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Composition and the Cooperative Dissertation Study: Our Collaborative Resistance

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COMPOSITION AND THE COOPERATIVE DISSERTATION STUDY: OUR COLLABORATIVE RESISTANCE

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This dissertation text communicates intertextually with Laura Mangini's dissertation: *Collaborative Dissertations in Composition: A Feminist Disruption of the Status Quo*. Both of our dissertation texts are the products of one dissertation study. As co-researchers, Laura and I enacted what we are calling a cooperative dissertation study—a social constructionist narrative inquiry that responded to the following primary research question: How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in composition? In addition, we explored another main research question: When two people collaborate on a composition dissertation, what experiential data can they construct via a narrative inquiry? As researcher-participants, we collaborated throughout the processes of researching and writing our five dissertation chapters, we co-authored two separate dissertation texts that shared the same data, and we situated both of our "independent" dissertations as intertextual artifacts that cooperated with each other through a shared epistemology, methodology, and advocacy for collaborative dissertations in composition.

For our data collection, we interviewed 14 participants; we placed these participants into three categories: (a) Collaboration Advocates, (b) Recent Ph.D. Graduates, (c) Higher Education Administrators. In addition, the nature and scope of our narrative inquiry positioned us as participants within our own study. We used three

primary methods to collect our data: roundtable discussion, semi-structured interviews, and emailed follow-up questions.

Our participant interviews and experiential data as co-researchers reveal that composition's resistance to a collaborative dissertation is real, contextual, and can be negotiated. Our data reveals that composition's ambiguous disciplinary location between the humanities and social sciences deepens the resistance to collaborative dissertations. Our data suggests this resistance is also a result of composition's patriarchal, systemic, and social privileging of the dissertation's purpose as a credential that proves one person alone can write a dissertation. Our narrative inquiry illustrates the meaning-making processes and products we enacted to challenge this resistance. Among our data's myriad themes, we probelmatized composition's understandings of collaboration and knowledge transfer along with the material realities of negotiating motivation, postpartum depression, and social belonging within the context of completing a dissertation.

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I want to acknowledge the scholars who have advocated for collaboration in composition. Their scholarship strengthened our resistance and inspired us to construct our cooperative dissertation study. In particular, I want to thank Kami Day and Michele Eodice for sharing their dissertation story, their collaborative scholarship, and their invaluable contributions to our dissertation.

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INTERTEXT

SITUATING OUR QUALITATIVE DISSERTATION STUDY

> An utterance, such as a scholarly work, may present itself as an independent entity, as monologic (possessing singular meaning and logic) yet it emerges from a complex history of previous works and addresses itself to, seeks active response from, a complex institutional and social context: peers, reviewers, students, promotion boards and so on.
>
> – Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, 2000

Welcome to the Conversation

This is a dissertation study unlike others that exist in the field of composition. The scholarship, however, is an extension of an ongoing conversation regarding collaboration in our field. This dissertation has emerged as a cooperative effort between *two* doctoral students, not one. It is a dissertation written cooperatively by two college professors, by a woman and a man, by a husband and a wife, by two friends, by two scholars. It is a dissertation that required a combined effort to resist the status quo. It was not an easy task that followed the beaten path for a traditional "get it done" dissertation. We acknowledge how our dissertation committee and our institution's graduate school have worked with us to negotiate a space for this study—which has strengthened our belief that this research is necessary and important.

We would be remiss not to state our indebtedness to those whose collaborative conversations have attempted to pave the rocky road that is collaborative academic work. Of course there are others, but without academic pairs such as Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford (1988), Claude Hurlbert and Michael Blitz (1991), Kathleen Blake Yancey and Michael Spooner (1998), and Kami Day and Michele Eodice (2001), we would not have had the space to take these chances.

Understanding a Unique Layout

We welcome these people and their views, and have included their voices throughout our dissertation; we believe that allowing their voices to join ours can reinforce the multivocal nature of our study. As such, we have organized the text in script-like format that illustrates the multivocal conversation within this dissertation—and to distinguish between each of our individual voices with our collaborative voice. Thus, we label the sections of our writing as *Sabatino, Laura,* or *Collaborative*.

In their seminal book, *Single Texts/Plural Authors*, Ede and Lunsford (1990) explore collaborative writing in academia, including how their decision to collaborate prompted "concerned warnings of friends and colleagues," and how their enacted collaboration "represented a challenge to traditional research conventions in the humanities" (preface, ix). In their book, Ede and Lunsford construct intertexts filled with quotes from various participants that were situated between each chapter. In addition, an intertext appears before chapter one and another intertext follows the final chapter of that book. We will also use intertexts, in this case, as a way to illustrate our meaning-making processes—and as one of the ways to bridge the gap between our shared dissertation processes and our dissertation products.

Before we explain the layout of our dissertation texts, we want to share the terminology we are using to situate the processes and products of our study. To this end, we have created the following phrase: *one dissertation study, two dissertation texts*. This phrase helps us to use consistent language when we refer to our collaborative dissertation processes (research and writing), our co-authored dissertation products (two "independent" dissertation texts), and our cooperative dissertation study (includes both our collaborative processes and

our two co-authored products). In fact, we have a sign posted on the wall of our home office that reads: *collaborative processes + co-authored texts = cooperative study.* We are not suggesting that our cooperative study can be reduced to a slogan or formula—only that these examples of concise language have helped us explain, to ourselves and to others, the scope of our cooperative dissertation. Later in this chapter, we further explain our understanding of the terms *collaborative, co-authored,* and *cooperative*, and we discuss how these terms apply to our cooperative dissertation study.

Because of the nontraditional makeup of our cooperative dissertation study, our layout needs to be explained in order for readers to be able to fully interact with our text. As negotiated by our committee and our university's graduate school, each of our dissertations is 60% solo-authored and 40% collaboratively authored. Thus, the primary chapters of our dissertation texts are both collaboratively and also individually written. Each distinct dissertation, however, bears a distinct title, and includes intertexts with shared themes that further exemplify the connectedness of our research and the processes of our collaboration and co-authorship. These intertexts provide our actual dialogue with each other, our research journal entries and blog posts, as well as excerpts from our annotated bibliography and our data collection. When we include dialogue in our intertexts, we have chosen not to attribute who said which lines so as not to value one opinion over another, but to stress the collaborative nature of our meaning-making. Our first intertext is collaborative; the final five intertexts, however, are solo-authored. Sabatino's five solo-authored intertexts will appear in his dissertation only. Laura's five solo-authored intertexts will appear in her dissertation only. They will share themes, but their separateness is necessary, as it will help comprise the 60% solo-authored portions of our dissertation as negotiated with our committee and our

graduate school. In many ways, our intertexts rely on the rhetorical canon's notion of *arrangement* because our intertexts are less about writing as solo-authored pieces and more about arranging a collection of texts that we composed (either collaboratively or alone) as we researched and wrote the chapters of our dissertations.

The explicit layout of our dissertation texts is as follows. Chapter one introduces our cooperative dissertation, along with our primary and secondary research questions. We cover why this nontraditional dissertation is worthwhile, how it came about, as well as the limitations and implications of our study. This is followed by our solo-authored intertexts regarding our negotiations of various frameworks. Chapter two is a review of literature; this chapter is followed by our solo-authored intertexts about how we talk and writer together as collaborative researchers. Chapter three is our research design: methods and methodology. This chapter is followed by our solo-authored intertexts that explore how we enact our collaborative research. Chapter four lays out our data, and is followed by our solo-authored intertexts that provide our personal oral histories about our dissertation experiences. Chapter five includes our discussion of data, and is followed by a collaborative intertext that discusses our move from the cooperative dissertation study to a movement we are calling the Composition Dissertation Cooperative.

This intertext, the first of six in this dissertation, represents both the intertextual nature of writing and meaning-making activities and our acknowledgement of those scholars who have come before us. Like Ede and Lunsford's text, our qualitative study about collaborative research and writing provides intertexts in between, among, and around the chapters that follow—from this text's "beginning" to the next…

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> In the long history of humankind those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.
>
> -Darwin, *Origin of Species*, 1859

Arriving at a Unique Dissertation—a Collaborative Introduction

Collaborative: In October 2010, we[1] visited our university's School of Graduate Studies and Research to present our proposal for a collaborative dissertation that studies the nature of and resistance to collaborative dissertations in the field of composition. The audience for our presentation included our Dean of Graduate Studies, the Assistant Dean, the Assistant Dean for Administration, and a member of our proposed dissertation committee. In our proposal we advocated for a fully collaborative process of researching and writing all five chapters of the dissertation. We proposed a dialogic process where we joined together as equal partners in constructing a dissertation—as opposed to a hierarchal approach that delineated a lead author who held separate and clearly defined responsibilities that differed from the secondary author in the dissertating process. Ultimately, we posited that to study the phenomenon of collaborative dissertating, we should work together through each chapter, join together for a shared three-chapter defense, and submit one dissertation (one text) with both of our names listed in a circle to reinforce the social nature of writing as well as to resist the stereotype of one author toiling away in a garret writing the dissertation alone.

That said, when we presented our proposal to our graduate dean, we soon discovered what Lunsford meant by the "some of the problems attendant on continuing to try to fit the square peg of multiple, polyvocal activity into the round hole of singular 'authorship'" (1999,

[i] Throughout, "we" refers to Laura Mangini and Sabatino Mangini— and co-authors of this

p. 529). We realized that our dean's understanding of a "collaborative dissertation" consisted of us collaborating during the research—and then going our separate ways to each write a solo-authored piece, to write two dissertations based on the same research. To us, however, so much of what we wanted to explore involved studying the process of working with another person to research, write, defend, and publish a dissertation. We wanted to explore how that dynamic would impact our work; this goal seemed impossible to accomplish without working collaboratively. Our notion of a collaborative dissertation included researching, brainstorming, workshopping, writing, revising, and defending one study and one text, *together*.

In the months that followed our proposal to the dean of the graduate school, we tentatively negotiated the following approach with the graduate school and our dissertation chair: we would be required to write two dissertations that were based on our collaboratively constructed research. Initially, this meant that those two dissertations would be a combination of two and one-half solo-authored chapters and two and one-half collaborative and co-authored chapters. While our research would fall under our notion of "collaborative," the actual writing of the dissertation would be a hybrid of collaborative and solo-authored. We have since negotiated a middle ground after presenting our proposal for our vision of a collaborative dissertation that the graduate school has agreed upon. Although we are still required to write two separate dissertation texts—with at least half of the writing being labeled as independent—we will collaborate throughout all five chapters of the dissertation and label our "solo-authored" contributions within the text of our "independent" dissertations. We will also have solo-authored intertexts following each chapter. To further distinguish our separate dissertation texts, Sabatino will use critical pedagogy as his

theoretical perspective to explore his position as a male researcher who is critiquing composition's resistance to collaborative dissertations; whereas, Laura, as a female researcher, will use feminist theory to inform her inquiry into the same resistance. In this way, we will be studying our own situated and ideological positions within the research while also problematizing the situations and ideologies of other stakeholders in composition dissertation research.

With this approach in mind, what follows is a dissertation text that is both collaborative and solo-authored, what we later explicate as the groundwork for what we are calling a *cooperative dissertation*. Later in this chapter, we define the terms *collaborative, solo-authored, and cooperative dissertation*. The solo-authored sections comprise more than 60 percent of our individually submitted dissertations. Each written portion is labeled in one of three ways: (a) Sabatino*,* (b) *Laura*, (c) *Collaborative*[2]. In this way, our dissertation presents three voices from three researchers, two independent voices (albeit in constant dialogue with one another throughout the composing process) and a third collaborative voice we are constructing as co-researchers who are working together within a space of qualitative inquiry that contests and constructs knowledge. We hope this third voice will reinforce the notion of a multivocal, collaborative conversation being shared between researchers. In addition, the appendices are co-constructed.

[2] We chose to label each section with our names to reinforce the notion of a multivocal conversation.

Origins of our Study

> American universities have sought to create 'a climate conducive to creativity' from their inception by welding the concept of individualism to the idea of research itself. The figure of the 'independent scholar' has served graduate education as both its informing principle and its telos...
>
> -Patricia Sullivan, *Writing With: New Directions in Collaborative Teaching, Learning, and Research,* 1994

Laura: This was not a study met with welcoming approval. Some may wonder why two doctoral students so close to their degrees would take on a dissertation study that would be met with the amount of resistance and criticism as this one. Our professors told us to just get the degree and change the world later. We understood the good intentions guiding the advice, but we believed that our dissertation goals were worth fighting for because we felt the research data would prove to be an important addition to the field's body of knowledge. From the time we joined our doctoral program in 2008, we had collaborated on multiple projects for our courses as well as our professional development, including academic conferences and journal articles. As such, the topic of collaboration had driven many conversations between us and our peers, ultimately arriving at one important question: Why, in our field of composition, are we encouraged to collaborate scholastically and professionally but denied that opportunity when it comes to completing one of our most important projects—our dissertation? Haven't we already proven ourselves as individual scholars throughout our coursework and qualifying portfolio[3]? Couldn't the dissertation process yield richer data if two people collaborated throughout the process? Doesn't this type of collaborative research capture the essence of the social constructionist nature of our discipline? Because we have no real data to answer such questions, we have decided to study

[iii] At our graduate institution, we are required to submit a qualifying portfolio after our first two semesters of coursework. According to the program website, "The purpose of the portfolio is to evaluate each student's ability to successfully complete this program."

the following question at the dissertation level: Why are there no collaborative dissertations in our field of composition? With such a research question, it seems only to make sense, then, that we should delve into the topic together, to collaboratively embody our scholarship– as co-researchers, co-authors, and co-constructors of knowledge.

Sabatino: Patricia Sullivan (1994) recognizes that the "dissertation is inhabited, shaped, and, in a sense, co-authored by all those whose works and lives give it presence and meaning" (p. 25). We shared the same collaborative goals for the project, and as qualitative researchers, we intended to tackle these questions by engaging in a multivocal conversation with one another as collaborative researchers, with the stakeholders (other ABD students), with gatekeepers (administration, facilitators), with faculty, as well as with other tandem researchers. After the dissertations have been written, after the act of collaboration has been studied, only then will those others like us who are trying to resist have a study to reference on the act itself.

Relevance of our Study

Collaborative: Faculty at our graduate institution have remained at the forefront as advocates of collaborative research at the dissertation level as far back as 1991, when Hurlbert and Blitz called on others in the academy "to claim a place for collaborative dissertations in our universities and in our profession" (p. 169). That same year the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) published a policy statement entitled "The role and nature of the doctoral dissertation" as a result of a yearlong study of fifty doctoral programs in the United States and Canada. The Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) seems a helpful place to begin, as they claim to be "the only national organization in the United States that is dedicated

solely to the advancement of graduate education and research" ("About CGS", 2014, n.p.). On collaboration, they affirmed that:

> [The] consensus was that 'original' does not mean 'in isolation.' The idea for the dissertation project and approach taken need not be developed solely by the student. It is expected, however, that the student should develop and carry out a research project relatively independently and be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the advisory committee what portion of the research represents the student's own thinking… All dissertation research is collaborative in some sense. (1991, p. 10)

Isolation, however, is typically expected and typically required. Our graduate dean was firm in his belief that the university could not award two degrees for one document. We will adhere by the views of the CGS, allowing our advisory committee to decide that we each independently were able to demonstrate with authority our own thinking on the subject within the field.

Laura: When two doctoral students from our program, Kami Day and Michele Eodice, attempted to write a collaborative dissertation in 1997, faculty member C. Mark Hurlbert offered to serve on their committee. In a note returned to them on their transcript, he poses a challenge: "Wouldn't it be interesting to research and report the sources of this resistance so the profession could make its own determinations on these people and their motives?" (as cited in Day & Eodice, 2001, p. 152). Coincidentally, Dr. Hurlbert's class was where we—Sabatino and Laura—first met and began collaborating at the doctoral level. As researchers, we have also questioned this resistance to collaborative dissertations; we hoped to research and report on the resistance while participating in the very act of the resistance—

collaborating on our dissertation (to the extent the academy will allow at this point) and report the findings to inform possibilities for change. In the end, Day and Eodice were not permitted to collaborate on their dissertation, and no one in our program has been permitted to do so since their attempt—until now.

After completing just one chapter of the dissertation together, we felt we were able to better understand and critique our collaborative processes in ways we could never have done without actually working together. We also felt we were better able to understand and critique some of the forms of resistance to the idea.

Tentative, Qualitative Definition of Terms

Laura: The nature of the dissertation requires a clear definition of key terms. Creswell (2009) stresses the importance of defining terms that "individuals outside the field may not understand and that go beyond common language… define a term if there is any likelihood that readers will not know its meaning" (p. 39). Due to the qualitative nature of our study, we will share a few "tentative, qualitative definitions" now "because of the inductive, evolving methodological design" (Creswell, 2009, p. 40). Qualitative research allows for changing perspectives, and as conscientious researchers, we are allowing the space for these terms to evolve throughout our study. In addition, due to the unique nature of our two non-traditional dissertations, we define these terms within the framework of each of our own qualitative research approaches. In this section, we provide our definitions of shared writing situations that are framed as *co-authored*, *collaborative*, and *cooperative*—as well as what we mean by *intertextuality*—so readers (including ourselves as research-participants) can orient themselves toward the specific contexts of our dissertation and, in particular, the text that

follows in chapter one. In the next chapter, we will construct a richer and fuller discussion of each term.

Sabatino: **Co-authored**. Ede and Lunsford (1983) acknowledge there are many perceptions of co-authorship, from "two authors [who] contribute separate sections, which are then put together" to their own process, which is "conceiving, drafting, and revising a text together" (pp. 151-152). For a co-authored project, however, we believe it would be possible for two people to never see one another or comment on each other's work and still create a co-authored piece. Michael Blitz, for example, recalls when two scholars agreed to co-author a work for an edited collection and then submitted two separate, solo-authored pieces to him. Blitz, as editor, had to "stitch together the pieces" to create a co-authored piece with two names on the article with shared credit, despite the fact that neither author had participated in the creation of the other's contribution (cited in Day & Eodice, 2001, p. 27). We would not consider such a work a collaborative piece because the writers had not worked together or combined their writing in any way prior to submission. Like the work of Blitz and Hurlbert (1998) and Day and Eodice (2001), we consider our shared writing to be not only co-authored, but also collaborative.

Laura: **Collaborative**. We consider "collaborative" to be a narrower term than "co-authored." To us, a collaborative project would involve two or more people who worked together throughout the researching and writing of one text. Collaborative writers would have shared the tasks of writing the same sections of the piece together, and they would have reviewed and commented on solo-authored sections of the piece to a point where both voices and viewpoints informed the text before the two authors submitted the work. In this way, the

partners would have worked as a unit with shared responsibilities with no hierarchal status of the partnership or approach to the work.

Sabatino: **Cooperative**. After meeting with the Dean of our graduate school, we were left with the question: Is our dissertation still collaborative? At that time, we felt it was no longer a collaborative dissertation because portions of the work would have to be "solo-authored," a term we continue to challenge. As such, we contended that the dissertation was co-authored but not collaborative. Laura saw merit in that viewpoint but countered that as long as we had worked together (researched, discussed, combined our writing toward a single project) that we could call the dissertation collaborative. Through much conversation, reading, and research, we have also concluded that any term we chose to describe our dissertations must encompass two essential elements: process and product. Benson and Nagar (2006) pointed to the "serious and promising work to be done to bridge the divide between processes and products" noting that

> [i]t is crucial that we consider how the process unfolds—what is said/written, individually and dialogically—and how a consideration of the mutually constitutive relationship between processes and products of collaboration can open up new spaces for intellectual and political interventions. (p. 586)

For us, we will be using a collaborative process of researching and writing the dissertation because we will work together throughout the duration. Still, the end product will be co-authored because some portions of the dissertation will be solo-authored. Because we are not permitted to submit one piece with both of our names—without signifying solo-authored sections—we chose to avoid calling the work collaborative. Therefore, we have determined

there is a need to define a new word, which clarifies the "mixed" collaboration, a term we will call "cooperative."

Laura: Our dissertation chair has pointed out, "The process is collaborative, but not the dissertations" (G. Pagnucci, personal communication, March 27, 2011). But because we worked together throughout the process of composing the project, we did not want to limit our shared partnership to our understanding of a "co-authored" piece—that is, a collection of separate pieces that can be joined together into a whole. Instead, we felt we needed to construct a new term for our dissertation—one that combined our concepts of "collaborative" and "co-authored" and which more accurately represented our process and end product. We decided on the term *cooperative.* In terms of our dissertation texts, we refer to each as cooperative dissertations because they rely on collaborative processes of research and writing but also have an end product that is solo-authored and also co-authored and collaborative. In addition, our two dissertation texts will emerge from the same sources of data—in this way they cooperate (share and construct meaning) in intertextual ways. Thus, we felt the term *cooperative* served as a more generalized term that seemed best applied to our two dissertations. Figure 1 (below) illustrates the distinctions we draw among *cooperative*, *co-authored*, and *collaborative* as they pertain to our dissertation.

