a reader.

The group pedagogy I am suggesting here is bound to be rather sloppy. It would be a mistake for the teacher to rigidly teach a conversational role and insist, during conference, that students stick with it. Instead, the teacher would be attempting to introduce her students to alternative ways of talking, among themselves, about writing. If freshmen learned a range of ways to think and talk, then these ways might begin to overlap, interweave, combine into a rich source of writing feedback. The teacher, then, could begin to say less and less, the group more and more. Eventually, the teacher could bow out, and leave the group to work alone. Because the various roles finally would become internalized by the participating group members, a single writer, working alone some day in the future, would know how to conduct a conversation with herself. Such a conversation would bring into focus and resolve the dissonance that underlies good writing; it would promote invention, textual and cognitive revision, rhetorical competency, and mature writing. The internal conversation, provided from a variety of roles, would liberate the student from the authoritative voice of the English teacher, and allow her to write well in a real world where she might find a group of readers, but rarely an English teacher.

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NOTES

- ¹ A number of revision theorists have suggested that "internal cognitive dissonance," or something similar, is responsible for a writer's impulse to change her mind or change her text. Some of the most interesting studies have considered the sources of productive dissonance and the kind of dissonance that in fact helps the writer (Bridwell, Perl, Sommers, and Beach). Some theorists, such as Linda Flower, believe that a writer's dissonance grows when she discovers a lack of correspondence between her text and the needs of a reader or audience. Others, such as Donald Murray, are more interested in the dissonance a writer experiences when she reads her own text and discovers that it does not correspond with her own prior sense of the world.
- ² Our understanding of group pedagogy has come a long way. At first, the group was perceived as being a task-oriented unit, mainly concerned with providing evaluative feedback for a late draft. Richard Gebhardt has helped us understand, though, that the group can also provide emotional support, and not only suggest textual emendation, but also motivate and encourage writing from start to finish.

- ³ Carl Rogers suggests that a therapist should encourage his client to do most of the talking and, in so doing, clarify and come to understand his own perceptions. His views regarding therapy have influenced many of the "new rhetoricians."
- ⁴ In my mind, the "new rhetorical" approach is best developed and explicated by Kenneth Burke and by Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike.

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