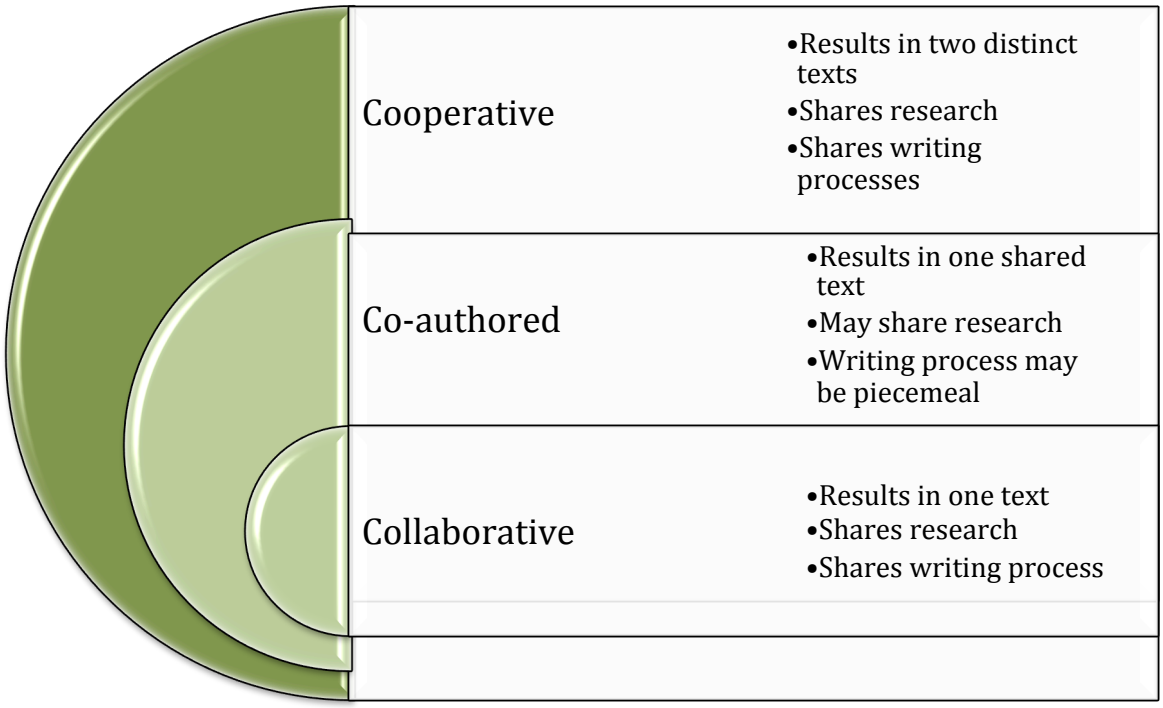

Figure 1. A graphic representation of cooperative, co-authored, and collaborative within the context of our dissertation study.

Intertextuality

Sabatino: Fontaine and Hunter (2006) cite Selzer's (1993) understanding of intertextuality as "an event, a kind of dynamic collaboration among seen and unseen writers and readers and texts, all cooperating in the creation of meaning…" (p. 8). This concept of intertextuality provides a framework for our "independent" dissertation texts because it acknowledges our belief in the social, situated, and contextual nature of meaning-making—that as co-researchers we are attempting to join a conversation shared between "seen and unseen writers and readers and texts" about collaborative research and writing. Fontaine and Hunter build from Selzer's notions of intertextuality when they posit:

> …on the one hand, our speaking and writing have essentially collaborative qualities—our meanings are conditioned and shaped by and will, in turn, condition

> and shape others'. But, on the other hand, ours is a dialogic language production that is unique to the moment in which it is uttered, the individual from whom it emerges, and the context within which it occurs. (p. 9)

We feel this explanation of intertextuality applies to each of our dissertations because each text communicates with prior research on collaborative writing. In addition, both of our dissertation texts share from the same pool of primary research data, namely the conversations we have shared between ourselves as co-researchers, between our participants and us, and between the participants amongst themselves (whether the participants talked to each other in person at a roundtable we held at The Conference on College Composition and Communication or talked to each other in "unseen" ways through their "individual" responses to our interview questions). We contend our cooperative dissertations are texts that share and construct meaning not only with each other but also with prior and future texts in ways that value the multiplicity of constructed identities, voices, and environments. Thus, the intertextual nature of our cooperative dissertations "reminds us that all texts are potentially plural…and always involved in the expression or repression of the dialogic 'voices' which exist within society" (Allen, 2000, p. 209). As co-researchers, one of our main goals is to add multiple voices to the on-going, intertextual conversation about collaborative dissertations.

Collaborative: We want to ask situated qualitative questions about the depth of this multiplicity within one person and then to extend that exploration into our unique partnership of who are constructing co-inquiries about the nature of dissertating writing. How does our collaboration impact our understandings of the roles we must occupy within the varied contexts of our research? At a minimum, we envision the two of us moving between roles as lone authors, co-authors, and collaborative authors. There will be times when we act as

editors of each other's work. For our data collection, we will occupy multiple roles as interviewers, as interviewees, as transcribers, to name a few. We are curious to research how these roles differ from those researchers who sustain a solo stance for their own research? Of course, our roles are in constant flux throughout the dissertation process—and to add a partner who is working on the same dissertation study also adds role reversals and conversations about which role we should inhabit and when. How do these role reversals and conversations deepen our research data? But collaboration necessarily invites these conversations and negotiations—and isn't that valuable? To address what is always imbedded within qualitative research, but in ways contextual and dialogic and not hierarchical. We contend that our collaborative voice enacts our multiple selves. We hope our text can, in some way, represent how our academic scholarly selves cannot—and should not—be separated from our other selves—those of husband and wife, father and mother, teacher and student. We believe that if we can embody these constructed and contested identities within our research processes and, again, within our textual product of our cooperative dissertations then we can enact richer, deeper, and more profound processes of making knowledge, of achieving a dialogic and reflexive rigor that we could not have achieved alone. Together, we are exploring the ways we make knowledge in paths similar and paths divergent—but always with a transparent focus toward constructing and intertwining these paths through open and intertextual dialogue.

Establishing Exigency for Further Research

Laura: The topic of collaborative research in the humanities has gained momentum since 1999 when MLA incoming President Linda Hutcheon named the theme of the 2000 MLA Presidential Forum "Creative Collaboration: Alternatives to the Adversarial

Academy," a forum she said was about collaboration, not "the romantic model of solo scholars" (as cited in Cornwell, 2000, para.11). From this forum, Hutcheon launched the website *Collaborate!* with Corinne Arraez, Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede. Lunsford notes, "The kind of research that needs to be done in the humanities can't be done by some solitary person sitting in the library trying to write the last great work on 'x'" (as sited in Cornwell, 2000, para.12). Unfortunately, according to Arraez, the website has not been updated in ten years and she is no longer a part of the project (C. Arraez, personal communication, July 20, 2011). We contend this type of collaborative work does little to promote scholars professionally, so projects such as *Collaborate!* often fall by the wayside. It seems that co-authors and those interested in studying co-authoring may start off with great momentum but this often wanes in the face of resistance. Even the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) is in need of newer research about the current nature of collaboration in dissertations. When we asked Belle Woods, the Government Relations and External Affairs associate at the CGS, what the most current views were of the CGS regarding co-authored dissertations, she responded with the same information previously cited by the CGS, adding:

> When I discussed this with our team, we agreed that this may not reflect recent practices that accommodate more innovative collaborations and intellectual partnerships on the dissertation or thesis. We are always trying to ensure that our publications are accurate and reflect up to date good practices and principles. We would appreciate your sharing with us any examples you find during your research that we could draw on to help us to update these and related CGS publications related to dissertations and theses. (B. Woods, personal communication, 22 July 2011)

Sabatino: Ede and Lunsford (2001) have been urging scholars for decades "to *enact* contemporary critiques of the author and of the autonomous individual through a greater interest in and adoption of collaborative writing practices—and to do so not only in classrooms but in scholarly and professional work as well" (pp. 355 - 356, emphasis in original). It was 1990 when this duo published *Singular Texts / Plural Authors*, and they have continued to study and write about what happens when people write *together*. We view our cooperative dissertations as meaningful artifacts that will hopefully inform a larger cooperative movement toward future multi-authored composition dissertations.

Research Questions

Collaborative: When we first set out to draft our proposal for this dissertation, our primary research question was: "Why are there no collaborative dissertations in the field of composition?" This leads us into general questions pertaining to resistance, but an individual could follow this path of inquiry alone. With this in mind, we chose to refocus our inquiry into collaborative dissertations and constructed this primary research question: "How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in the field of composition?" Although we are using "cooperative" to name our dissertation texts, we believe our research primary question about collaboration continues to inform our research. In turn, we hope our research data responds in meaningful ways to the larger conversation about composition's resistance toward collaborative dissertations. In this way, we focus on our own experiences as collaborative researchers and writers, exploring the process and rigors of collaborative dissertation writing, while constructing first-hand data about the resistances we encounter. We can then explore the lived experience of what happens when two students collaborate on aspects of their dissertation project. We have chosen to ground our research within the

framework of our own collaborative writing practices because we value Ede and Lunsford's reasoning for their choices in studying collaborative writing. In *Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship,* Ede and Lunsford (2001) posit they hope to "trouble conventional understandings of authorship in contemporary theory" by:

> looking at these understandings through the lens of actual collaborative (or noncollaborative) practices inside and outside the academy...looking at concepts of authorship through this materially grounded lens allows us to see, and then critique, assumptions and practices that otherwise appear natural or commonsensical. Doing so also reveals the powerful ideological, cultural, social, and political forces that work to resist, co-opt, or contain change—including those forces that work most intimately (and thus powerfully) in our personal and professional lives. (p. 356)

Ede and Lunsford inspire us to problematize conventional understandings of authorship (solo, co-authored, collaborative, cooperative), particularly in terms of a dissertation's processes and products. We have experienced the ways in which the dissertation genre is a continuous negotiation between stakeholders who bring to bear on our project a multitude of varied backgrounds, disciplines, and hierarchical statuses. We not only invite this negotiation, we strive to be participants who are actively constructing and critiquing this negotiation as we work toward answering our primary research question. From this basis, our primary research question produced several secondary questions:

- Why is the academy resistant to collaborative dissertations?
- What are the rationales for or against collaboration in composition and at our graduate institution?

- What are the professional implications/risks of writing a collaborative dissertation?

We understand that administrators who shape doctoral programs and who hire job candidates possess more experience than us in terms of dissertation research. These administrators occupy a higher status within the dissertating hierarchy and, in many instances, view dissertation research through different lenses than we do. Most of these administrators have experienced the dissertating process as students pursuing their doctoral degrees, and now they are in the position to make high-stakes' decisions about the dissertating work of their students and job candidates. With our dissertation research, we want to learn more about how an administrator views the purposes of a dissertation. While we are open to other data that may or may not emerge from our conversations with administrators, we want to focus our inquiry on the rationales and processes administrators use to approve a dissertation study or to hire a job candidate. Returning to Ede and Lunsford's (2001) work in *Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship*, we hope a nontraditional dissertation such as ours challenges the varied "ideological, cultural, social, and political forces" that, we contend, shape the rigor and scope of what are permitted and not permitted to pursue within their qualitative doctoral study.

From this basis, tertiary questions can also be asked:

- Why/how do researchers negotiate the shared responsibilities of researching and writing a collaborative dissertation project?
- How has gender affected your collaborative writing?
- How do other doctoral researchers value a collaborative dissertation?

Laura: It is important to state that we are not attempting to claim that all dissertations should be collaborative. Elbow (2000) points out that scholars in composition often feel that

to be noticed, they have to be disproving someone (327). As such, this is a non-refutational argument for the consideration of collaboration at the dissertation level. Our research questions allow us to qualitatively gain a better understanding of the resistance to collaborative dissertations and to provide rich data about resistance that is indisputably lacking in the field of not only composition, but also graduate studies as a whole. We understand that the nature of qualitative research does not seek to find definitive answers, more accurately to shed light on a topic, thus contributing to a larger academic conversation. We can only gain a better understanding of the resistance to collaborative dissertations through engaging in research with the stakeholders, gatekeepers, and facilitators.

Delimitations of our Study

Laura: There has been little research conducted on the resistance to collaborative dissertations in composition, and no research has been done that examines what happens when two dissertating students in composition collaborate. As such, we have chosen to limit the scope of our research to focus on doctoral dissertations in the field of composition within the United States. Prior to collecting actual first-hand data, our scope has been shaped by what we contend are some of the main reasons administrators are resistant to collaborative dissertations. First, a model of solo-authored dissertations is already in place. It would not be as efficient to modify the current model to meet a new approach to knowledge production. Our cooperative dissertation, for example, has required us to work with our committee and the graduate school to reshape the traditional dissertation process, from topic approval to defense. Our process has included an in-person presentation with our graduate school dean to argue why we needed to collaborate on our dissertation, a prolonged negotiation about how we divide authorship credit throughout our dissertation texts, and multiple conversations

about whether or not we can share our work together or present alone at the required three-chapter meeting and dissertation defense. Along the way, we were required to create "two paper trails" for all of the paperwork we have submitted, ranging from our dissertation proposals to our protocols for the Institutional Review Board. We provide this information not to serve as a complaint about our situated dissertation process. Rather, we aim to point out how our graduate school, doctoral program, and dissertation committee worked with us through a nontraditional dissertation process to approve and support our study. In fact, we value the primary, experiential data that has emerged from our dissertation process—primarily because this data shows how we encountered and responded to hierarchical resistance. At times, we felt as if the traditional dissertation process forced us to "jump through hoops" to get a degree as opposed to a meaningful capstone to a doctoral education. In her chapter "Why Write a Dissertation?" Marsha Lee Holmes comments:

> At my alma mater, two myths of a dissertations' purpose send mixed messages to graduate students in composition and rhetoric. One myth says that the best dissertation is a done dissertation (no matter how good it is) while the other insists that the best dissertation is a published dissertation (no matter what good it does). In such a setting doctoral students write to 'get it done' or to 'get it published'— and since publication depends on completion, either myth indicates that getting it done is more important than what gets done. (2002, p. 119)

Sabatino: Holmes' anecdotal argument about how doctoral students at her alma mater are asked to either write a "done dissertation" or a "published dissertation," points to a worldview of dissertations that privileges completion over quality. We contend that a "done" or "published" dissertation still assumes a high level of quality; however, throughout our

doctoral work, countless times we were told, "Just get it done," and one scholar went so far as to say one should not remain an "indentured servant to the institution" any longer than needed to (in other words just fold and do what is expected to make our lives easier). When we have received such advice, we never thought the implication was to write a dissertation without purpose or rigor. We give merit to the advice that people provided us. We understand that at times, those cautioning us were attempting to protect us from the systematic politics that frame a dissertation. Still, we have never viewed the purpose of our writing—especially in the genre of dissertation writing—through a "get it done" lens. We agree with Holmes (2002) that if composition students write dissertations with a "get it done" mentality, they are not "applying the very best of what's to be learned in their discipline—connections between word and world, process and product, means and end—[thus] they abandon what they've learned in this, the final act of student writing" (p. 120). Thus far, we have rejected this mentality and have instead opted to challenge the status quo, even at the risk of incompletion.

Laura: As two researchers writing cooperative dissertation texts, we contend all writing emerges from social and collaborative meaning-making activities as we build upon prior research, voices, and ideas; this worldview subverts the competitive model of education that privileges the individual. Amy Goodburn and Carrie Shively Leverenz (2002) echo these thoughts when they share how as graduate students situated "within an institutional structure forcing [them] to compete" they used collaboration to "diffuse competitive feelings" among themselves as well as to "struggle against the forces that threaten collaborative work" (p. 130). Goodburn and Leverenz assert "a system based on the primacy of individual ambition will succeed only as individuals buy into the system" thus, it takes a "collaborative effort to change the system, especially when what [they] want to change are the constraints against

collaboration (p. 130). The dissertation is typically the ultimate *individual* accomplishment of a student's academic career, but collectively we believe that we can change the system to make it more open to the potential of collaboration at the dissertation level as well. In the context of a collaborative dissertation, Goodburn and Leverenz contend:

> …there is the philosophical argument that language, knowledge-making, and text production are inevitably social and collaborative processes so we might as well make the process explicit rather than hidden. Patricia Sullivan (1994) points to the dissertation in particular as a site on this inevitable collaboration: 'The institutional contexts that frame and circumscribe the processes of the writer locate the dissertation in a social context that is fundamentally collaborative. The author of the text literally writes the text *with* others' (p. 25, emphasis in original). (p. 134)

Sabatino: We hope our cooperative dissertations make explicit the social nature of our meaning-making processes as we explore the material realities of co-constructing a dissertation within a degree-awarding system that seems conflicted about what it means to collaborate on a dissertation. We feel that a collaborative approach has great potential to expand knowledge.

Implications of our Study

Laura: Based on our review of the literature, a study such as this has not been done previously in the humanities. Actually examining the source of resistance to collaboration in dissertations would allow those in positions of institutional power to make more informed decisions about allowing or denying graduate students the opportunity to collaborate on dissertations. When we asked to write a fully collaborative dissertation, we were met with

resistance that was not, in our opinions, supported with strong evidence in the face of scholarship on the benefits of collaboration. When Day and Eodice attempted to co-author their dissertation in 1997, they too hoped to demonstrate that there was value in collaborative dissertations—but they were not allowed to do so either. Day stated in her solo-authored dissertation that she had hoped to, "understand why, if well-respected names in our field have asserted that the time has come for collaborative dissertations, such a dissertation has yet to materialize in the humanities and is in fact still forbidden" (Day, 1999, p. 13). We argue that without context-specific data to inform such decisions—graduate students should no longer be denied the opportunity to write a collaborative dissertation.

Collaborative: Our dissertation study would also serve as a means of opening the academic conversation for others to continue researching collaboration among dissertating students. In Kami Day's dissertation published in 1999 at our own graduate institution, she quoted a personal correspondence with Lisa Ede, who said, "If we can just get two or three precedent-setting dissertations, we will have a great breakthrough, I believe" (cited in Day, 1999, p. 79). Two or three precedent-setting dissertations have not yet been written in the sixteen years since this correspondence; in fact, not one collaborative dissertation in our field has been written in those sixteen years. Sullivan (1994) attests that it is in the very nature of a graduate program to train its students to be able to "undertake independent investigations" (p. 13) that ultimately lead to a dissertation. She nevertheless comments: "This formulation, however, belies the inherently social nature of the dissertation as both a discursive event and artifact. As a genre, a process of inquiry, and a rite of passage, the dissertation might more properly be described as a work of collaborative scholarship" (p. 13).

Sabatino: Perhaps Sullivan uses the word 'process' and not 'processes' because the field of composition privileges one standard dissertation process. Of course, each inquiry has limited space to challenge the standard process—there are minor permutations such as using a different lens, perhaps, or adding an extra chapter outside of the traditional five chapters—but in the end the process is essentially standardized. We wonder if the academic and departmental bureaucracy (availability of dissertation chairs to read the work, IRB approval to protect research participants and the institution, the material mechanics of assessing the research, etc.) of dissertation research has entrenched our dissertating processes into a single approved-upon process. In other words, how many gatekeepers hold true to the process of solo-authored dissertations because they value independent research as a true right of passage—and how much of their steadfastness to independent dissertating belongs to the naturalized idea that "this is how it has always been done"—and so it shall remain this way.

Collaborative: We understand our cooperative dissertation study disrupts the traditional process of writing a dissertation—and that we are placing even more responsibility and work upon our dissertation committee, our English department, and our graduate school by attempting to publish cooperative dissertation texts. We appreciate how these people have worked with us to construct a space for our study. We trust that our fellow composition scholars will continue to value the importance of constructing flexible frameworks that protect non-traditional research and "original" contributions to the field. We also trust that our study points to the progressive and open nature of an ever-evolving field of composition and its scholars. We are excited to critique our dissertation data to see what emerges.

Benefits of our Present Study

Collaborative: In this chapter, we've reviewed how our initial proposal for completing a collaborative dissertation study met resistance from our graduate school dean. We shared our experiences of working with the dean to negotiate a middle ground where we would be permitted to collaborate throughout our processes of researching and writing our study, but we would also be required to submit two independent dissertation texts. Both dissertation texts were required to have two separate titles and to have clearly labeled sections of solo-authored and collaborative writing. We would be remiss then if we didn't discuss the reasons we feel our cooperative dissertation can be a worthwhile contribution to the scholarly work on collaboration in composition.

Collaborative: From our first meeting with our graduate school dean, we learned that his understanding of collaboration differed from our own—namely that our definition required us to work together from beginning to end, throughout process and product, to write one text. This initial conversation forced us to think critically about how we defined collaboration and how this term continued to impact a proposed study that explored collaboration at the dissertation level. In short, we had to reconceptualize the framework and textual presentation of our inquiry, which led to our construction of a cooperative dissertation. We have come to appreciate the reconceptualized version of our dissertation because we were required to differentiate the scope of our inquiry, in terms of a collaborative process, a co-authored product, and a cooperative study. By clearly naming the three main components of our inquiry, we have constructed primary data that presents a nuanced interpretation of what collaboration means to various dissertation stakeholders. In addition, our cooperative dissertation challenges the status quo of how a traditional solo-authored

dissertation is written and lends new data to the topic of men and women writing collaboratively—particularly at the dissertation level. Not only are we the first composition doctoral students to get graduate school approval for a collaborative dissertation (albeit a negotiated version of the one we proposed), we are also traversing new grounds by writing two dissertation texts that are constructed from the same primary data, which foregrounds the intertextual nature of research and scholarly writing. Through our shared intertexts, we use multiple genres and alternative discourses to bridge the gap between process and product and to challenge the standard academic discourse and five-chapter conventions of the traditional dissertation genre.

Collaborative: Perhaps most important, we hope our cooperative dissertation will serve as both a model and as another entry point for future doctoral students who want to collaborate on a dissertation. We view our cooperative dissertation as a marker for progress; one that shows collaborative scholarship is not a trend or a movement that is over. We hope our cooperative dissertation builds the framework for a movement we are calling a dissertation cooperative—a place where doctoral students can find resources to enact their own forays into collaborative and other nontraditional dissertations.

INTERTEXT

NEGOTIATING OUR FRAMEWORK(S)[4]

The purpose of our intertexts is to show the meaning-making processes we enacted as part of our researching and writing of this cooperative dissertation study. The intertexts that follow have been excerpted from our various modes of knowledge construction, including recorded conversations, research journal entries, photos, annotated bibliography responses, research notes to each other, and blog posts. We are not adding "new" content to these intertexts, so we are arranging our process texts, as they were originally written, in a multigenre narrative because we feel this is the most transparent and trustworthy way to share our story. After a negotiation with our dissertation chair, at times we resist inserting *Sabatino, Laura,* or *Collaborative* to label each section so we can present our dialogic collaborative process—one where we were not concerned with using attribution to illustrate ownership over ideas. Other times, we insert our names to label certain sections in the intertexts. We also resist the traditional move of "tying up loose ends" for the audience—meaning our intertexts should illustrate the open-ended processes of our problem solving and not necessarily illustrate the problem being solved. We trust that the solutions to those problems are embedded with our dissertation texts, our end products. Our processes are shared, varied, situated, and always imbedded (seen or unseen) within our dissertation texts. Thus, we have decided to arrange our intertexts before, in-between, and after our dissertation chapters to illustrate the intertextual, recursive, and, sometimes, messy interplay of the conversations we have shared with each other and our texts. These intertexts ask you to

[4] This intertext is unique to my dissertation, and thus does not appear in Laura's dissertation.

embrace the nonlinear narrative of our processes and to embody the uncertain and, at times, disruptive nature of our collaborative dissertation inquiry. These intertexts invite you to join our story.

Sabatino's Intertext[5]

"We've agreed we are doing more than co-authorship, right? And we can't use

'collaborative dissertation' because it doesn't fit our definition: two or more authors who

produce one text. Maybe we need a new name?"

Research Blog Post: "Mashup Writing/Dissertation" February 16, 2011

…we have considered using what we are calling "mashup writing" and "mashup dissertation" to refer to our actual researching and writing of the dissertation. These terms have grown from our understanding of a Web mashup. As part of Web 2.0, mashup applications and webpages (whether the mashup combined music from two or more sources or remixed digital data) help much of the growth of social media. This popularity of mashup technologies and composing emphasized the social nature of creating new ideas and began distancing invention from the stereotype of a solo author. Rather, a mashup celebrates and makes transparent the collaborative nature of "making something new"—and challenges the

[5] Appears in Sabatino's Dissertation Only

Western notion of ownership over a creation. Thus, mashups seem to rely on other parts of the rhetorical canon—arrangement, style, and delivery—to critique long-held beliefs about the beginning of the canon: invention. So a mashup culture of creation can serve as a counterculture, a counternarrative, if you will, against the larger, dominant narrative that informs our Western views of how to create something new in academia. With this as a backdrop, we view mashup writing as a type of combined composing that meshes various voices through multiple texts, genres, and modes of communication in ways that help invent a new collective voice, a new collective text, a new collective genre, a new collective mode. Our dissertation is emerging as a mashup-writing piece because it weaves the above mentioned disparate sources into a new cohesive piece that challenges the status quo. Our use of genres and texts and modes challenges the aesthetic look and language of a traditional dissertation, which, at the same time, gives body to, shapes, and enacts our argument against the myth of the solo-authored, print-based, monolithic, standard-academic-discourse dissertation. In this way, because we have to submit two, separate dissertations (that emerge from disparate sources and our collective research), we are constructing a "mashup dissertation" and not our intended "collaborative dissertation" (which would be a collaboratively researched and composed dissertation that leads to the production and publication of one text).

"Mashup dissertation could work. But does it capture the essence of what we are doing? Maybe if we were doing a digital dissertation, it would work better for that type of project?"

"I agree. I think that post was more therapeutic than anything. It felt good to vent a little. I like that the post discusses Western notions of ownership. I just reread that post and asked myself: where did that come from? I like when writing emerges like that. Has my recent blog writing shown that I've been reading a lot of Gramsci, Freire, and Giroux?"

"A little bit. The aggressive antiestablishment side. That's good, though."

"Thanks. We'll see how much ends up in the dissertation. I mean...I am really writing to make meaning with this dissertation. Based off of our last conversation, I'm in the middle, now, of writing about what we should call our dissertation. How we should name this thing. Do you want to work on it—write and talk about it—later tonight?

"Yes. Sounds very collaborative."

"Doesn't it, though?"

~~Collaborative Dissertation~~

~~Co-Authored Dissertation~~

~~Mashup Dissertation~~

~~Partnered Dissertation~~

~~Networked Dissertation~~

~~Roundtable Dissertation~~

~~Intertextual Dissertation~~

"I think we should reconsider using a food cooperative as a model for our study because it represents the shared efforts of many we've been talking about."

Annotated Bibliography Entry: Slow Food Movement

Schneider, Stephen. (2008). Good, clean, fair: The rhetoric of the slow food movement. *College English*, 70 (4), (pp. 384-402).

Summary

The article explores the emergence of the Slow Food movement and its aim to challenge the globalization of fast food culture. Carlo Petrini, known as the primary founder, is from Bra, Italy, where there is a "history of cooperative businesses, activism, and community organizations." Petrini built the social movement as a protest to the opening of a McDonald's in Rome's Piazza di Spagna. He made the rhetorical decision to keep the name "slow food" in English to communicate to other Italians the group's ideology: 1) to resist America's "Big Mac phenomenon"—it's industrialized food system and homogenized ways of eating and living 2) to cultivate their "other ways" of living and eating and enjoying the slow pleasures of life.

Relevant Quotes and Responses

"gastronomic organizations, while a regular part of Italy's cultural landscape, often waxed and waned in response to the political climate of the day…Slow Food's first incarnation, Arcigola, emerged from Arci—the recreational and cultural organization of the Italian Communist Party" (p. 386). **[This reminds me of what Corinne Arraez told us about the website *Collaborate!* and how she is no longer part of that defunct project. I wonder what would happen if academia didn't privilege solo-authored research and writing over collaborative research and writing, from the dissertation level and beyond, if getting hired, tenured, and promoted didn't rely so much on the model of one person publishing "his own work." I wonder if projects such as *Collaborate!* would continue to**

contribute to our discipline, if our vision of a Dissertation Cooperative movement would have a more inclusive and nurturing space to grow.]

"Slow Food's model of gastronomy is similarly focused on both the biological and cultural aspects of food production and consumption, with a similar multidisciplinary approach. The rhetoric of new gastronomy attempts to relocate food as the center of human culture. Petrini argues that food "is far more than a simple product to be *consumed*: it is happiness, identity, culture, pleasure, conviviality, nutrition, local economy, survival" (*Slow Food Nation* 166, emphasis in original). For Petrini, food is a network "of men and women, of knowledge, of methods, of environments, of relations"—a network in which all participants are co-producers of cultural and culinary knowledge and traditions (175). Within the new gastronomy, then, food is an expression of various political, economic, cultural, and agricultural networks, all of which demand the serious attention of any would-be gastronome" (p. 388). **[It seems the main correlation here between the Slow Food movement and our cooperative dissertation is that we do not want our study to be relegated to an end product that does not represent our shared values and understandings of collaboration and how collaboration can and should be enacted within the political and cultural network of composition dissertations. Just as the Slow Food movement resists the dominant ideology of American industrial food culture, our cooperative dissertation resists the dominant ideology of the solo-authored dissertation]**

"Slow Food stands as a reminder of the potentially broad rhetorical and educational scope of new cultural movements. Recognizing what Buechler has called the politicization of everyday life, Petrini and Slow Food insist that every day life is precisely the terrain we need

to re-examine. By approaching how and what we eat in a more thoughtful and informed way, we also begin to think about the society in which we live through the same lens" (p. 399). **[Yes! Couldn't we build on this approach for our dissertation? This model mirrors our own reexamination of the current research practices in our discipline, which we argue is a terrain that—if approached differently—could yield an "other" way to conduct research together. A model of cooperative or collaborative research is not claiming superiority, but it is an area that deserves reexamination in a thoughtful and informed way.]**

Annotated Bibliography Entry: Food Co-Operatives

Knupfer, Anne Meis. (2013). *Food co-ops in America: communities, consumption, and economic democracy.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Summary

Knuper writes a history of the co-op food movement in which she offers a clear view of how throughout time food co-ops have challenged the status quo of typical corporate capitalism. She examines ways food production and distribution can be handled differently at the community and even global levels.

Relevant Quotes and Responses

"Food co-ops are situated within a larger history of the cooperative movement, one that is at least 180 years old in this country." (p. 2).

"And it is through the practices of participatory democracy that 'community' takes shape in co-ops" (p. 3).

"Food co-ops are stores collectively owned by members who...make decisions democratically about their businesses' policies, products, and work structures. Many, but not all, have followed principles practiced by groups of weavers who started their own co-op, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in England, in 1844. Historically, the Rochdale principles have included open membership, regardless of ethnicity or religion…(p. 2-3)."

"Although food co-ops are businesses, they need not to follow the corporate model of growth and expansion" (p. 4).

"For example, many women served on their [Rochdale] committees…" (p. 4).

[As co-authors writing a cooperative study while using collaborative research methods, we too value a structure that relies on cooperative participation by members who seek to challenge the status quo. Like a food co-op is still a business, just one operating under a different model that values cooperation, like other ABD students, we too are attempting to write a dissertation—just under a different model that values cooperation over speed of completion and at times at the cost of efficiency. Democracy is often slower than monocracy (we are not suggesting dissertation writers function as autocrats). As cooperative researchers, we are resistant to conventional methods of writing a dissertation. Just as a cooperative values multiple voices within the community, a cooperative dissertation strives for transparency in allowing multi-vocality throughout the study.]

"Such principles favor a participatory democracy, one that is activated through group discussion and decision making. This model resembles one encouraged by twentieth-century philosopher John Dewey. Using language that mirrored the Rochdale principles, Dewey insisted that people's access to an organization be 'equal' and 'voluntary'…" (p. 3).

"Dewey's choice of words was deliberate: freedom is 'cooperative' in the interest of a common good, not the individual Cooperation, then, is both a means and an end. This process of democracy necessarily requires that members participate in discussions about 'the means and purposes of policies and [their] institutions.' This process is time-consuming and often conflict is inevitable, a process that Dewey believed was not counterproductive but a critical part of democracy" (p. 3).

[John Dewey has influenced the cooperative movement in similar ways that he has influenced education. Dewey valued shared knowledge and working together as opposed to engaging in solo learning. In this book, they use Dewey to point out that cooperation includes both the process and the product—both the means and an end. "Group discussion and decision making" can be riddled with conflict, but it is worth it to have multiple voices heard and valued. When producing a cooperative dissertation project with a co-author, it is inevitable that there will be conflict. Collaborators don't always agree, but this is not counterproductive to the goal to create the best final project as possible using cooperative means. Yes, cooperation takes a lot longer sometimes (a common misconception is that collaborative or cooperative work is somehow a shortcut or easy approach), but valuing and considering multiple viewpoints

is key to the cooperative model of research that we have in place as we research together, just as it continues to be a key facet of food cooperatives.]

Research Blog Post Excerpt

"A Co-Op Dissertation" February 2, 2011

...we have enacted a partnership that still reflects our co-op ideology and grows from the model of a food co-op. How so? We have decided to construct a community of like-minded participants to plant seeds of growth in our field (of composition) in hopes of cultivating a crop that nourishes us as well as future generations. This approach to growth challenges the status quo, the bottom-line structure of knowledge production. We want our dissertation to be organic, to be sustainable. To meet these goals, we argue that adapting to the academic landscape as it is presently situated and by working with others toward mutual goals underscores the social nature of humanity and meaning making. Of course, our sustainability must be grounded in a local context, hence our decision to embody our own qualitative research, to frame our dissertation within our institution's landscape, and to invite composition scholars (ABD and Ph.D. faculty and administrators alike) to pose and answer questions...to contribute to our research...to tend to the field.

The Slow Food Movement informs so much of the co-op worldview—that consumers should get back in touch with the production of their food, to question why our current fast-food system exists, to challenge the powers who decide how we access and eat our foods and have decided to create a culture of efficiency, a culture of cheap food that just fills the gaps of its consumer's hunger while, more importantly to the top-downers, filling their financial quotas and mechanized production, dissemination, and evaluation of the food industry. Unless the consumers resist this approach to corporatized food, the cycle will never stop...So

a co-op dissertation grows from a unified effort toward a crop that nourishes and sustains many, including ourselves, but we don't necessarily benefit the most from the crop, and we are okay with that. And just like co-opers gain agency by growing crops through methods they most value and [that] most represent their worldview, by putting into practice the theories that inform how they wish to sustain the ways they interact and contribute to their communities, by creating from the ground up the specific foods that they want to eat and to share with others (depending on the local context and community members' shared goals), by resisting the dominant structures of food production by dedicating themselves to the type of work that yields food they can be proud of, we gain agency in much the same way and hope this agency sustains other compositionists who share our passion for such collaborative, co-op scholarship -- especially when it comes to dissertations.

"Do you think we should use co-op or cooperative?

"Probably cooperative."

"Yeah. But don't you think food co-op has, uh, a more recognizable name than food cooperative? I mean...co-op is more distinctive than cooperative. Would people make the connection quicker if we used co-op dissertation as opposed to cooperative dissertation?"

"I don't know. I don't know if it matters. In the dissertation, we will explain our reason for using the term cooperative. And then we will define the term cooperative."

"Do you think it would seem off topic to include in the dissertation our rationale for connecting a cooperative dissertation with a food cooperative?

"I think it would be necessary."

"Yeah. Maybe we put that part into one of our intertexts?"

Research Journal: February 24, 2011

We will use the term cooperative dissertation to name our study and our texts. From there, we want to build off of our study to create a dissertation cooperative. Of course, food cooperatives can take on many forms. Still, we like how food cooperatives started as a movement against corporations—against the status quo of grocery chains and the like. We frequent a food cooperative that promotes social responsibility within the community and provides local, organic, and sustainable food. We are working within our own dissertation cooperative movement—one that challenges the status quo of the composition dissertating community in ways we hope are socially responsible, local, organic, and, perhaps most important, sustainable.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

> All of us who write must ground our language in the knowing of those who have preceded us. We make our meanings not alone, but in relation to others' meanings, which we come to know through reading, talk, and writing.
>
> -Reither & Vipond, "Writing as Collaboration," 1989

Overview

Collaborative: This chapter reviews past and current scholarship on collaboration, collaborative writing, and co-authorship. In addition, it provides a background of the literature we deem influential in the critical pedagogy and feminist theory that guides our research. We have decided for the literature review, not to merely redistribute what other scholars have said, because as Maxwell (2013) suggests, "an exclusive orientation towards the literature leads you to ignore your own experience, your speculative thinking" (p. 40). Returning to Laura's notes from her Research Methodology class, they state, "NO personal reflections in Chapter Two! That comes in Chapter One/Rationale." Although we acknowledge the benefits of reviewing literature relevant to our study, we also recognize the importance of not separating ourselves from the pertinent work that's come before us. Further, we are not merely trying to cover everything in the field of collaboration, or composition, or co-authored dissertations; rather, we will "treat the literature not as an *authority* to be deferred to, but as a useful but fallible source of *ideas* about what's going on, and to attempt to see alternative ways of seeing the issues [emphasis in original]," (Maxwell, 2013, p. 41). Tyson (1999) also discusses such transparent subjectivity in her discussion of feminist criticism in stating:

> [T]herefore all acts of interpretation, are unavoidably subjective. We cannot leave ourselves out of the picture when describing what we see because we are a product of who we are… To claim that we are objective, as patriarchy encourages men to do, is merely to blind ourselves to the ways in which we are not so. From a feminist perspective, when we interpret texts, or anything else, the way to deal with our subjectivity is not to try to avoid it but to as aware of it as possible, so that others will be able to take it into account when evaluating our viewpoint. (pp. 94-95)

As such, we will interact with our origins and our background, as we continue to make sense of what collaboration means to us at the dissertation level in the field of composition.

Laura: Here we will begin with an overview of the literature of our epistemology, social constructionism, which informs our theoretical perspectives as feminist and critical scholars. We will then discuss narrative inquiry, as this is the feminist and critical research methodology that we will employ throughout our study. Our specific research methods will be discussed in chapter three; however, a brief review of the rationale for our research methods will be provided here as well. That basis leads to a basic history of collaboration in the academy, composition in particular, and then co-authored and cooperative writing. We then end the chapter with a more in depth examination of intertextuality, writing in isolation, as well as the dissertation as a genre, as resistance, and as a system.

Honoring Feminist-Critical Contextualization

Collaborative: We privilege longer quotes in our research-annotated bibliography, as well as in this dissertation. First, longer quotes help us to have a clearer understanding of the context without having to continually return to the text. In this way, we are streamlining and

placing our information into one easy-to-access and shareable technology. Second, we are arguing that all dissertations are collaborative and intertextual—and should value and maintain the multiple voices that frame their research. We embrace the critical, feminist, and social nature of meaning-making and view the use of longer quotes as a resistant move against the traditional summarization and decontextualized use of paraphrased content and pithy quotes. We do acknowledge fair use, and never attempt to claim these scholars' ideas or research as our own. Section 107 of the Copyright Act states:

> the fair use of a copyrighted work... for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research, is not an infringement of copyright. In determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is a fair use the factors to be considered shall include - (1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes; (2) the nature of the copyrighted work; (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work. (U.S. Copyright Office)

Zaharoff (2001) advises: "Contribute significant original material of your own. Where possible, transform the character of the original, by adding new expression, meanings or messages" (pp. 27-28). We abide by this advice; at the same time we argue longer quotes help to preserve as much of the authors' voices as we can in a way that shows respect to their scholarship and not an attempt to steal it or wrongfully misuse it. Throughout our research

process, our research-annotated bibliography, therefore, has emerged as a genre space where we can fuse secondary-research voices with our own collective voice to create an emergent polyphonic voice of the dissertation.

The Foundation of our Research

> Although our profession has made dramatic strides in rethinking the demands associated with many common composition tasks—and postmodern contexts that lend new shape and complexity to these demands—we have done very little to bring these understandings to bear on the specific demands involved in working on a dissertation project.
>
> -Catherine G. Latterell and Cynthia L. Selfe,
> "Dissertation Writing and Advising in a Postmodern Age," 2002

Collaborative: Given the nature of our research and our shared ontological viewpoints, it was fairly easy to articulate a research process that we both agreed upon. The chart below visually represents the foundation and building blocks of our research:

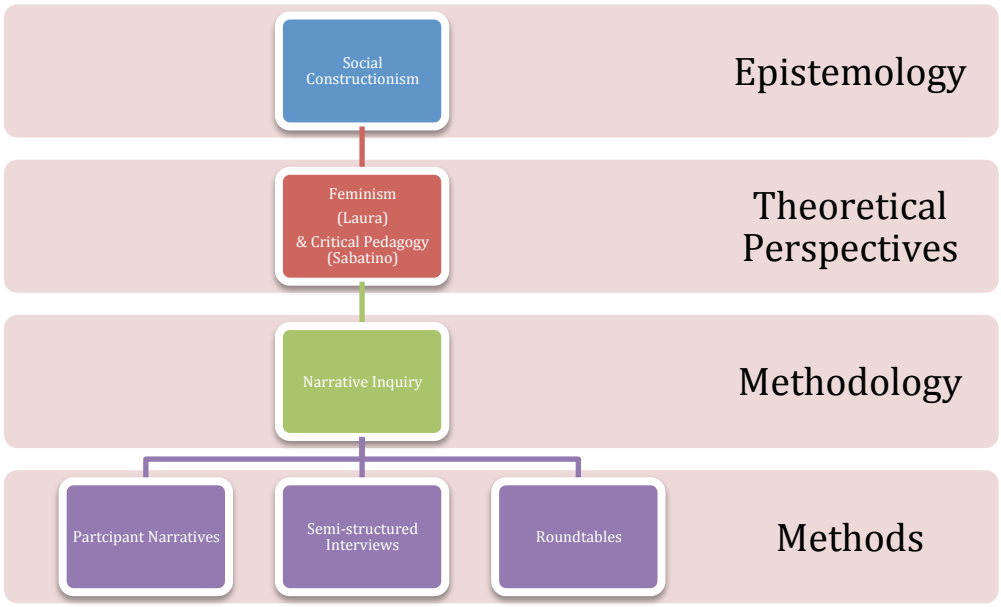

Figure 2. A visual representation of our framework

A Social Constructionist Epistemology

Collaborative: Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as "the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology... a way of understanding how we know what we know" (p. 3). We believe that knowledge is socially constructed, and thus claim a social constructionist epistemology. Social constructionism grew out of constructionism, which assumes "that knowledge is created by an interaction between the knower and the known" and that when researching, constructionist "researchers become acutely aware that their studies are collaborations between themselves and their participants" (Preissle & Grant, 2004, 173-174). As such, we are building from the belief that our participants play a vital role in the meaning of our research study. According to Burr (1995), social construction "denies that our knowledge is a direct perception of reality" (p. 6). Thus, as a collective unit, we make meaning alongside and as a result of the effort, time, and input of our participants. Freire (2009) echoes social constructionist ideology when he purports: "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72). Through our cooperative dissertation study, then, together, we make meaning.

Sabatino: Vygotsky's social constructivism was also influential in shaping our epistemology. Vygotsky (1978) distinguishes between two levels of learning—one independent and one in collaboration with others. His belief that language is social and learning is collaborative—that human beings use talk both internally and externally to make meaning in relation to others—guides and shapes our beliefs throughout our research project. He describes "zones of proximal development" as "the distance between the actual

developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers," (p. 86) and that "with assistance, every child can do more than he can by himself" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 91). Applying his theories of children to learners and collaborators in general, we are using this theory to help guide our epistemology. Moreover, while neither of us as researchers find one to be more capable than the other, we do subscribe to the notion that working in collaboration with one another and our participants enriches our potential meaning making.

Collaborative: Bruffee (1984) suggests "the place of conversation and learning, especially in the humanities, is the largest context in which we must see collaborative learning" (p. 645). Still, Bruffee contends:

> the graduate training most of us have enjoyed—or in endured—has taught us, in fact, that collaboration and community activity is inappropriate and foreign to work in humanistic disciplines such as English. Humanistic study, we have been led to believe, is a solitary life, and the vitality of humanities lies in the talents and endeavors of each of us as individuals. (p. 645)

Laura: Bruffee emphasizes how human beings are predisposed to build knowledge through conversation—and that humanistic discourse communities privilege one way of knowing. Bruffee suggests this epistemological privileging moves from the top down—from graduate school training and into the classrooms of younger students. He advocates for classroom environments that encourage collaboration and conversations that allow for students to interact with other people and with other types of talk to learn in ways that make the most sense to them.

Collaborative: Vygotsky's scholarship about the social nature of knowledge, particularly the concepts of internalized talk made public, informs much of Bruffee's (1984) explanations about the ways in which collaborative learning can also frame student writing in this way: "If thought is internalized public and social talk, then writing of all kinds is internalized social talk made public and social again. If thought is internalized conversation then writing is internalized conversation re-externalized" (p. 641). Bruffee points out that writing involves social ways of knowing. Of course, students engage in conversations that are separate in many ways from the education system's situated disciplinary discourses. Bruffee suggests collaborative learning environments challenge the academic discourses and teaching models that acculturate students into the standard of knowledge communities. Bruffee (p. 648) points out:

> The importance of abnormal discourse to the discussion of collaborative learning is that abnormal discourse serves the function of helping us—immersed as we inevitably are in the every day normal discourse of our disciplines and professions—to see the provincial nature of normal discourse and other communities defined by normal discourse. Abnormal discourse sniffs out stale, unproductive knowledge and challenges its authority, that is, the authority of the community which that knowledge constitutes.

Sabatino: Bruffee mentions how students build new knowledge through "abnormal discourse," a term he credits Richard Rorty with using to describe language systems that serve as alternatives to the standard discourse of academic learning communities. Bruffee argues that students must be allowed to collaboratively carve out spaces where they can use their own discourses as a way to both challenge the social construct of a teacher's authority

and to acquire fluency in a discipline's dominant discourses. In this way, teachers in the classroom, and we could contend people in positions of authority throughout the academy, "...must perform as conservators and agents of change, as custodians of prevailing community values and as agents of social transition and reacculturation" (Bruffee, 1984, p. 650). Bruffee maintains the:

> continued vitality of the knowledge communities we value—in particular the community of liberally educated people and its sub–communities, the scholarly and professional disciplines—depends on both these needs being met: to maintain established knowledge and to challenge and change it. (p. 650)

Collaborative: In the context of our cooperative dissertation study, we embrace the multiplicity of our roles as teachers and as Ph.D. students. Within these roles, we occupy positions as people who have authority in the classroom and as people who are working toward a credential that opens up spaces within a discourse community that values a doctoral degree as an artifact that symbolizes expertise. Our dissertation texts provide the traditional dissertation discourse and structure of five chapters as well as our intertexts that illustrate our "abnormal discourses"—our internalized talk and writing made public—as we make meaning together and challenge the conventions of the dissertation genre. In this way, we hope our cooperative dissertation study works to "maintain established knowledge and to challenge and change it."

Intertextuality

Laura: The concept of intertextuality is key to our understanding of co-authorship, because our dissertations are intertextual in their plurality, in their relations with signs and culture, and, most relevantly, with their relations to the literary systems that promote

hegemony as well as their relations with each other as two texts emerging from the same research processes and data construction. Foucault (1972) says that a piece of writing is "caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands... Its unity is variable and relative" (p. 23). This is especially true for research writing, particularly a dissertation that relies so heavily on reference. Thus, we argue that our dissertations texts are "a tissue, a woven fabric" (Barthes, 1977, p. 159) situated as textual artifacts that resist the "ingrained notions of originality, uniqueness, singularity and autonomy" (Allen, 2000, p.6). Some may bristle at a dissertation study that claims to resist originality, as this is supposed to be a key factor of the genre of dissertation writing. As creators of a cooperative study, however, we argue that together, with our participants, with those who researched before us, and with one another, we can continue and expand on the knowledge of collaborative writing processes and practices.

Sabatino: We continue to build from Bakhtin's notion that every utterance is already embedded in history, built upon the words that came before, without single ownership. Bakhtin (1986) notes:

> A word (or in general any sign) is *interindividual*. Everything that is said, expressed, is located outside the soul of the speaker and does not belong only to him. The word cannot be assigned to a single speaker. The author (speaker) has his own inalienable right to the word, but the listener has his rights, and those whose voices are heard in the word before the author comes upon it also have their rights (after all, there are no words that belong to no one). (pp.121-122)

Kristeva (1980) furthers Bakhtin's notion of the dialogic in three dimensions: the writing subject, the addressee, and the exterior texts: "The word's status is thus defined *horizontally* (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as *vertically* (the word in the text is oriented toward an anterior or synchronic literary corpus" (p. 66, emphasis in original). Because we assert throughout our argument that all writing is intertextual, authors who engage in collaborative writing should not be expected to defend the ownership of particular words, sections, or phrases. Kristeva asserts, "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 66) thus using intertextuality as "an attack on monological conceptions of meaning and communicability" (Graham, 2000, p. 69). In looking at collaborative dissertation writing as intertextual, we are privileging the melding of Sabatino's writing with Laura's and vice-versa as a mosaic of meaning making.

Critical Pedagogy[6]

Sabatino: It came naturally to apply a conceptual approach that works in tandem with my own teaching pedagogy, which is why I chose a critical pedagogy lens for my theoretical framework. Giroux (2013) discusses the power of a critical pedagogy:

> As a political project, critical pedagogy illuminates the relationships among knowledge, authority, and power. It draws attention to questions concerning who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and skills, and it illuminates how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations. Similarly, it draws attention to the fact that pedagogy is

[6] This portion of the dissertation is solo-authored, and thus only appears in my dissertation. Laura's cooperative study focuses here on feminist rhetorical theory.

> a deliberate attempt on the part of educators to influence how and what knowledge and subjectivities are produced within particular sets of social relations. (Giroux, cited by Tristán, 2013, np)

The origins of critical theory from which critical pedagogy stems can be traced back to the early 1930s with the growth of the Institute for Social Research, the Frankfurt School philosophers, and Horkheimer's inaugural lecture in which he defines critical theory as meeting three necessary criteria: "it must be explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time. That is, it must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to change it, and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation" (Bohman, 2013, np). Critical pedagogy provided a relevant lens for my partnered critique of the existing power structures that exist in higher education within the act of dissertation writing. Within power structures, Gramsci (1971) explains how hegemony works to ideologically dominate a culture's worldviews. In Gramsci's definition, the dominant class uses language systems to communicate ideologies that shape the worldviews of the masses. Gramsci argues that hegemony occurs when the masses agree to accept the dominant ideologies—namely because they lack the discourse to articulate alternative ideologies. Gramsci points out this ideological acceptance equates to a mass standardized consent for the dominant class to enact their worldviews in material reality. In short, when the masses lack the discourse to construct alternate worldviews, they cannot resist or transform the dominant worldview. Thus, the culture's dominant hegemony is sustained. Villanueva (1993, p. 125) builds on Gramsci's concept of hegemony when he posits "the ideological elements which are necessary to hegemony must be maintained and passed on, reproduced" by cultural institutions. In the context of our cooperative study and

the institution of graduate school education, we are resisting what we contend is the composition dissertation system's dominant ideology that a Ph.D. must be earned through solo-authored scholarship.

Gramsci influences the work of Freire (2009), a scholar who also shapes much of my critical pedagogy lens. Much of Freire's scholarship focuses on the illiterate and dispossessed adults of Latin America—people who suffered extreme oppression. I offer this information because part of our dissertation's inquiry looks to problematize whether or not composition's current dissertation system constitutes a type of oppression for students who possess myriad histories, identities, literacies, and epistemologies. Our study does not mean to conflate the oppression Freire mainly discusses in relation to subjugated masses engaging in praxis and problem-posing literacy practices to achieve humanity and transform their worlds with the oppression we are investigating in our cooperative dissertation study. We value the themes Freire explores in his arguments that people must critically reflect upon their worlds in order to transform their worlds. He asserts that this process of critical reflection and transformation begins in earnest when a person acknowledges that systemic inequities and dominant ideologies are not inevitable—that the status quo worldview is a social construct that can be challenged. Our cooperative dissertation study hopes to communicate intertextually with Freire's (2009) argument that for people to transform their worlds they must act upon the

> 'here and now,' which constitutes the situation within which they are submerged, from which they emerge, and in which they intervene. Only by starting from this situation—which determines their perception of it—can they begin to move. To do this authentically, they must perceive the state not as fated and unalterable, but merely as limiting—and therefore challenging. (p. 85)

The dissertation system presents a limit situation. As Ph.D. students, we are limited by the rules, ideologies, and practices that have been set in place long before we entered into the dissertation situation. Still, we do not accept this limit situation as inalterable. Rather, we find strength in Freire's words:

> A deepened consciousness of their situation leads people to apprehend that situation is an historical reality susceptible of transformation. Resignation gives way to the drive for transformation and inquiry, over which men [and women], feel themselves to be in control. If people, as historical beings necessarily engaged with other people in a movement of inquiry, did not control that movement, it would be (and is) a violation of their humanity. Any situation in which some individuals prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence. The means used are not important; to alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects. (p. 85)

Our anecdotal experiences as Ph.D. students and our research into the discipline of composition both illustrate to us that a collaborative dissertation has not fit into the traditional composition dissertation system, which sets a precedent that dissertating students can exert only so much control over their inquiry. We understand that a dissertation involves a negotiation between the students and the administrators—that students alone are not permitted to have entire autonomy over the scope and direction of their dissertation. From the onset of our cooperative dissertation study, we have negotiated with those in power the amount of control we were permitted to have for our inquiry. We value this power negotiation as part our narrative and as part of our data because our dissertation inquiry has been constructed to make explicit the dominant resistance toward collaborative dissertations

and to challenge the fatalistic notion that history prevents the present and future from including a collaborative dissertation in the scholarship of composition studies.

According to Freire (2009), those who are oppressed can still carry out their critical practices before actual "revolution" or change has taken place by engaging in "*educational projects,* which should be carried out *with* the oppressed in the process of organizing them" (emphasis in original, p. 54). He further explicates this process, much like our process of attempting a collaborative dissertation, in two stages:

> In the first, the oppressed unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation. In the second stage, in which the reality of oppression has already been transformed, this pedagogy ceases to belong to the oppressed and becomes a pedagogy of all people in the process of permanent liberation. (p. 54)

Through the act of writing an unconventional dissertation, we are carrying out the first stage. It is only through its successful completion that we can move to stage two. Again, we acknowledge some may feel it is a stretch to call ourselves oppressed. Hillock (2012) notes that "Oppression is also more than a simple binary division of oppressors and oppressed because individuals can simultaneously occupy positions of both privilege and oppression" (p. 39). In academia, there is tension between those with power and privilege and those who seek to attain the same level of power and privilege of their mentors, professors, and leaders. The power almost goes unnoticed until someone attempts to challenge the status quo. Audre Lorde (1983) comments, "I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sizes and colors and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of

oppression" (p. 219). Even if within society as a whole we are seen as privileged because as co-authors, as co-researchers, we are both white, middle-class, educated people, within the academy, we are non-Ph.D. bearing students who still remain at the will of the system of higher education. Without approval and permission from those in higher positions of authority, we cannot graduate. We cannot attain the next level of success in our field.

While in prison, Gramsci (1971) wrote of the construction of knowledge among those with power and without power. Knowledge, according to Gramsci, cannot merely stem from intellect, but a combination of the intellect, emotion, and engagement with everyday citizens of the world:

> The intellectual's error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned (not only for knowledge itself but also for the object of knowledge); that is that the intellectual can be an intellectual (and not a pure pedant) only if he is distinct and separate from the people-nation, that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people, understanding them and therefore explaining and justifying them in the particular historical situation and connecting them dialectically to the laws of history and to a superior conception of the world, scientifically and coherently elaborated—i.e. knowledge. (Gramsci, 1971, p. 418)

Gramsci points out here that the social/power relationships among people influences how they make meaning and how knowledge is constructed. We posit that those in positions of authority and decision-making at the dissertation level are often separate from the "people-nation," or graduate students writing dissertations. Our dissertation committees are providing

collaborative feedback that is closely tied to us as dissertation writers; however, many of the administrators that we have encountered seem far removed from the level of graduate students. The removal from the masses influences their decision making and meaning-making. Administrators who hold positions of authority view the dissertation through a different lens than the dissertating student or students who have yet to attain that level of authority (or who never will). Even those who are closely tied to dissertating students are in positions of higher power, and this leads to separation. In his discussion of education, Freire (2009) echoes this sentiment of change coming from those within the situation: "The point of departure of the movement lies in the people themselves. But since people do not exist apart from the world, apart from reality, the movement must begin with the human-world relationship (p. 85)." Laura and I are among those who are within the movement, now. We are the ones writing a dissertation; we cannot rely on those outside of the situation to enact or initiate change. Freire (2009) pushes for change not in isolation, but through solidarity (p. 85). He states, "The pursuit of full humanity, however, cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity; therefore it cannot unfold in the antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed" (p. 85). It must come authentically from within the people-nation of graduate students who feel that change needs to be met. This supports our decision to interview other students who value collaboration, or have collaborated, to get their views on collaborative dissertations.

This describes my theoretical framework. Laura and I are not attacking or nullifying other perspectives; we simply seek the space for an exploration of a new way of doing things.

Narrative Inquiry as a Methodology

> Narratives open profound spaces for learning, fertile and realizable.
> -Schaafsma & Vinz, "Composing Narratives for Inquiry," 2007

Collaborative: Crotty (1998) defines a methodology as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and particular methods linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (p. 3). Our methodology drives us to inquire, and "at the heart of inquiry is the asking of questions. Inquiry begins with doubt... Our response to question and doubt, in other words the ways in which we organize and make meaning, is narrative" (Hendry, 2010, p. 73). This leads us to narrative inquiry, a term coined by Clandinin and Connelly (1990) as a viable methodology in the field of educational research through "a Deweyan (1938) notion that life is education" with a focus on "'lived experience—that is, in lives and how they are lived'" (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007, p. 22). Narrative inquiry, has, however, been "a recognized research methodology for at least the past twenty-five years in fields ranging from anthropology to psychology to English education and writing studies" (Schaafsma, Pagnucci, Wallace, & Stock, 2007, p. 281). Hendry (2010) argues, "all research traditions originate from narrative... if inquiry (research) is understood as meaning making, then all inquiry is narrative" (p. 71). It is our goal as researchers to collect the narratives of recent Ph.D. students who have shown an interest in collaboration, other collaborators in the field of composition, as well as administrators.

Laura: A special issue of *English Education* (2007) on narrative opens by explaining the power of narrative as research:

> Through narrative, we are trying to look closely, pay attention, to be *bricoleurs,* of experience... Researchers who use narrative to inquire and

> to present their research understand that stories are filled with the languages, codes, theories, ideologies, and methodologies. These are shaped and given life through and in the narratives themselves. (Schaafsma & Vinz, 2007, pp. 277-278, emphasis in original)

Collaborative: We aim to capture the experiences of our participants and analyze their stories, looking for themes to code, categorize, and conceptualize. The use of narrative inquiry, we feel, will lend itself to more authentic, richer data that gets to the heart of our participants' lived experiences, resistance, and beliefs regarding cooperation.

Pagnucci (2007) describes how using narrative inquiry in his dissertation, and thus shifting the dissertation itself from a traditional five chapter report to a creative act, shifted the meaning of dissertation writing for him: "Eventually, I gave up on writing a dissertation and decided to change the world instead... The intellectual project I finally undertook for my dissertation was, at heart, to write research not as a report but as a novel: to retell the form of the dissertation itself" (Schaafsma, Pagnucci, Wallace, & Stock, 2007, p. 295). Similarly, we chose a nontraditional dissertation because what we are studying matters—to us and to the field. To that end, we hope we can also "change the world" in some manner, even if only at the dissertation level.

Sabatino: Connelly and Clandinin (2006) further explain their notions of narrative inquiry here:

> Arguments for the development and use of narrative inquiry come out of a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives. People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in

> the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study. (p. 477)

Collaborative: What better way to capture the challenges, stigmas, triumphs, and beliefs about collaborative work than to study our participants' narratives? This ties to our belief in the social construction of knowledge, as well as our feminist and critical pedagogy methodologies. We believe that "when using narrative inquiry it is important that the researcher is not only able to ask questions that elicit stories but also that she/he is able to position her/himself so that stories can be analysed effectively" (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007, p.463). As such, we will ask questions of our participants that we feel will elicit the richest and most helpful stories involving collaboration.

Dissertation as Genre

> If the shoe doesn't fit, must we change the foot?
>
> -Gloria Steinem, *Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*, 1984

Laura: In asking why some are resistant to collaborative dissertations, we must first examine the dissertation as a genre. Also, if we aim to challenge the status quo of what it means to write a dissertation, this resistance can be better exemplified by looking at the dissertation as a genre. Anis Bawarshi (2000) challenges Foucault's author-function by

examining the genre function. Bawarshi points out that we are all "functions of the genres [we] write" (p. 335). Typically, we may feel discomfort at the idea that we are functioning within the contexts of genre, but we argue that this is particularly true in terms of the *dissertation as genre*.

Laura: Placing the genre function at odds with Foucault's author-function is apt for our writing situation as well, because we choose *not* to place the greatest value on the naming of a text by its author. We choose *not* to ignore the non-literary discourses that embody our collaboration. We are, however, bound by the contexts and often the rules of the genre of the dissertation, no longer just an "innocent, artificial, and even arbitrary" form, (Bawarshi, p. 339) because within the contexts of the form, we are restricted and continually told, "You can't do it that way;" "You need two documents;" "You must have two 'unique' titles," and so on.

Collaborative: Likewise, genres are rhetorical environments with social motives, what Bawarshi categorizes as "socially sanctioned ways of 'appropriately' recognizing and behaving within certain situations" (p. 341). As "all-but-dissertation" (ABD) graduate students, we know the expectations of the dissertation as genre and are expected to acknowledge and adhere to the appropriate "socially sanctioned" ways of writing a dissertation. Acknowledging the genre-function, in turn, helps us to both enact the genre and resist it. If we perform an activity, i.e. dissertating, we are working within the preexisting activity defined by a dissertation—independent, non-collaborative scholarly production. Bawarshi writes, "Antecedent genres thus play a role in constituting subsequent actions, even acts of resistance" (p. 341). What if we choose to challenge the current understanding of the genre of the dissertation, and our unique dissertation emerges as the antecedent? We want

our dissertation to be the one that willingly challenges the conventions and social actions of what a dissertation ought to be and be the precursor for future acts of resistance (future collaborative dissertations).

Laura: Our graduate institutions are constituted by its genres; we are thus expected to exist and act within the genre-constituted roles that support the hierarchy of the university. The genre function seems to prevent the administration from seeing beyond what has happened for years and years in terms of what research is and how it should be written. Bawarshi posits the way we respond to exigency is through reproduction of recurrence, "The recursive process is what genre *is*" (original italics, p. 357). By aspiring to write a collaborative dissertation, we are not allowing the dissertation genre to write us; we are choosing the re-write the genre of the dissertation.

Dissertation as Resistance

Sabatino: Freire (2009) tells us, "To surmount the situation of oppression, people must first critically recognize its causes, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation, one which makes possible the pursuit of a fuller humanity" (p. 47). In the way Goodburn and Leverenz (2000), Rider and Broughton (1994), and Ervin and Fox (1994) articulate how collaboration can contest the entrenched and systematic institutional oppression toward collaborative scholarship, we collaborate to investigate, problematize, and hopefully transform the landscape of doctoral research. Freire also notes: "However, the oppressed, who have adapted to the structure of domination in which they are immersed, and have become resigned to it, are inhibited from waging the struggle for freedom so long as they feel incapable of running the risks it requires" (2000, p. 47). We contend advocating and enacting our collaborative dissertations is worth the risk, thus proving that we are able to

"perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which [we] can transform" (Freire, 2009, p. 49). Similarly, Fike and Cook (2002) discuss the risks and challenges of writing any "nontraditional dissertation":

> Ultimately, issues of and questions about authority—the authority of the academic persona created by the dissertation writer and the authority of the postsecondary apparatus that grants its imprimatur to that writer—are raised by the form of the nontraditional dissertation. In composition, some play seems to be allowed. But how much? And where? And whose? (p. 80).

Collaborative: Already this dissertation as it has been written thus far is producing questions of authority. Whose name appears before each paragraph preceding the colon? Which pieces are written collaboratively? Change is occurring with every written word.

Sabatino: But what happens when these attempts at change are stifled? We have not been prevented from engaging in the process of inquiry, but we have had to negotiate what we consider a lesser version of our vision and scope of the dissertation. Freire (2009) further claims:

> The truth is, however, that the oppressed are not 'marginals,' are not living 'outside' society. They have always been 'inside' the structure, which made them 'beings for others.' The solution is not to 'integrate' them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become 'beings for themselves.' Such transformation, of course, would undermine the oppressors' purposes; hence their utilization of the banking concept of education to avoid the threat of student conscientização. (p. 74)

Conscientização is the Portuguese word for critical consciousness, which Freire argues is not encouraged in education because within the power structures of academia, becoming critically conscious may threaten the oppressors' inherent power over their students.

Collaborative: Freire's insights here about education and oppression coincide with our own notions of being oppressed in that we as dissertators are not outsiders to the educational system, but while within the system, are beings being transformed into the very roles of those with higher power in our field—administrators, tenured professors, or program directors. We are not expected to go against the system, but to embrace it, to become, like those before us, obedient students who follow the rules as laid before us. It is our aim, however, to make transparent the power structures that can oppress within the act of writing a dissertation. Consciousness-raising is the cornerstone of a critical worldview, which forces the researcher to constantly be mindful of existing power structures that affect the creation and maintenance of power. This seems an obvious and even necessary choice when critiquing the act of writing a dissertation.

Origins and History of Collaboration

Collaborative: When we began our research of the history of collaborative writing and co-authoring in the field of composition, we were surprised at the disparate opinions not only on what the appropriate terminology was that should be used to define collaborative writing, co-authorship, and the like, but also whether these terms should even be valued in our field. Similarly, Reither and Vipond (1989) recall their frustration toward the ways in which collaboration scholarship was limited to "short-range activities such as co-authoring and peer editing," but after studying the academic writing of co-authors, they found it essential to add "long-range collaborative activity [they] call 'knowledge making'" (p. 856).

Combining and explicating these three activities—co-authoring, workshopping, knowledge making," they are able to outline goals pedagogically for having students come to the realization that "writing and knowing are collaborative acts" (p. 868). Similarly, we (Sabatino and Laura) have found our ability to work on our dissertation study was limited when we were only permitted to co-author portions of distinct dissertations and workshop our separate sections with one another. It was only when we began to create new knowledge together, that it felt like collaboration.

Laura: Despite the fact that in the nineties, research continued about collaboration, little was accomplished in terms of collaborating at the dissertation level. Ede and Lunsford have proven to be seminal writers for us throughout our research. In one of their many works on collaboration (1990), Ede and Lunsford question why teachers do not strive to make writing collaborative and "less alienating," since collaboration is expected more of men and women in the workforce (p. 13). Similarly, we ask why teachers and administrators at the graduate level do not strive to make writing collaborative and less alienating at the dissertation level when it occurs so often after graduation. Is the resistance to change due, perhaps, to the persistent stigma against collaboration post-graduation in academia? And on what is this stigma founded?

A Similar Journey

> If two graduate students who proven themselves to be serious scholars feel they will do their best work together—produce something innovative and original—that kind of work should be encouraged.
>
> -Day & Eodice, *First Person*^{2}, 2001

Laura: Our shared interests in collaborative dissertations were only strengthened when we discovered that two female students at our graduate university had attempted to compose a collaborative dissertation in 1997. Michele Eodice and Kami Day, like us, felt that when they collaborated, they created a new voice—"(first person)^2" (Day & Eodice, 2001, p. 1). We openly reference Day and Eodice at length in this section, as we feel that their voice deserves to be at the forefront here, as they helped pave the way for this project. They, like us, felt that because they were a part of a university that valued collaboration so heavily, that they should be able to pursue a collaborative dissertation. They, like us, became frustrated when they found the dissertation was framed more as an individual hardship than a fulfilling, potentially collaborative, endeavor:

> Perhaps if academia could look at dissertations not as a hoop to be jumped through, a convention to be mastered, a tradition to be perpetuated, but as an opportunity for innovation, discovery, and real joy that comes with authentic learning—perhaps then co-authored dissertations would make more sense. We think of the sessions with each other as we wrote the proposal and review of literature for what we believed would be a co-authored dissertation. Sometimes long reading silences would be punctuated by "Wow—listen to this!" or, "hey—here's just the support we need." … It was stimulating and fun, the way learning and

> writing should be and the way they cannot be if the learner and writer always work in isolation. (pp. 164 - 165)

Collaborative: We could have written the above section, as we too have enjoyed the shared experience of meaning making and the satisfaction of finding the perfect quote to support our argument. *This* is collaborative learning, we thought, we challenged the other to look at ideas from new perspectives and through different lenses.

Sabatino: Day and Eodice (2001) felt that they could make progress, as two other students from our university, Janine Rider and Esther Broughton, had "entertained but finally abandoned the idea of a collaborative dissertation" (p. 3). Rider and Broughton (1994), did not get as far as Day and Eodice despite their strong beliefs in collaboration. Rider and Broughton elaborate on their experience:

> In many practical situations, fixed attitudes and traditions implicitly and explicitly reject collaboration… After writing a research paper together, we were encouraged to consider continuing our work. Why not try a collaborative dissertation? Several of our professors confirmed the need for revising the concept of the dissertation, and they went on and on in class about how great it would be to see a collaborative one approved. More talk with them brought reality closer, however: getting a director in our department for a collaborative dissertation was one thing, but getting it through the university approval process was another. We would have been laughed right out of the graduate office. There was never a choice. (pp. 248-249)

Laura: Rider and Broughton may have stopped their pursuit for fear of ridicule; Day and Eodice had to stop their pursuit to write a collaborative dissertation after they had already begun their research. In yet another discussion of challenges to the dissertation, Richards and

Miller (2005) conclude that the collaborative dissertation is "one area that is unlikely to become a reality in the near future" (p. 58). Their discussion of the collaborative dissertations, however, was flawed in that they describe the same facets of graduate education that we feel would make it easier rather than more difficult for graduate schools to shift to a collaborative model of dissertation research:

> Because significant aspects of a doctoral program involve candidates individually proving their ability to succeed in the program (the qualifying exam) and providing that they have learned something (comprehensives), it is undoubtedly difficult for the university hierarchy to shift from individual expectations to an assessment model that involves a collaborative effort. How would they know whose work they were reading? How would they divide the "credit"? (p. 58)

Sabatino: We feel that because graduate schools have these measures in place, qualifying exams or portfolios, graduate students have had opportunities to indicate their efficacy of individual work before they even begin the dissertation. These very obstacles as presented by Richards and Miller (2005) are the same ones that prove we are trustworthy and successful scholars capable to collaborative writing and researching. The university hierarchy would only face the difficulty of establishing a new means of assessment that accounts for collaboration.

Another new Beginning: Research on Collaborative Dissertations

Collaborative: Many peers and mentors have advised us to write our dissertation in a traditional form—as solitary scholars, writing five succinct chapters, in standard academic, distanced voice. But we argue our non-traditional dissertation provides us with purpose, inspiration, and agency, as well as a collective push to affect change within the environment

that frames the composition dissertation genre, comprised of researching, writing, assessing, defending, publishing—all intertwined and part of the process we are critiquing within this very dissertation. We believe real change cannot be made unless all of these parts of the process are critiqued in both individual and holistic cycles. We place more emphasis on the holistic, which extends beyond our personal dissertations and into the larger institutional hegemony that dictates our ways of not only making meaning through the dissertating process, but also our possibilities of personal and professional fulfillment, which includes career advancement.

Collaborative: When Ede and Lunsford felt they had completed their research for *Singular Texts/Plural Authors* more than two decades ago, they found instead that they were "at a new beginning" (1990, p. 12) rather than a neatly fashioned conclusion. This new beginning was realized at the moment they found that there were no concrete answers to why the humanities so vehemently prohibited collaborative writing, and why so many people continued to view writing and authorship as solitary acts (p. 12). We too are at a new beginning. When we sat down together, working on separate dissertations, we asked one another: *why not together?* Why must dissertating be such a solitary act? Ede and Lunsford (2001) published their encouragement to other writers to challenge conventions through not only words, but actions, stating: "Since the mid-1980s…we have been calling on scholars in rhetoric and composition, and in the humanities more generally, to *enact* contemporary critiques of the author and of the autonomous individual through a greater interest in and adoption of collaborative writing practices…" (pp. 355 - 356, emphasis in original).

Laura: In this time period of the late 1990s and early 2000s, Ede and Lunsford were not the only scholars hoping to upset the apple cart. Scholarship about challenging tradition

academically and scholastically was more abundant in this small window. The Dissertation Consortium (2001)[7] is a group of scholars working to disrupt the status quo comprised of more than twenty doctoral students, recent Ph.D.s, and dissertation advisors from around the country (among them well-known compositionists Nancy Welch and Cynthia Selfe) who have been meeting online and at conferences to "discuss the possibilities and difficulties of changing the processes, forms, and purposes of dissertations in composition and rhetoric" (p. 454). In their 2001 convention-challenging article, they address the same issues from the perspective of composition professors:

> The question is why aren't dissertation committees allowing composition and rhetoric students to write innovative, tradition-challenging dissertations... No, scratch that. The question is why aren't dissertation committees ENCOURAGING [original capitalization] composition and rhetoric students to write innovative, tradition-challenging dissertations? (p. 453).

Some of their concerns remain ours more than ten years later. Two members of The Dissertation Consortium, Cook and Fike (2002) posit:

> Successfully negotiating the rhetoric of a traditional dissertation will provide the compliant doctoral candidate with the keys to the kingdom. But what of the braver or more foolish candidates, who, if driven by intellectual honesty, curiosity, or necessity, must pursue a nontraditional dissertation? A doctoral candidate is both a student who seeks approval and a would-be expert who offers evidence of his or her

[7] In 2002, The Dissertation Consortium published an edited collection in the influential CrossCurrents Series at Heinemann Publishing called *The Dissertation and the Discipline: Reinventing Composition Studies.*

> competence. For the non-traditional dissertation writer, this dual role is triangulated to include the role as a breaker of tradition. (p. 446)

Sabatino: Driven by necessity, and at times bravery, we are still struggling to seek the approval and trust of the members of our graduate school community while grappling with the role of non-traditional graduate students, partners, and colleagues. Nancy Welch understands the struggles of our undertaking, but also acknowledges the role of the faculty members working with students who aim to write tradition-challenging dissertations:

> Almost any time I bring up the topic of innovation, revision, and change in relation to the dissertation in particular and academic writing in general, I am met with a conversation-stopping assertion of responsibility: 'I have a responsibility to teach my students the conventions'; 'I'm responsible for ensuring that my doctoral students write a solid, get-a-job dissertation'; 'It's my responsibility to show I really know the field, really know my stuff.' In most every conversation I can think of in which questions of academic voice and genre have come up, at least one person voices this idea of responsibility—including those who have worked for change in their own academic writing. (p. 443)

These are questions that we will address when speaking with our participants who are in the position to work with dissertation students. In fact, when determining the members of our dissertation committee, we were very eager to work with one faculty member who had always pushed us to challenge conventions; his views on dissertations have been widely discussed and published within our field. When presented, however, with the opportunity to work on such a dissertation, we were met with the same fearful notions that Welch notes.

Eventually, we chose a committee that was willing to enthusiastically support our desire to challenge the traditional dissertation.

Risks of Collaboration

Collaborative: After reading and discussing Day and Eodice (2001), we realized no one has yet to ask us if collaborating on the dissertation has provided a more enjoyable environment for us to write—or if that collaboration has inspired us to become better researchers and writers. Reading the experiences of two graduates from our own program whose attempts to collaborate were thwarted gave us determination to push beyond the risks in the attempts to forward a movement. Day and Eodice (2001) understand the enjoyment that writing a collaborative dissertation creates, noting it "enriches and deepens the participants, the process of writing, and the product. Those who appreciate the value of collaboration are convinced their co-authored works are better than their individually written ones," but they admit:

> Most graduate students want their dissertations to be the jewel in the crown in their collegiate experience, but dissertation writing has come to be more about jumping through hoops, confirming, and getting hired than about making an original contribution to a field of knowledge… Perhaps then the writing would be more about making a contribution, and learning and writing voluntarily and joyfully, than about getting a job, fulfilling requirements, and producing a piece of writing that very few people will ever read. (pp. 165-166)

Collaborative: This has been an ongoing conversation since beginning a shared dissertation study with collaborative processes yielding two co-authored texts: we want our cooperative

study to be the crown jewel, *and* we want to make an original contribution *together* to the field. We want to produce a cooperative study that people can learn from, build from, and use as an example of what cooperative learning looks like.

Laura: We continue to hear how we are taking an incredible risk by writing a collaborative dissertation—that we are limiting our chances for jobs because we will not have a solo-authored dissertation. This speaks to Day and Eodice's assertion that the dissertation has become: a hoop to jump through for a potential job or promotion. They add, "Sharing an experience, even an intellectual one like writing a dissertation, enriches and deepens the participants, the process of writing, and the product. Those who appreciate the value of collaboration are convinced their co-authored works are better than their individually written ones (p.165). We agree that the work we produce together, whether idea-by-idea or line-by-line is more fulfilling and stronger than the writing we produce alone.

Sabatino: Freire notes a disturbing risk to those oppressed; he cautions:

> at a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressors and their way of life. Sharing this way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressors, to imitate them, to follow them. (p. 62)

Collaborative: As writers, as composers, as educators and scholars, we often strive to reach that next level—graduates, Ph.D. candidates, published authors, tenure-track, tenure, and so forth. To reach these new aspirations, graduate student scholars routinely achieve these milestones by following in the footsteps of predecessors, but there is danger in doing so when the path to reach these goals is impeded with outdated rituals and rigid rules that no longer fit the mold for how some writers write and learn—or in this case, dissertate. In order to pave

new paths for future generations, there must be those willing to traverse the risky and rocky paths to create new precedents.

Laura: At the beginning of the cooperative study we worked together at a university—a place where administrators valued our cooperative dissertation study. In addition, we have been quite comfortable with the notion that we might teach at a community college someday where job security isn't based on the "publish or perish" diet that feeds many research institutions. Why wouldn't we want to research a dissertation topic that encourages us to ask and seek answers to questions that matter to us as teachers who both rely on collaborative pedagogies and as scholars who value the social construction of knowledge? We hope our dissertation is one more step toward reshaping how the academy views dissertating—that a project should be shaped by the researchers' purposes for inquiry along with processes that sustains their worldviews, their writing, and their abilities to make meaning. For the purposes and processes of constructing our dissertation, our commitment to ground-up collaboration made—and continues to make—the most sense to us together.

INTERTEXT

HOW WE TALK AND WRITE TOGETHER[8]

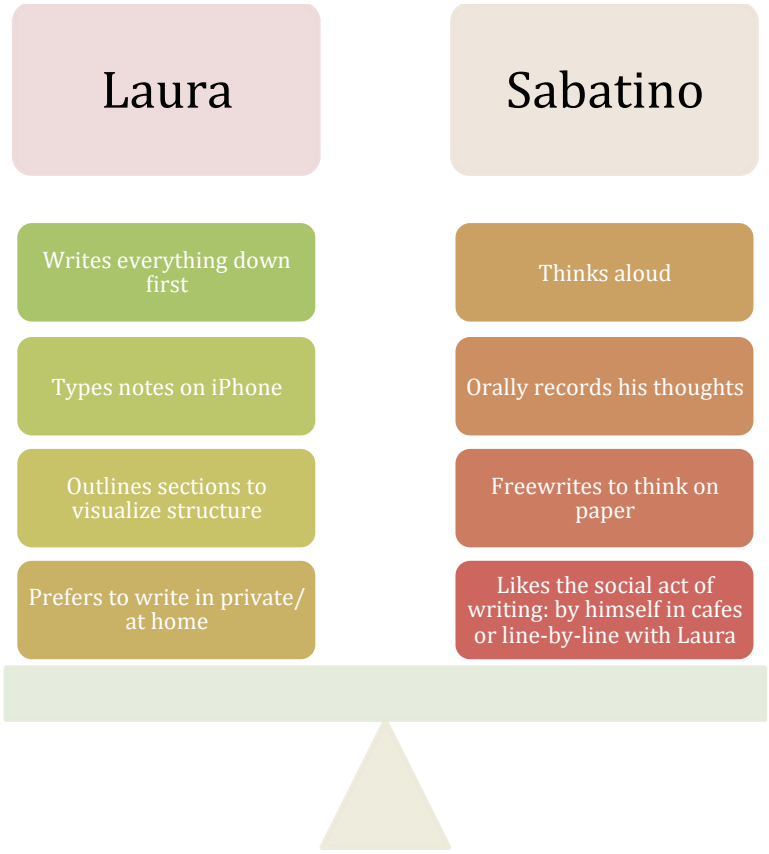

Figure 3. A visual representation of the differences in the ways in which Laura and Sabatino pre-write

[8] This intertext is collaborative and thus appears in my and Laura's dissertations.

Sabatino's Intertext[9]

This intertext explores the processes we use to talk and writer together, as well as the interplay between our differences. What follows is a collection of journal entries, blog posts, and recorded conversations that we had already composed (either collaboratively or alone) as we researched and wrote the first three chapters of their dissertations.

Research Journal: March 12, 2010

Laura and I had a long conversation today about the similarities and differences shared between feminist and critical theories. The conversation proved worthwhile on two levels: (a) we agreed that feminist and critical theories are in conversation with each other in that they problematize and, at times, challenge the status quo—whether the scholarship addresses patriarchal dominance or cultural hegemony, we see consistent themes against oppression and marginalization, at the least, in the theoretical worldviews; (b) we also agreed that our dissertation should represent within the text the similar and divergent ways we talk and write. More on this....

I've noticed sometimes I discuss an academic or theoretical concept with Laura and she doesn't respond. No verbal or discernable non-verbal cues. She does not do this as noticeably when we talk in our "everyday lives." I find myself asking her if she didn't like the idea or if I hadn't explained the idea properly. Through today's conversation we both understand that Laura prefers to think about complex concepts first—alone in her head or alone on paper—and then respond later. She says she wasn't aware she remained silent. I find these types of self-realizations fascinating. I feel comfortable talking aloud to "work

[9] Appears in Sabatino's Dissertation Only

out" complex ideas, even when I haven't fully built the meaning yet. I use think-aloud conversation as a meaning-making activity.

I've also noticed I tend to freewrite my ideas—whether it's a concept I am constructing for the dissertation or a response to complex idea I've read during my research—and then I return to revise. Laura usually does not freewrite. She structures her work through a loose outline and then writes to her subheadings. Freewriting is a type of low-stakes writing that helps me make meaning. I will read a piece about hegemony and then go to the blog and start writing. I am not worried if the work is polished yet. The physical act of writing sustains my research and future writing, and helps me figure things out. The rhythm of the writing helps me work through complexity. I have to hear and feel the keys under my fingertips. Laura comments on how hard I punch the keys. She says she likes it. I say it goes back to my days as a journalist working in a room with many other reporters who were pounding on the keyboards to file stories before deadline. I am accustomed to writing drafts that are raw and then receiving feedback from others. This happened when I worked as a journalist and as a copywriter. Even as a grad student...I can still feel the eyes of my classmates fixed on my as I sat in the middle of the classroom and listened to people comment on my fiction writing...and how I wasn't allowed to respond because the teacher said we were "dead" during the workshops. I remember classmates, in tears, complaining that the workshops were brutal and insensitive. The public nature and candor of the workshops didn't bother me.

Now, when I am working on our annotated bibliography, I will respond to a source entry. And sometimes that response goes on for 6-7 single-spaced pages. When I later review my writing, I revise with Laura in mind. I ask myself: What would Laura say here? Would

she be able to make sense of this or would I need to clarify? I picture the two of us sitting on the floor in the office and I see her face. She provides gentle feedback. I write to her.

Blog Entry

"Shoulder to Shoulder Google Doc" January 22, 2011

Tonight, we worked on our dissertation at the dinner table. No dinner yet. But we worked side-by-side with our two computers: Sabatino on his Sony laptop and Laura on a netbook. We spread out eight books and four journals across the table and we began composing our annotated bibliography on Google doc. We found it ironic how we worked together, in the same room, but used document sharing software to be more efficient and productive on an individual basis (two writers working toward the same goal) -- and collaborative at the same time. Many times, we talk about the dissertation and one of us will type down our ideas. But when it came to actually writing summaries of and responses to our sources, we decided to work at the same time on the same document and Google doc afforded us that space. We were able to view each other's entries online and make comments in person and reach for books on the table. Sabatino grounded tonight's research and writing annotations for our chosen print books and journals, while Laura ventured off into the digital arena of researching and annotating online databases. All of these embodied acts melded virtual with "real world", semi-public with private, solo-authored with co-authored. And this example of our composing underscores our point that all writing is collaborative -- even if we weren't in the same room, the technology would have allowed us to compose at the same time. Even if we were/are attempting to construct knowledge and contribute new meaning to the discussion of collaborative dissertations, we must rely and build upon prior scholarship,

prior conversations so we can make meaning for ourselves and our audience. So...two separate writers. Two separate writing processes. Two separate computers. One piece of shared writing...our annotated bibliography. (Even as I write this, the eyes over my shoulder and our on-going conversation about what should go into this post are socially constructing the message -- even if one person is typing the post). And I am sure a few months from now, we won't know for sure "who said what" or, for that matter, who even typed this post...but we will know this data emerged from our partnered researching and writing.

Blog Entry

"Sustaining Reading and Writing Practices" October 18, 2012

We use Dropbox's technology to annotate a source and share with each other. For example, when Laura reads a source, she will annotate the text, publish in Dropbox, and inform Sabatino of the addition. Next, Sabatino will read the same source and add his own annotations. In addition, he will note the quotes and Laura's comments he feels would be most useful for the dissertation. Of course, sometimes both Sabatino and Laura will read and annotate one source at the same time. In-person and online dialogue permeates this entire process so both Laura and Sabatino maintain multiple channels of communication. The rote nature of typing out quotes (Sabatino calls this the *Finding Forrester* process because when he writes longer quotes in someone else's voice he finds himself following the entry with his own writing--thus sustaining both his reading and writing processes) and the interactive nature of responding to these quotes help to sustain our practices of reading, writing, and dialogue because we view our annotated bibliography as generative, meaning-making genre--and not a text being prepared as a final public product. We also acknowledge that much--if

not all--of an entry's content may not find a place in our final dissertation. This acknowledgment frees our writing because we are not necessarily concerned with how appropriate the source material is for our final product or how "correct" our analysis of the material sounds. To this point, we shared a discussion about whether we should share such an informal entry in a blog post: Did we want to move a private drafting and discussion text into the public sphere? Ultimately, we decided to share at least one entry because it is so integral to our process (this decision is consistent with our prior agreement to share and discuss all blog posts before publishing the content on our website--and includes the current post about our annotated bibliography). We decided--at least for now--that posting one sample on the blog would provide enough insight into what we are doing, without disrupting the more private nature of our co-generation of ideas. While we plan to publish more about our collaborative writing processes post-doctorate, we also value ourselves as the primary audience in our drafting stage. Thus, this one post seemed like a sensible way to be both public and private at this stage of our dissertation research.

Research Journal: April 10, 2011

Today, I read a few journal entries to Laura. She listened and took notes. Gave feedback. Laura asked me to read a section of the dissertation. She spent time refining the work to "get it ready" for me to read. I offered my feedback. Later, Laura and I discussed ways we can use intertextuality in our dissertation. She typed my thoughts as I spoke. When she spoke, I jotted down her ideas in a notebook. We ended up with four pages: a hybrid of typed and written texts.

Research Journal: April 11, 2011

Laura and I read over the section about intertextuality. We revised and intertwined ideas line-by-line. This is the type of collaboration we had envisioned: a hybrid…a blending of literacies and genres and modes of discourse. Writing together, side-by-side, at the dinner table or seated at our office desks at work. Today, in our home, we were speaking aloud and jotting notes for each other and with each other. We worked as writers and editors of each other's work. We reviewed articles and books together and co-wrote annotated bibliography entries about intertextuality. Of course, we didn't always agree. We didn't have the same types of understanding or interpretations of intertextual theory. The interplay between consensus and dissensus, between learning from each other and from our texts, builds parts of the rising action within the narrative of our collaborative story—what makes our partnership compelling and challenging and rewarding.

I like that we created lame "intertextual references" to each other about Bakhtin:

"Can you finish my utterance?

"I hear your polyphony. But I don't believe it's your voice alone."

"Okay. Let's get Bakh-tin to this conversation." [Still makes me laugh.]

These quips helped us enjoy the difficult conversations we had about intertextuality and about how we will address and integrate intertextuality into our dissertation. These conversations will continue, of course. We haven't figured it all out yet. We may never. But these are the days of collaboration for which we have advocated. I will appreciate these days—as intellectually and emotionally draining as they can be—because we are not experiencing these days alone. I will appreciate our collaboration. Today's collaboration

proved productive because we motivated each other with our enthusiasm for the work. I am excited about the directions we are headed. Together.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

"Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."

-Zora Neale Hurston in *Dust Tracks on a Road,* 1942

Overview

Collaborative: This chapter discusses our research design and methodology. Maxwell's (2013) "interactive approach" to qualitative research informs much of our own design. Maxwell argues that typological or sequential design models are not a "good fit for qualitative research, because they attempt to establish in advance the essential steps or features of the study" (p. 2). Maxwell's (2013) interactive model asks us to construct and reconstruct our design by continually assessing the "interconnection and interaction among the different design components" (p. 3). In this way, we aim to construct a flexible design that provides space for the inductive and reflexive "…activities of collecting and analyzing data, developing and modifying theory, elaborating or refocusing the research questions, and identifying and addressing validity threats" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 2).

Collaborative: Maxwell's interactive model is comprised of five components: goals, conceptual framework, research questions, methods, and validity. He acknowledges these components are not new to research design, but in his model, "the different parts of a design form an integrated and interacting whole, with each component closely tied to several others, rather than being linked in a linear or cyclic sequence" (p. 4). We use these five components as subheadings to organize the rest of this chapter—with the exception that we use the term *trustworthiness* instead of *validity*, a choice we articulate in that section. For the purposes of

this text, we present these five components in a somewhat linear fashion because of the limitations of our medium. In the actual *doing* of the study, we engage in Maxwell's interactive and reflexive model.

Goals

Laura: Maxwell (2013) encourages researchers to articulate their "personal goals, practical goals, and intellectual (or scholarly) goals" (p. 24). What follows is an explanation of Maxwell's three main goals for qualitative research along with how we intend to incorporate these generalized goals into our specific study. We understand that these three sets of goals inform and interact with each other. Thus, our listing of the three subsets of goals is not meant to infer that these goals are not connected—rather we organize these subsets to make our ideas more approachable and readable for our audience. In short, we are not advancing a hierarchy in the listing of our nine overall goals for our dissertation (three personal, three practical, and three intellectual).

Personal Goals

Sabatino: Personal goals "motivate *you* to do the study, but are not necessarily important for others. These personal goals often overlap with your practical or research goals, but they must also include deeply rooted individual desires and needs that bear little relationship to your 'official' reasons for doing the study" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 24). We have three main personal goals for this dissertation (again, not listed in order of importance): (a) personal and interpersonal motivation; (b) career advancement; (c) research-informed pedagogical construction.

First, we want to explore how collaborating on a dissertation motivates (or doesn't motivate) us to conduct our research and write our dissertation:

> A particularly important advantage of basing your research topic on your own experience is *motivation*. Lack of motivation causes many students to never finish their dissertations, and a strong personal interest in the topic and in answering your research questions can counteract the inevitable interference from work, family obligations, or procrastination. (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 24 – 25)

Laura: We discovered early on in our first attempts at writing separate solo-authored dissertations with different topics that we were not as invested in our research. When we discussed how we were just pushing through our dissertation processes to achieve the degree, we weren't working up to our fullest capabilities—primarily because our commitment wasn't as strong as it is in our current direction of embodying and studying our own collaborative dissertation processes within a credentialing system that resists such a project. Day and Eodice (2001) share an anecdote about the material realities of academic writing at large:

> In a revealing story, Reamer (1992) shares, 'I have lost count of the number of faculty around the nation who have whispered to me that they write because they feel they have to, not because they want to or do it well' (131). None of the co-authors in our study spoke of writing because they have to. They want to write, and they have learned that they write better, enjoy support and guidance, and just generally have more fun when they co-author than when they write alone. (p. 162)

No one has yet to ask us if collaborating provided a more enjoyable environment for us to write—or if that collaboration inspired us to become better researchers and writers. It has done all of the above, and we hope to exemplify this through this cooperative study.

Collaborative: Our families serve as motivating factors as well. On a personal level, we can continue to foster our rapport as scholar-teachers and spouses in ways that marry

(pardon the pun) both our professional and personal lives. To take this concept a step further, we would like to revisit our separate but comparable backgrounds. Sabatino grew up in and around Philadelphia. Laura spent her childhood on a tobacco farm in North Carolina. Neither of our blue-collar families necessarily encouraged higher education. In fact, many of Sabatino's immediate family members had not earned a high school degree. Laura's immediate family valued religion, farming, and mechanical aptitude with vehicles—rather than a pursuit of college degree. Concepts like SAT scores and tuition reimbursement couldn't have been further removed from our parents' worldviews. Today, our world continues to distance itself from Sabatino's tile-setting father and Laura's stay-at-home mother. As researchers, when we have needed extra motivation to complete the dissertation, we discuss how incredible it will be to earn our Ph.D.s together—at the same ceremony for the same effort and research—and how our families will be there to share in our accomplishments. We talk about how our collaborative work will make that day even more special than if we each would become doctors based off of our separate and different dissertations. The cooperative nature of our work welcomes both sides of our families to celebrate together—with us together—in a moment that challenges the oft-cited lonely culmination of completing a dissertation. We view that ceremonial day as the realization of a joint effort that continues to sustain our careers but also our families' integration into each other's lives. Our parents and siblings have no idea what our work really entails, but they will realize our work is important and collaborative. Laura's relatives' joy over her accomplishment can carry over to Sabatino and his family's celebration as well, because all involved would be commemorating the same work and rewards. That type of shared pride cannot be reproduced in the same meaningful and shared ways on an individual basis. What a

positive message to send our younger relatives. Our teenaged and elementary-aged nieces and cousins will experience first-hand the power of education—and how this type of success does not have to be accomplished alone. That's a transformative moment.

Sabatino: Second, we want to construct a dissertation that will help build our careers in ways consistent with our teacher-scholar values (critical, feminist, collaborative)—via a doctoral degree, papers, presentations, and a book. We continue to hear how we are taking an incredible risk by writing a collaborative dissertation—that we are limiting our chances for jobs because we will not have a solo-authored dissertation. This speaks to what Day and Eodice argue the dissertation has become: a hoop to jump through for a potential job or promotion. Throughout the years of enacting this cooperative dissertation study, we have both sustained full-time employment in both university and community college contexts. For the purposes and processes of constructing our dissertation, ground-up collaboration made—and continues to make—the most sense.

Laura: Bencich et. al (2002) note: "Why not encourage clear, sensible, and voiced writing from the beginning, rather than insisting on a traditional, five-chaptered, heavily formatted work that will not hold appeal for anyone outside the academic committee? Dissertators need to feel that their work will have an authentic audience and that is has a meaning beyond the immediate goal of a Ph.D." (p. 292). This is a huge motivating factor for us. We wanted to write a dissertation that could be publishable as a book—as we decided that this research topic was so needed at the dissertation level and beyond (e.g. the book, journal articles, conferences, consistent social media advocacy presence) and yet still so missing from our field. At the very least, we wrote to each other as an audience and that helped us conceptualize and negotiate the purpose, focus, and larger audience of our work.

Sabatino: Third, we want our dissertation to inform our feminist, critical, and collaborative pedagogies. Cooper, George, and Sanders (1994) cite Elizabeth Martinez:

> 'It is clear that arguments about collaborative learning are not just arguments about what goes on in the classroom. They are arguments about how people might conduct themselves outside the classroom. If we, as scholars, content ourselves with arguing over collaborative learning as if it were simply a classroom issue, then we miss the point. It is about how people live and function in a democratic society (p. 41).' (p. 40)

Collaborative: Our dedication to teaching is one of the reasons why we wanted to collaborate on a dissertation. We reasoned that our experiences in constructing cooperative dissertation would inform our decisions as teachers who create collaborative assignments for our writing students. Because we view our dissertation as part of an on-going movement that blends liberatory pedagogy and research scholarship, we continue to investigate connections between the knowledge we construct with students in the classroom and the collaborative nature of our research.

Laura: In a 2001 *College Composition and Communication* article, authored by The Dissertation Consortium, a group dedicated to reshaping the dissertation in composition and rhetoric, Fred Arroyo argues for graduate students and professors to

> work ethically between who they are (becoming) and what the discipline is (becoming)... they must ethically invent...the force of what graduate students do not know bridging them into what they are beginning to know, the force of what professors know bridging them into what they do not know. A dissertation, then, is not just a requirement, an insular document.

> Instead, the dissertation creates spaces, 'beginnings': The graduate student enters into the real, unconcluded process of responsibility for himself or herself and the relations he or she is creating with the ongoing conversation. (p. 452, italics in original)

Sabatino: We contend this ongoing conversation loops through our classroom and into the varied spaces of our scholarship. In this way, our pedagogy and practices as teachers take part in a continual dialogue with our dissertation research. In fact, we learned early on that viewing our dissertation through a teacher-scholar lens would sustain our dissertating processes because our research would be imbued with a teacher-centered practicality—a sort of praxis we value as teachers. In terms of this practicality, our dissertation allows us to explore a primary pedagogical interest for both of us—that is to gain experiential knowledge as students who are situated as collaborators for the same academic research project, which, in turn, will inform our own collaborative assignment design and implementation. Our dissertation provides us one last chance to locate ourselves as composition students—in the traditional sense; we plan to be life-long students of our field—who must complete a research project for a "grade."

Collaborative: As teachers, we value and use collaborative writing in our respective classrooms. In fact, in our Writing, Research, and Technology course, we have partnered with students via social media and website technologies to collaborate on research projects between our two classrooms. In other words, Sabatino's students have communicated (via technology and in-person dialogue) with Laura's students—and vice versa—about similar projects they are working on in their individual classes. The students have collaborated

throughout the writing process: brainstorming, informal tweeting, responding to each other's blog posts, and critiquing projects in process.

Laura: As doctoral students, we have collaborated on conference presentations and doctoral coursework, but we have limited experience as students who are collaborating on a research project that will be evaluated by those in authority. Thus, we wanted to experience in a real way the affordances and constraints of collaborating ourselves through new media and in person on an in-depth research project. We are not attempting to liken undergraduate rigor with the rigors of dissertation writing. However, we both believe this type of student-situated experiential knowledge will inform our teacher-situated assignment design and implementation of collaborative research projects in our classrooms—everything from co-creating with our students goals for the project through exercises that aide group dialogue, dialectical rhetorical approaches to identifying and negotiating group understandings of dissensus and consensus, and defining the types of collaboration each group is constructing for the purposes of their research.

Sabatino: At present, we have already experienced the benefits and downfalls of "talk"; for example, Sabatino talks more; Laura does not. As such, we would recommend future research about the impact of non-verbal communication, the importance of what we call *planting the* seeds (ways to phrase ideas, questions, and disagreements that foster growth) in the possibility of muddying the waters of professional and personal relationships. For instance, we have both worked together as husband and wife as well as with student groups who have at least one "couple" or is a unit of friends who must now identify in very explicit ways their roles and ways of learning and communicating within and outside of the "research group", and how this "talk" can blend both process and product, such as recycling

our conversation transcripts and repurposing the material into the dissertation in various genres and modes: dialogue, epigraphs, or academic prose. We argue this type of multimodal, multivocal, and multiliteracy approach to dissertation research and writing is a critical-feminist and transformative response to the traditional hegemonic system of dissertating.

Practical Goals

Collaborative: Practical goals "are focused on *accomplishing* something—meeting some need, changing some situation, or achieving some objective" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 28). We have three practical goals for our dissertation: (a) disrupt the status quo of solo-authored dissertations; (b) share our collaborative writing processes in transparent ways; (c) inform and inspire future research on collaborative dissertations.

Laura: First, we want to disrupt the status quo of solo-authored dissertations in composition. We think collaborative dissertations will add richness and depth to our field—and to our own academic careers because we value the social construction of knowledge. We acknowledge this bias impacts our study.

Sabatino: We want to be clear about our goals to shift current perspectives on collaborative dissertations from an outlier phenomenon (that is sometimes referenced in academic articles and discussed in graduate classrooms but, as of yet, never actually permitted to happen) to a viable option for future composition ABD students. We view our dissertation and our reconceptualization of processes and terminologies as an important continuation of critical, feminist, and collaborative research in our field. We contend our research questions will enable our participants and ourselves the space to articulate various ideas about collaborative dissertations.

Laura: Second, we want to share our research and writing processes in transparent ways. As such, we will provide our specific situation as a married couple that works and researches together–and how these personal and professional factors impacted our research and writing processes. Maxwell (2013) expounds on the practice of separating oneself from research as "harmful" in two ways:

> First, it creates the illusion that research takes place in a sterile, 'objective' environment, subject only to rational and impersonal motives and decisions. This obscures the actual motives, assumptions, and agendas that researchers have, and leads them to ignore the influence of these on their research process and conclusion. It also leads researchers to hide their actual motives and practices when they don't conform to this ideal, feeling that only they are failing to live up to the goal of scientific neutrality and disinterest. Second, this separation cuts the researcher off from a major source of insights, questions, and practical guidance in conducting research… (p. 24)

Collaborative: We have a personal stake in our research and cannot separate ourselves from it. The credibility of our academic work depends on others learning about collaboration at the dissertation level. We plan to be upfront about our motives, as well as our assumptions and agendas. Failing to do so would harm the transparency of our project.

Sabatino: Third, we want our work to inform and inspire both our own and other scholars' future studies on collaborative dissertation research and writing. We understand our dissertation will in no means open the floodgates for more collaborative dissertations. Academia will likely continue to privilege the lone, rational scholar proving he belongs in the field of composition. Still, we contend that future graduate students can benefit from having

at least one source of data to frame their own forays into collaborative dissertating—that they can build on our research to construct their own arguments for the needs of collaborative dissertating.

Intellectual Goals

Collaborative: Intellectual goals "are focused on *understanding* something—gaining insight into what is going on and why this is happening, or answering some question that previous research has not addressed" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 28). We have three main intellectual goals.

Collaborative: First, we want to experience collaborating on a dissertation to construct first-hand data and analysis about this phenomenon. From this experiential data, we hope to problematize long-held perspectives about the practicality and academic rigor associated with constructing a collaborative dissertation.

Laura: Second, we want to collaborate on a dissertation to contribute much-needed research and findings to composition's body of knowledge. We have this goal because we respect and care for the continued growth of composition as an academic field, we wish to build on the collaborative scholarship that provided the foundation for our own study, and we want to advance our careers through a dissertation that mattered to us and to our goals as scholars and teachers—rather than write a dissertation "just to get it done." We hope that our dissertation will provide us with material for various journal articles, conference presentations, and, ultimately, a book. We believe that our cooperative dissertations will sustain us through all of these varied contributions to the field because we continue to value this work—especially because we overcame non-traditional obstacles to get the work approved. In addition, we wanted to write a dissertation that would feed the rest of our

scholarship for years to come, hence the importance of selecting a topic and partner that would keep us motivated and engaged.

Sabatino: Third, we want to understand the context (particularly the who, what, when, where, why, and how) of the resistance to co-authored dissertations in composition.

Conceptual Framework

Collaborative: Maxwell (2013) defines a conceptual framework as the "system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research" (p. 39). We have worked to sustain a dynamic interconnection between the critical, feminist, and social constructionist theories that frame our dissertation. In addition, we believe that narrative inquiry informs our methodology in ways that promote dialogic and subjective methods of interpreting the composition dissertation construct. We agree with Maxwell (2013) that this system of concepts should be fluid rather than fixed, "constructed" and not "ready-made" (p. 41). We are repurposing prior research-based knowledge to build our own dissertation framework. Still, very little, if any, of this prior material is ready-made for the construction and implementation of our specific dissertation framework. This apparent lack of framework material serves as one of the reasons we are conducting our collaborative dissertation: We have built, continue to use, and reshape our framework so future ABD composition researchers can work from a sort of blueprint to construct their own situated collaborative dissertations. For the remainder of this section, we cover three main components of our conceptual framework: 1) the issues, settings, and people in our study; 2) the theories, beliefs, and prior research findings that inform our research; and 3) the literature, preliminary studies, and personal experiences we draw on to understand the people and issues we are studying.

Issues, Settings, and People

Collaborative: Our primary research question captures the main issue we want to explore in our dissertation: How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in the field of composition? To investigate this issue, we decided to collaborate on our own dissertation to construct experiential data that might provide some answers to this question. At the very least, we hope our study promotes further critical discussion about the phenomenon of collaborative dissertations—a dialogue necessary for any type of informed shift toward a larger acceptance of collaborative dissertations. We argue that the current setting of composition dissertations can be located within a paradigm of Romanticism that privileges the written work of one author.

Participants and Contexts

Dissertation Committee

Collaborative: Our set of research participants will be comprised of composition students, teachers, and administrators who support the idea of collaborative dissertations (starting with ourselves our researcher-participants), those who are interested in being able to write their own collaborative dissertations, those who wish to uphold the tradition of approving only lone-authored dissertations, and those who occupy the spaces in between these locations—those who are undecided and have their own biases but who are willing to join the discussion.

Laura: In particular, our dissertation committee includes those we feel are most supportive of and invested in the type of collaborative processes and cooperative study that we strive to complete. Dr. Gian Pagnucci is our committee chair, as well as Chairperson for Department of English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). He was named an IUP

Distinguished University Professor for 2009-2010. Dr. Patrick Bizzaro is also an IUP professor, and previously served as the first director of the University Writing Program at East Carolina University (ECU). He is also a University of North Carolina Board of Governor's Distinguished Professor for Teaching and ECU Scholar-Teacher Award winner. Our last committee member was approved by the graduate school as an outside reader because of her particular expertise pertaining to collaboration. Dr. Michele Eodice is an IUP alumna and collaborative dissertation advocate who is the Associate Provost for Academic Engagement and Director of the OU Writing Center at the University of Oklahoma. Eodice earned a Ph.D. in English at IUP; she and her partner, Kami Day, attempted to write a collaborative dissertation, but their attempts were thwarted, and she wrote a solo-authored dissertation on co-authoring and collaborative writing in the classroom. Their research resulted in the book *(First Person)^2: A Study of Co-authoring in the Academy*, which serves as inspiration throughout this cooperative study.

Participant Researchers

Sabatino: King and Horrocks (2010) argue "qualitative research in general breaks down the distinction between the researcher, who does the thinking, and the researched, regarded as the 'object' of study" (p. 136). As this is certainly true with the use of narrative inquiry, it is also furthered in that we consider ourselves to be participants in the study alongside our selected participants, thus changing "the power relationship between interviewer and interviewee to one that is far more relational, breaking down familiar power differentials" (p. 136). Therefore, we feel it is important to begin the description of our participants with descriptions of ourselves.

Laura: Laura Mangini is a thirty-five year old American female who grew up in rural North Carolina until the age of twelve when she relocated with her mother and sister to a small town south of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Laura graduated high school in the top ten percent of her class before going on to gain a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2002 and then a Master of Arts degree in English from West Virginia University in 2007. She then studied at Kent State in their Literacy, Rhetoric, and Social Practice Ph.D. program in 2007, before opting for a larger, more composition-based program in 2008 at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She began her teaching as a Master's student teaching College Composition I and continued to teach first year writing classes before starting a tenure-track instructorship position within the Writing Arts program at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey.

Sabatino: Sabatino Mangini is a 37-year-old white male who grew up in and around Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in a blue-collar family. Sabatino has over fourteen years of experience as a copywriter, journalist, editor, and creative nonfiction writer. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications and a Master of Arts degree in Writing Arts at Rowan University before coming to Indiana University of Pennsylvania in 2007 as a summer-only student. At the end of his first summer semester, Sabatino accepted an IUP Foundation Doctoral Fellowship and a full Graduate Assistantship, as he completed his doctoral course work over the ensuing fall, spring, and summer semesters. In 2009, Sabatino entered into a full-time position at Rowan University where he taught first-year and upper-level writing courses in the stand-alone Department of Writing Arts. He also served as Coordinator of Foundations of Writing in the First-Year Writing program. At present,

Sabatino is an Assistant Professor in the Communications, Arts and Humanities department at Delaware County Community College.

Collaborative: In addition to ourselves, participants were recruited "who represent a variety of positions in relation to the research topic, of a kind that might be expected to throw light on meaningful differences in experience" (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 29). Accordingly, we decided on three distinct groups that we would recruit from: collaboration advocates (those who we felt were either active and known collaborators in the field of composition, or who are advocates of collaboration), higher education administrators who are actively involved in hiring decisions, graduate administration, or who are program directors, and lastly, recent graduates from our Composition and TESOL program who we considered as open to or involved in collaborative writing practices. Our target is to conduct twelve to fifteen interviews, as this will yield rich data for narrative inquiry if we were able to obtain interview data from four-five collaboration advocates, four-five administrators, and four-five recent IUP Ph.D. graduates.

Collaborative: Below, we have provided further explication of our participants, including name, gender, current institution and job title, discipline, degree with granting institution, and interview type. We have divided our participants into three categories: collaboration advocates, administrators, and recent Ph.D. graduates. We will describe our interviewees according to the categories below, and not necessarily in the order in which they were interviewed.

Collaboration Advocates

Collaborative: The first subset of interviewees is a group of scholars who have all collaborated and are supporters of collaboration. They have advocated for collaboration

through their scholarly work and continue to be advocates through their participation in this study. Note that all of the collaboration advocates' data was collected at once, via a roundtable discussion at the 2013 Conference on College Composition and Communication in Las Vegas, Nevada. We felt that this was the best way to gather the type of stories that fit with our narrative inquiry approach. We were pleased with the direction of the conversation and we were participants and facilitators within this conversation. We would also like to note that Kerri Flinchbaugh was not originally chosen or selected by us [Laura and Sabatino] to be a participant, but as an advocate for collaboration and a friend of Patrick and Resa Bizzaro, she joined them with our permission.

Table 1

Participants: Collaboration Advocates

Participant	**Gender**	**Current Job Title, Current Institution**	**Discipline**	**Degree, institution**	**Data Collection**
Dr. Patrick Bizzaro	Male	Professor, Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Graduate Studies in Composition and TESOL, Department of English	Ph.D. in English (Literature) Miami University (1975)	Roundtable
Dr. Resa Crane Bizzaro	Female	Associate Professor Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Graduate Studies in Composition and TESOL, Department of English	Ph.D. in English (Literature) University of North Carolina, Greensboro (1999)	Roundtable
Dr. Kami Day	Female	(Retired) Professor University of Oklahoma	Department of Women's and Gender Studies	Ph.D. in English (Composition) Indiana University of Pennsylvania (1999)	Roundtable

Dr. Lisa Ede	Female	Professor Emeritus Oregon State University	English	Ph.D. in English (Literature) The Ohio State University (1975)	
Kerri Flinchbaugh	Female	Assistant Director, Writing Program East Carolina University	Writing Program/ English Education	Master of Arts in English Education East Carolina University (2005)	Roundtable
Dr. Nancy Welch	Female	Professor University of Vermont	English	Ph.D. University of Nebraska (1995)	Roundtable

Administrators

Laura: The second subset of interviewees described below is a group of administrators that we chose because of their gatekeeping abilities. We were interested in speaking to deans, provosts, and professors who served heavily on hiring committees in order to gain a better understanding of this subset's views on collaborative dissertations. They were chosen because they each had a connection to either Laura or Sabatino through education and employment, allowing entry to speak with these administrators and professors who are often quite busy. As such, we had the most difficult time scheduling interviews with these participants, so all but Laura Brady agreed to be interviewed via Skype. Dr. Brady agreed to participate via email.

Table 2

Participants: Administrators

Participant	Gender	Current Job Title, Current Institution	Discipline	Degree, institution	Data Collection
Dr. Lorin Basden Arnold	Female	Dean of the College of Communication and Creative Arts Rowan University	Communica-tion	Ph.D. in Interpersonal Communica-tion Purdue University (1996)	Skype, semi-structured
Dr. Laura Brady	Female	Professor of English, Director for Center of Writing Excellence West Virginia University	English	Ph.D. in English (Literature) University of Minnesota (1988)	e-mail
Dr. Virginia Carter	Female	(Retired) Provost Delaware County Community College	Education	Ed.D. Rutgers University (1992)	Skype, semi-structured
Dr. Clayton Railey	Male	Provost and Dean of Academic Affairs Bucks County Community College	English	Ph.D. Vanderbilt University (1994)	Skype, semi-structured
Dr. Pamela Takayoshi	Female	Professor Kent State University	Rhetoric and Composition/ Writing Studies	Ph.D. Purdue University (1994)	Skype, semi-structured

Recent Ph.D. in Composition Graduates

Collaborative: The final subset of interviewees is comprised of recent doctoral graduates in composition programs. We wanted to collect stories about the experiences of others who had recently completed solo-authored dissertations. Because each of these recent (since 2009) graduates has secured employment out of state, all agreed to complete their interviews via Skype. Prior to this project, we had not met Dana Driscoll, but because she was a collaborator of Jennifer Wells, she suggested that we interview her as well. Consequently, this was the only online interview (using Google Hangouts) where we interviewed two participants at the same time.

Table 3

Participants: Recent Ph.D. Graduates Composition

Participant	**Gender**	**Current Job Title**	**Current Institution**	**Discipline**	**Degree, institution**	**Data Collection**
Dr. Pisarn "Bee" Chamcharat-sri	Male	Assistant Professor	University of New Mexico	Bilingual/ TESOL Composition	Ph.D. Indiana University of Pennsyl-vania (2012)	Skype, semi-structured
Dr. Dana Driscoll	Female	Assistant Professor	Oakland University	Rhetoric and Composition	Ph.D. Purdue University (2009)	Google Hang-outs, semi-struc-tured with follow-up email

Dr. Jessica Schreyer	Female	Associate Professor and Writing Program Administrator	University of Dubuque	English	Ph.D. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2014)	Skype, semi-structured with follow-up email
Dr. Jennifer Wells	Female	Director of Writing	New College of Florida	Composition/ Writing Center	Ph.D. Indiana University of Pennsylvania (2011)	Google Hang-outs, semi-structured with follow-up email

Locations

Collaborative: We conducted our interviews and collected our data at The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), via the phone, and via digital technologies such as Skype, online forums, and email.

Theories, Beliefs, and Prior Research Findings

Collaborative: In our literature review, we discussed how feminist, critical, and social constructionist theory shapes our narrative inquiry into composition's resistance toward collaborative dissertations. In addition, we have shared how we hope our cooperative dissertations disrupt the status quo of composition dissertations. Here, we want to build on that discussion. Maxwell (2013) cites Abbot (2004, p. 191): "philosophical positions, rather than being unified sets of premises that strongly shape the practices of particular communities of scholars, function instead as heuristics, conceptual and practical resources that are used to solve specific problems in theory and research" (p. 42). Maxwell points out that "critical realism" informs his philosophical position:

> It combines two common-sense perspectives that have often been seen as logically incompatible. The first of these perspectives is ontological realism[:] the belief that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions and theories…The second perspective is epistemological constructivism. Our understanding of this world is inevitably our construction, rather than a purely objective perception of reality, and no such construction can claim absolute truth. (p. 43)

Sabatino: Because of the personal, at times autobiographical nature of our dissertation, we think it is important to discuss how we will integrate our shared epistemology (social constructionism) and dialogic worldviews (feminist rhetoric and critical pedagogy) with Reason's (1988, 1994) "critical subjectivity" to share our own experiential knowledge. Maxwell (2013) claims the "researcher *is* the instrument of research" and that separating "research from other aspects of your life cuts you off from a major source of insights, hypotheses, and validity checks" (p. 45). Maxwell (p. 45) cites Reason's (1988) use of "critical subjectivity" as a "quality of awareness in which we do not suppress our primary experience; nor do we allow ourselves to be swept away and overwhelmed by it; rather we raise it to consciousness and use it as part of the inquiry process" (p. 12). We will use multiple methods, including researcher identity memos, interview transcripts, and transparent blogging to view our experiences as dissertation writers and researchers through a lens of critical subjectivity.

Laura: In addition, we hope our experiential data will build on the work of other composition scholars who advocate for collaborative writing. We understand our dissertation has been made possible by the prior research of Ede and Lunsford; Day and Eodice; Patricia

Sullivan; Cooper, George, and Sanders; Villanueva. We understand these scholars have written about collaborative writing from various positions (solo-authored, collaborative, tenured, ABD), worldviews (critical, feminist, postmodern), and topoi (literacy, new media, pedagogy)—to name a few. The one common thread shared between these scholars and the work is their recognition and advocacy for the social nature of writing and meaning making. We view our dissertation as multivocal text that will continue to recognize and advocate for multiauthored writing while also directing our contributions toward the marginalized collaborative dissertation. We contend this is a much-needed move toward shifting the composition dissertation paradigm to a space where two or more people can partner from start to finish through the construction of a single-text dissertation.

Methods

Sabatino: As co-researchers who are constructing a qualitative dissertation, we understand the importance of participating in and representing through text the dialogic nature of our narrative inquiry. In this section, we will again work from Maxwell's model when we discuss how we plan to 1) establish relationships with our participants, 2) select our settings, participants, times and places of data collection, 3) construct multiple methods for collecting data, and 4) integrate qualitative strategies and techniques to analyze our data.

Establishing Relationships with our Participants

Laura: We understand that our data will be constructed through our dialogic interaction with people who bring a multiplicity of histories, worldviews, and stories to the discussions we share with them. With this in mind, we will foreground the importance of establishing relationships of mutual respect and trust with our participants. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) advise "All interviewers need to put their interviewees at ease, to listen

carefully to what they have to say, to respect their opinions, and to encourage candid responses" (p. 84). We hope to establish this respect and trust by being transparent about our identities as teacher-scholars with specific worldviews (and thus biases) and research goals. We also intend to problematize the research/participant divide by joining the dialogue as participants ourselves. In this way, we do not want to administer unidirectional structured interviews, but join a bidirectional conversation with fellow participants as we collaborate toward and contest knowledge through semi-structured interviews, oral histories, and round-table discussions.

Selection of Settings, Participants, Times and Places of Data Collection

Collaborative: We are selectively choosing participants who occupy varied positions within the hierarchy of composition, who deal with the "issues" of collaboration and dissertation writing, and who know us through a professional relationship. Our doctoral institution served as the most useful and meaningful starting point for our research setting and selection of participants. We chose IUP as a starting point for our participant selection because the setting was local.

Trustworthiness (or Validity)

Laura: Because our dissertation study is qualitative, we have chosen to use the term trustworthy, as opposed to valid. Validity, according to Creswell (2009) "is one of the strengths of qualitative research, and it is based on determining whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of an account" (p. 191). Sandelowski (1993) argues that in staying true to qualitative research, "trustworthiness becomes a matter of persuasion whereby the scientist is viewed as having made those practices visible and, therefore, auditable" rather than "claiming to be right about

a phenomenon" (p. 2) as a quantitative researcher would do. Being faithful to the nature of qualitative research means that we understand that our conclusions may be wrong. We understand that there are plausible alternative interpretations to our data and to our approach to studying collaborative dissertations. This is the beauty of qualitative research.

Collaborative: We recognize as well that there is a responsibility in carrying out qualitative research to be cognizant of our qualitative reliability, meaning "the researchers approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). As such, rather than seeking one absolute "truth" in our research, we are chiefly concerned that our research is transferable, confirmable, dependable, and credible. Gibbs (2007), provides procedures to ensure more rigorous qualitative research:

- Check transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes during transcription
- Make sure that there is not a drift in the definition of codes, a shift in the meaning of codes during the process of coding. This can be accomplished by constantly comparing data with the codes and by writing memos about the codes and their definitions...
- For team research, coordinate the communication among the coders by regular documented meetings and by sharing the analysis
- Cross-check codes developed by different researchers by comparing results that are independently derived (as cited in Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

Collaborative: Similarly, Creswell (2009) lists his set of validity strategies, including triangulation, member checking, use of rich, thick description, clarifying bias, presenting negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the researchers' themes, using peer

debriefing, and using an external auditor to review the entire project (pp. 191-192).

Sabatino: Triangulation of our data sources will address the risks and help embrace the tricky nature of multiple truths and realities. We understand by not using a structured interview method, there is a possibility of a variation among questions and it may be difficult to determine which information is relevant among such a large amount of data. This is why to "increase the expressiveness of the data gathered," we will triangulate our research to ensure a robust and systematic collection of data for analysis (Flick, 1998, p. 218). Part of this triangulation will include recording collaborative- and dissertation-themed oral histories as well as collecting and interpreting participants' narratives. "Greene argued that the use of triangulation to simply confirm a conclusion has been overemphasized and overrated in mixed method research, and that the use of different methods is most valuable for providing *divergent* perspectives, and thus creating a more complex understanding of the phenomena studies (pp. 79-83)" (as cited in Maxwell, 2009, p. 104). In this way, we will use triangulation to construct deeper and divergent views, and not just for confirmation.

INTERTEXT

ENACTING OUR RESEARCH

Collaborative: The intertexts that appear before chapter four are in place to be transparent about our collaborative research processes and practices. We also want to show our narrative as collaborators as we engaged in dialogue with one another in intertextual ways. Our processes of meaning making unfold in the various genres presented within our intertexts.

"Process Journal" Excerpt

[This collaborative intertext will appear in each of our dissertations]

2/6/2015

Below is an excerpt from our notes in our process notebook. Before ultimately deciding to demarcate Chapter 4 with our research questions, we drafted and re-drafted potential themes that we found within our data. The first drafts took place via FaceTime conversations as I jotted notes in our process notebook.

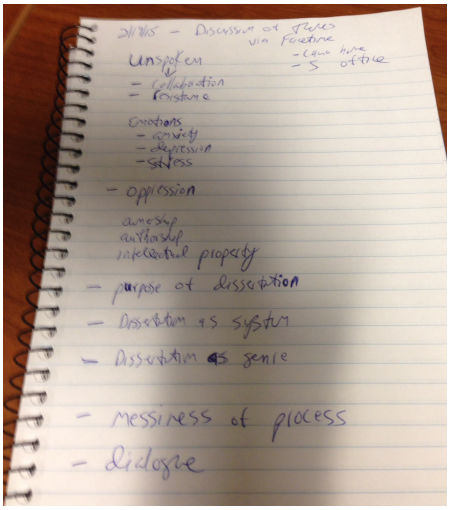

Figure 5. First draft of potential themes and categories for Chapter 4

Eventually this list was typed out and took on the following appearance with themes and sub-themes:

Dissertation as a System

Dissertation as an Institutional System

Institutional Ideology

- Expectations
- Hierarchies
    - Oppression
    - Cultural Hegemony
        - Normalization
        - Dominant Ideology

Qualitative Dissertation as a Genre

- Expectations
- Ownership (shared versus alone)
- Authorship
- Intellectual Property

Purpose of a Qualitative Dissertation

Transformative

Initiation Ritual (gatekeeping)

Establish Individual Ethos

Job Market

- R1 Schools
- Smaller Research Institutions
- Community Colleges
- Outside of Academia

Get it Done

- Present at Conferences
- Publish Articles and Papers Later
- Does Not Model Books

Collaborative Process

Negotiation

- Between Participants
- Between Participants and Researchers (any data on that?)
- Between Participants and Committee

Messiness

Dialogue

Shared

- Take Turns (tennis, ping pong)

Collaborative Product

- Layers
- Shared Ownership

Locating the Discipline and the Doctoral Student

- Social Science and Humanities Influence on Collaborating in Composition
- Traditional versus Nontraditional Student
  - Material Realities: Work (Labor and Professionalization), Distance from Campus, Pregnancy
- Knowledge Transfer (could be a big deal to study at the dissertation level)
- Social Belonging (all over higher education, why not Ph.D. composition programs?)

Emotions

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Stress
- Motivation

- Demotivation
- Demoralized
- (no mention of pleasure...)

Resistance in the Qualitative Dissertation

- Unspoken
- Spoken (made explicit)
    - Collaboration

We further negotiated this list via text messages between the two of us, as (with a toddler at home) this is often the only way we can collaborate. One of us stays downstairs with her, while the other works in the office. We rarely could talk with her in the room, or she is eating pages, shuffling notes, or crawling in our faces for attention.

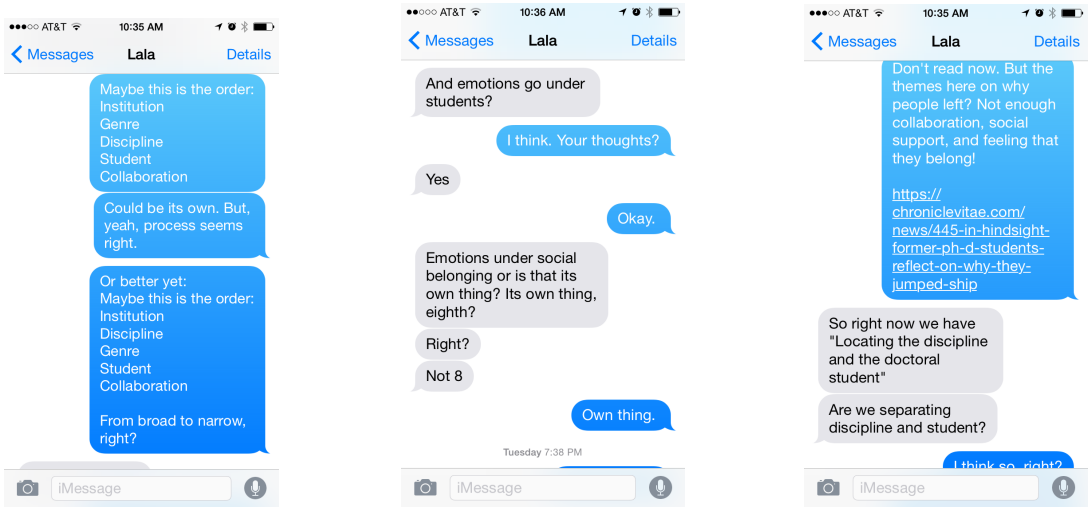

Figure 4. Series of text conversations to negotiate themes and categories for Chapter 4[10]

[10] "Lala" refers to Laura

We then furthered our conversations of thematizing here through multiple versions of a working Table of Contents.

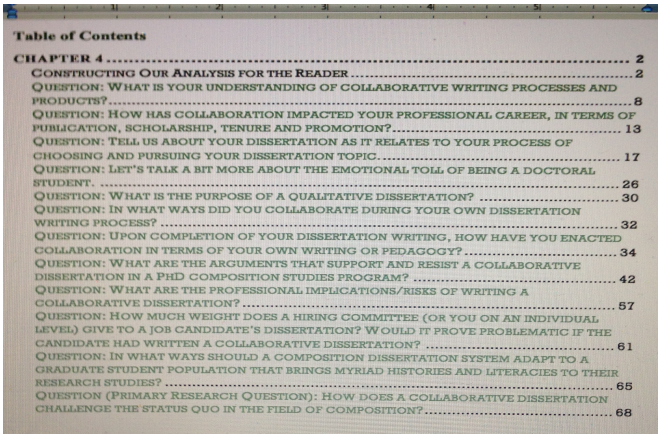

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Figure 5. Our version of the Table of Contents

Sabatino's Intertext[11]

Voice Memo

2/28/2015

I think we have both noticed that when we make dissertation work the priority in our lives, we find it more difficult to switch back into our personal relationship. Not that we are feeling discord in our marriage, but that the way we interact on non-work days is different than the way we interact on the days for spending hours writing and researching and discussing the work. But we have also found it seems the only way we can complete this dissertation is by putting it first—almost at all times in our lives. At this point in the dissertation we understand we have minimal time to finish the dissertation, so we are making a concerted effort to complete the work now.

[11] Appears in Sabatino's Dissertation Only

Research Journal

11/22/14

Today we interview Jessica Schreyer. Nine days ago, Jessica gave birth to her second child, a baby boy named Walter. We offered to reschedule the interview, but Jessica still agreed to participate today. And we are thankful. We feel Jessica represents the nontraditional student we have been referencing in our cooperative dissertation study. She entered the IUP doctoral program as a summer-only student. She completed her dissertation from her home in Iowa, while holding a full-time job as a professor at a private university. During her dissertation process, Jessica and her husband, Jonathan, welcomed into the world their first child, Fiona. Jessica does not represent the doctoral student who remains a resident on campus post-coursework to complete her dissertation. Laura and I are not those students, either. We work. We are parents. From our home, we write together and conduct our interviews together.

Our preparation for today's talk with Jessica involves situating our home and our interview station (our dining room table). I walk around our living room and pick up Elyse's toys: multicolored blocks and stuffed animals and motorized cars. I hear Elyse's toy kitty motoring across the hardwood and repeating: "Here I come. I'm on the run. Chase me again..." This thing never stops singing and moving around the floor. Today, Elyse has long grown bored of chasing the kitty, but the toy is stuck on the rug under our dining room table. I look at the kitty as the toy motor grinds to get loose from the rug's woven tweed and the plastic nose blinks away in despair. The voice recording chuckles and repeats the phrase: "Catch me." Over and over again. I catch the kitty. Turn her off. Put her away. I cannot

transition to "scholar" mode with toys at my feet. I walk toward the dining room and notice Laura has lit two orange candles. They smell like autumn. These candles soothe her. Me too. Laura is anxious about our interview. She gets anxious for each interview. Right now, Laura is feeding Elyse in the nursery, to calm the baby for her nap. I think Laura uses this time to collect herself as well. I can see the two of them in the dark room, blackout shades keeping out the noon sun. Laura will be holding Elyse on her lap and sitting in the soft glider near the crib. She will rock the baby and sing *ABCs*, then *Twinkle, Twinkle*, and end with *Bushel and a Peck*. This scene comforts me. It's a scene I know well. How many nights have I stood at the nursery doorway and found through the darkness the shape of Laura and Elyse holding onto each other. I have closed my eyes and listened to Elyse babble along to Laura's words as they both sing when they don't know I am listening. Voices joining in their own song. How many nights have I been in that same chair and singing those same songs with Elyse. I wonder how Laura listened and joined us. We have told each other in passing that even when one of us is in the room with Elyse, we can still feel the other. So many shared experiences in this room, in this space of mother and father and daughter.

I resist the urge to travel up the steps and to the nursery. Laura has set up our MacBook Air on the table. Skype is ready to go. We will use *Call Recorder* software to record the conversation as an mp4 file. In case the software falters or fails, we have an iPhone placed next to the computer that we will use during the interview as a backup recorder. In front of our two chairs, I place on the table two Word documents with the interview questions numbered and prioritized for this particular interview. In between the Word documents, I place our red dissertation notebook, the one where we record notes for our writing processes, conversations, and interviews with participants. The table spread also

shows three pens (two blue, one pink), two coffee mugs filled with ice water, one Red Bull (always a Red Bull for Laura), and a Blistex. Winter is coming (I say this aloud to myself as I type in my best *Game of Thrones'* voice). Winter has dumped six or seven feet of snow on Buffalo and Sunday's Bills game has been postponed until Monday and moved to Detroit. I am going to the Eagles game tomorrow, and I am glad Buffalo's winter has yet to come to Philly. Our work on the dissertation today will give me peace-of-mind when I am in the stands tomorrow.

As I write this journal entry, Laura descends the stairs with the baby monitor in her hand. Elyse is asleep. Laura places our sign: *one dissertation study, two dissertation texts* on our dining room table. She sits next to me and reads over my shoulder as I write. We have decided to sit at our table because our home office is adjacent to Elyse's bedroom, and we don't want to disturb her sleep. We cannot get a babysitter for today, so we must conduct our interview within the one or two hours that Elyse sleeps. If Elyse wakes during our interview, I will go to her.

Laura asks, "Maybe I should take the notes? I mean, you're more verbal."

Before I answer Laura, I type the question she has just asked me. At the same I speak the words "sounds good," I type into the document, "sounds good." This feels very multimodal. Laura picks up a Word document with our interview questions. I look at the handwritten notes I had chicken-scratched in the margins and wonder if Laura took on the role of note taker because she'd like to be able to read our notes later. We decide I will open the conversation.

We will explain to Jessica that we want this to be a real conversation—that we are not conducting a one-way structured interview. We will explain our chosen method: a

semistructured interview where the researchers and the participants share a two-way conversation. We have a loose framework of questions, but we hope Jessica will lead the conversation so we can contribute our own experiences in response to Jessica's comments and stories. We know Jessica. We have collaborated on conference papers and panels—and we are interested in hearing what she has to say about collaboration and composition's resistance toward collaborative dissertations. It is now 11:58.

Reflective Voice Memo

[minor edits for words that were unintelligibly translated]

1/28/2015

I must admit that the idea of transcribing our interviews did not seem like it would be a very enjoyable experience. I have heard the horror stories from other Ph.D. students and the amount of hours and frustrations that they had to navigate to complete that part of the dissertation research. My experiences as a journalist informed my dread of participating in transcribing the data. Back then, I was always writing on a very tight deadline and the transcription always felt like a big time drain that would get into the way of my process of writing and filing the story on deadline. I will say, however, that my actual experience of transcribing the data has been a better one than my experience as a journalist. Here's why: I usually wake up early in the morning, say 5:00 or 6:00 AM, before the sun has risen, and I walk into our office with a cup of tea. I put in the earphones and I get lost. I get lost in the words, lost in the people's stories and the conversations we share. The outside world has yet to wake and interfere with me.

Sometimes I cringe at the sound of my own voice and at the things that I'm trying to articulate. Other times I smile when I remember a glance that Laura and I had shared or some type of shared recognition at a piece of conversation that our participants are sharing and we have both found the connection to. In this way, the transcribing process allows me to be relive the conversations and to reenter the scenes of action of our story.

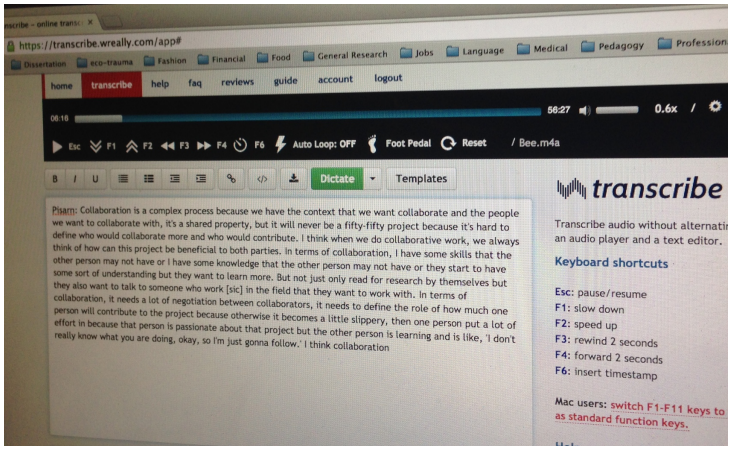

Figure 6. Screenshot of Transcription Software used to show participants' voice

When I am transcribing the interviews I feel as if I am inhabiting the story of our research. I find that as I am transcribing somebody else's words or ideas, I routinely respond to what they are saying instantly. Of course there are times when we are responding to that person in the moment. But even during those instances in the interviews, when I have the distance that transcribing brings, I think to myself, "Why didn't I say this?" or "Why didn't we respond to this comment this way or ask this question?" In these instances, we typically send a follow-up question or two to the participants. I am sure most dissertation researchers pursue this follow-up model to some extent. But what I do in a way that helps me make meaning is that I write down my responses to what people have said in the interviews. I respond to them in my dark office with my ear buds in and my research journal open. This act of rejoining the

conversation, a free-flowing exchange of ideas that we were exploring together with our participants, allows me to embody the recursive nature of researching and writing the dissertation through the medium of writing and through other modes of oral and written communication. Sometimes when I just want to respond quickly, I will pick up my phone and speak into the text and then that file it saves automatically to our to dissertation cooperative email account so Laura and I can then review my ideas. Then I can add my ideas to my digital research journal. In fact, this very meta-level journal entry occurred via my speaking into my iPhone. Once I have the transcribed my own thoughts, either written or spoken, I return to the transcript, I reread the past section of transcription that my participant has provided, and I re-listen to the section or two before, as I read the transcribed text on the computer, to double-check what the participant has said and to reinsert myself back into the conversation so I can continue to transcribe the interview.

Another valuable experience for me involves the ways in which my transcription has deepened my understanding of multiple people's perspectives and provided me with the space to compose on two different levels: the first level involves the practical transcription of words into a document. The second level involves a composition of anticipating where the responses will end up in chapter 4 and considering which answers are answering or responding to our specific research primary and secondary research questions. I am amazed quite frankly at how very specifically I remember people's responses. Even once I have finished completing a transcription, there are times where I read the first few words of a quote and I know exactly what the people are saying and how we're gonna put the comments in the dissertation. Laura and I have had a conversations about how it is more difficult to read through the transcription that the other person has constructed, meaning that when Laura

views the text that I transcribed or when I view text that Laura has transcribed it is more difficult for us to enter into that conversation and make sense of the dialogue. In these instances, the transcriber takes the lead in navigating the text and making suggestions for where the work may end up in chapter 4, so for me the genre of transcription, one of the sub genres of writing a dissertation, has been sort of a transformative experience. Much like I have repurposed the annotative bibliography genre to suit my meaning making abilities and to construct a shared space where Laura can enter in and view the work that I've been doing alone sometimes, the transcription genre has served my research and writing processes in two distinct ways: one, sometimes I use a transcription process as a mere rote process of recording ideas into a document. When Laura and I have engaged in deep theoretical conversations and readings and writings I like the opportunity to transcribe ideas and feel the momentum of accomplishing work that is helping to move the dissertation forward, while not having to, if I don't want to in that moment, think critically about the work that I am doing. On the second level, the transcription serves as a genre where I can communicate with my participants as well as Laura in a second round of conversations. And in these instances I feel as if I am constructing multiple layers of meaning and ways of communicating with the text, with the ideas, and with the people who are sharing this story with Laura and myself.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA DIALOGUE AND ANALYSIS

> ...collaborative writing has the ability to disable the well-oiled machinery that drives the engine of static, recidivist, conservative institutions. –Day and Eodice, 2001

Overview

Collaborative: What follows in this chapter is a conversation. This conversation is not linear. We contend our narrative inquiry not only problematizes and resists the dissertation status quo in composition, but also disrupts, if only for a moment, the grand narrative in composition about how a qualitative dissertation is enacted. Of course we are not alone: the voices of the participants who have joined our inquiry are also part of this disruption. In this chapter, we present the following:

- Methodology: Narrative Inquiry
- Participant Groups
- Situating Ourselves as Researcher-Participants
- Data Collection: Methods
- Data Analysis: Constructing Our Process and Product for the Reader
- Authorship in the Data Dialogue
- Data Dialogue

Methodology: Narrative Inquiry

Sabatino: We value narrative inquiry as a methodology because of how it embraces our own ideals of research and knowledge as co-constructed. In writing this dissertation, we wanted to construct experiential firsthand data about what it would be like to the challenge of

status quo of composition studies by doing a collaborative dissertation. King and Horrocks (2010) remind us: "researchers have a wider social responsibility... to present their work in ways that are understandable, useful and accountable" (p. 139). We view our dissertation texts as narrative cultural artifacts that present our data and primarily our narrative. We include our processes within the intertexts; we share our individual and shared stories within the text itself, and we conclude each independent dissertation text with our solo-authored life stories, as they relate to our cooperative dissertation study.

Laura: We hope that chapter four provides a space for our shared conversations and stories to communicate in intertextual ways. As King and Horrocks (2010) suggest, we have chosen "quotes that highlight the nature of the theme vividly, are easily understood and, where possible, give some sense of the character of the speaker" (p. 165). We have chosen to group our data thematically through how responses illuminate particular research questions rather than case-by-case, because we believe narrative inquiry has helped us build the space to interweave our stories with our participants' perspectives and stories. We view our interviews—our conversations with our participants as well as our conversations with ourselves—as the dialogue that helps drive our story. We enacted our interviews as scenes of action that collaboratively support our shared narrative as that are writing a dissertation together. Our participants' contributions, then, provide valuable context to our story while also presenting background information and shared perspectives on collaboration, on the dissertation as a system and as a genre, and gives us multiple perspectives from various positions within the hierarchies of academia. Polkinghorne (1995) states:

> A story is a special type of discourse production. In a story, events and actions are drawn together into an organized whole by means of a plot. A

> plot is a type of conceptual scheme by which a contextual meaning of individual events can be displayed. To illustrate the operation of emplotment, I will use a simple story. "The king died; the prince cried." In isolation the two events are simply propositions describing two independent happenings. When composed into a story, a new level of relational significance appears... The story provides a context for understanding the crying. (p. 7)

Collaborative: So in short: this is our story. It is shared with our participants. But ultimately we hope that the driving force behind this research is the story of two researchers who problematize the resistance toward a collaborative dissertation in the field of composition.

Participant Groups

Sabatino: In chapter three, we explained the rationale behind our participant selection, we provided our participants' individual academic credentials and their institutional locations, and we outlined three distinct categories to distinguish our interview contexts: (a) Recent Doctoral Composition Students; (b) Higher Education Administrators; (c) Collaboration Advocates.

Table 4

Our participant member locations in the three participant groups

Recent Doctoral Composition Students	Higher Education Administrators	Collaboration Advocates
Dr. Jennifer Wells	Dr. Virginia Carter	Dr. Kami Day
Dr. Jessica Schreyer	Dr. Clayton Railey	Dr. Patrick Bizzaro
Dr. Pisarn Bee Chamcharatsri	Dr. Lorin Arnold	Dr. Nancy Welch

Dr. Dana Driscoll	Dr. Laura Brady	Dr. Lisa Ede
	Dr. Pamela Takayoshi	Dr. Resa Bizzaro
		Ms. Kerri Flinchbaugh

Laura: Of course, our arrangement of the participants into three discrete groups involved subjective decisions on our part—particularly because multiple participants could have located themselves within two or more of these groups. With the mentorship of our dissertation committee chair, we constructed these three categories to provide our inquiry with varied perspectives from multiple stakeholders who occupy different levels of academic hierarchies. While our participants' words, stories, and lives intersect with each other in seen and unseen ways, such explicated hierarchies, we maintain, provide situated layers of complexity that deepen our understanding of collaboration as it relates to composition studies, and enable us to problematize our primary and secondary research questions. Rather than organize the chapter by each of the three categories, thereby providing each participants' ideas within the realm of their "grouping" or hierarchical status, we chose to organize the chapter via interview questions so we could arrange quotations in a more dialogic and democratic representation of each member's participation, including our own participation as well. Without straying from the spirit and methodology of narrative inquiry, we adapted certain interview questions to suit the context and purposes of the conversations we shared with our multi-situated participants, but we embraced the constant overlap of questions and responses that occurred between each grouping.

Situating Ourselves as Researcher-Participants

Collaborative: We situate ourselves as researcher-participants so we can construct and analyze the data of our shared narrative inquiry into the implied resistance toward collaborative dissertations in composition. We contend that there is resistance to collaborative dissertations, but it is often more implicit than blatant. The proof lies in the absence of collaborative dissertations. Our cooperative dissertation study presents meta-data and meta-analysis of our stories as two people who are sharing collaborative writing and research processes, co-authoring dissertation texts, and cooperating in an intertextual dissertation study. Still, we know we are not the lone voice(s) in this narrative inquiry. As researcher-participants, we made a concerted effort to join our voices with the voices of our participants as we shared stories and made meaning together. Our own research dialogue occurred via our conversations during the one roundtable and several semi-structured interviews with our participants and during our post-interview conversations with each other as we reflected on the comments and themes that had emerged from the interview discussions. In this chapter, we integrate our more "private" conversations (shared between the two of us alone) with the more "public" conversations we shared with our interview participants.

Data Collection: Methods

Laura: We collected data from 14 study participants. We used three primary methods to collect data from our participants: (a) one roundtable discussion with our six collaboration advocates; (b) seven semi-structured Skype and Google Hangout interviews with five administrators and four recent Ph.D. graduates; (c) email question and answers with one administrator, as well as several follow-ups emails with recent Ph.D. graduates and

administrators. In addition to the data we collected from our participants, we collected data from our own collaboration as two researchers. While we have shared countless informal conversations about our writing and research processes, we have used two primary and formal methods to collect data on our own collaboration: independent research journal entries and audio recordings of our conversations.

Data Analysis: Constructing Our Process and Product for the Reader

Sabatino: Because our primary and secondary research questions framed our qualitative inquiry, we included these questions in our participant interviews as a starting point for the discussions we wanted to enact within our research. As we conducted the interviews, however, we composed follow-up questions within the flow of our conversations—questions we had not prepared before the interview—to facilitate as organic a dialogue as possible. In this way, we worked to construct a flexible and reflexive position as researchers. Moreover, each interview constructed a dialogue that communicated with other interview dialogues. At times, an interview question that had emerged in one conversation would then reemerge, either through our direct question or through a question raised by a participant, to shape the exchange of ideas in a new context. Depending on the context of the conversation, our interview questions were arranged in different order and re-worded or phrased differently, so we are not suggesting the questions provided in this chapter offer an exact replica—in arrangement, diction, and tone—to the questions we asked in each interview. Rather, these questions provide the gestalt (a composite of myriad questions) and common entry points into the multivocal conversations we shared with our participants. In fact, many times, participants answered these questions before we had asked them. Other times, they asked the questions themselves—either to us or to other participants.

Collaborative: Our first method of interview emerged as a roundtable discussion with six aforementioned collaboration advocates at the 2013 *Conference on College Composition and Communication* (CCCC or 4Cs) in Las Vegas, Nevada, and we were pleased with the open and free-flowing spirit of the conversation. In our subsequent semi-structured interviews, administered via Skype or Google Hangout, we wanted to facilitate a spirit of conversation that mirrored the one we shared at the roundtable. After transcribing the interviews, we analyzed the responses and found that the following questions enabled our participants to connect their narratives with our narrative inquiry—creating a beautiful mélange of personal stories and perspectives to create our narrative understanding. We ultimately found that the following questions or prompts provided meaningful data to answer our primary and secondary research questions and ultimately helped lead us to the primary research question, listed last in bold:

- What is your understanding of collaborative writing processes and products?
- How has collaboration impacted your professional career, in terms of publication, scholarship, tenure and promotion?
- Tell us about your dissertation as it relates to your process of choosing and pursuing your dissertation topic.
- Let's talk a bit more about the emotional impact of being an isolated doctoral student.
- Upon completion of your dissertation writing, how have you enacted collaboration in terms of your own writing or pedagogy?
- How does your collaborative writing process work?

- What are some of the material and philosophical concerns that may arise when two Ph.D. students collaborate on a dissertation?
- What are some of the arguments that support a collaborative dissertation in a Ph.D. composition studies program?
- How does composition's position/location in the academy affect the ways in which we view collaboration?
- What are the professional implications/risks of writing a collaborative dissertation?
- How much weight does a hiring committee (or you on an individual level) give to a job candidate's dissertation? Would it prove problematic if the candidate had written a collaborative dissertation?
- In what ways should a composition dissertation system adapt to a graduate student population that brings myriad histories and literacies to their research studies?
- ***Primary research question:*** **How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in the field of composition?**

Laura: We use the above questions to both structure and categorize the data—to lend cohesion and continuity to the intertextual, multivocal interviews. In their discussion of narrative and discourse within qualitative research interviews, King and Horrocks (2010) tell researchers:

> In our society we give meaning to events by describing them with words. Without language our communication would be minimal and we wouldn't be able to share knowledge or develop collective ways of seeing/constructing the world. Indeed, our knowledge never objectively

> reflects the external reality; it is always a creation (a construction) that is brought into being through language. When we engage in narration, we are using language to construct and represent events and experiences. (p. 215)

Sabatino: We are not attempting to create or construct this story alone; we are reliant upon the shared knowledge and narration of our participants. Therefore, we want to build on the roundtable discussion model that Hurlbert and Blitz (1991) incorporated into *Composition and Resistance*, an edited collection that integrates roundtable transcript excerpts between each chapter. In the edited Hulbert and Blitz collection, the transcript excerpts provide quotes of substantial length and of sustained dialogue shared between multiple scholars. We began our research with a roundtable conversation in Las Vegas at CCCC in 2013. We value the type of data constructed within a roundtable conversation, mainly because our participants shared their stories and shaped much of the scope and direction of the conversation that day—with minimal prompting (explicit interview questions) from us. We joined the conversation when we wished to facilitate the flow of conversation, which seldom occurred, or when participants asked us direct questions. Throughout each of our subsequent semi-structured interviews, we hoped to construct the same type of participant-driven dialogue and storytelling. We invite readers of this chapter to conceptualize the data via a roundtable metaphor, to read this conversation aloud, and by doing so, to create their own space "at the table," and to join the multivocal dialogue constructed in our text. Because we are using narrative inquiry as our methodology and posit that we are part of the story that emerges, we are not privileging a particular order for these excerpts, but rather we are allowing the

participants' responses to travel where they needed to travel. We are attempting to preserve as much of the original context as we can without having to delineate the themes in isolation.

Laura: We enter the chapter four conversation with a question about collaborative writing. This question seemed to be a natural entryway into our narrative configuration, a term Polkinghorne (1995) uses in his discussion of narrative inquiry to:

> refer to the process by which happenings are drawn together and integrated into a temporally organized whole. The configurative process employs a thematic thread to lay out happenings as parts of an unfolding movement that culminates in an outcome. The thematic thread is called the plot, and the plot's integrating operation is called emplotment. When happenings are configured or emplotted, they take on narrative meaning. That is, they are understood from the perspective of their contribution and influence on a specified outcome. (5)

Laura: Our thematic thread is collaboration and our emplotment begins with our participants' understanding of collaboration in general. We use a feminist rhetoric to construct the data into a story, as Micciche (2010) reminds us that to feminists,

> writing is not a transparent reproduction of what is; it is an active construction that reflects and refracts, creates and distorts, imagines and displaces. How we choose to position writing reflects later configurations of meaning and power; in short, writing is fertile material for doing feminist rhetorical work because it establishes links between language, action, and consequences" (Micciche, 2010, p. 176)

Collaborative: Our hope is to use our stories to do critical and feminist rhetorical work that will contribute to the ongoing conversations about collaboration in composition at the dissertation level.

Authorship in the Data Dialogue

Collaborative: In an attempt to illuminate Roland Barthes' conceptualization of intertextuality and authorship, Graham Allen (2000, p.14) writes: "The author is placed in the role of a compiler or arranger of pre-existent possibilities within the language system." This quote points to the author as someone who does not create words or ideas in isolation or from his rationale thought alone; instead, an author's words manifest themselves within a language system. The author, then, is an "arranger" of meaning and not the origin of meaning. In this chapter's ensuing "Data Dialogue" section, we serve as the arrangers of the dialogue data. Thus, we join our participants as multi-authors who contribute multivocal data to the cooperative dissertation study. As co-authors and as researcher-participants, we construct experiential narrative data in two interrelated processes: (a) sharing our research and writing processes through intertexts; (b) contributing dialogue through our conversations with our participants and with ourselves. At times, we communicate our research and writing processes in our interview conversations as well—a rhetorical move that connects in material ways both our enactment of and our meta-level discussions about the qualitative dissertating process in composition. Hence, we both construct and arrange the data in this chapter to present a situated, cohesive narrative—one that begins with understandings of collaborative writing processes and products.

Data Dialogue

Collaborative: The section that follows contains the responses from all fourteen of our participants, as well as Laura and Sabatino as participant researchers, interwoven as if you were reading their insights through the transcript of a roundtable conversation. This is not an actual transcript of one particular roundtable conversation, but a mélange of participants' responses arranged as we felt they answered our questions. At the end of each themed portion of this "transcript," you will find our interpretations of our participants' answers in italics. These conclusions will be discussed much more in depth in chapter five.

Question: What is Your Understanding of Collaborative Writing Processes and Products?

Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, he is listed as the lead author for this question.

Laura Mangini: For me, I always envisioned collaborative writing with Sabatino as working together at every level to ensure that the meaning we wanted to share was what went on the page in the intended way.

Sabatino Mangini: Exactly. We're not talking about piecemealing something or splitting up the work. To us, collaboration has always been more organic…

Laura Mangini: …Like when we re-read something later and can't even tell who wrote it because it's been discussed so much or worked on together so many times that we know it is what we intended it to be, together. Just yesterday, Sabatino was reading a draft of a portion

of text one of us had written and he said, "You wrote this. You like the word 'delineate'. Or maybe I do. We use it a lot." I like that level of collaboration. This isn't divide and conquer work. It's much more tortuous and bendy.

Sabatino Mangini: Extremely recursive...with lots of back-and-forth conversations.

Laura Brady: Any collaborative project expands the ability to check data and interpretations, and collaboration is frequently more time consuming. But how can anyone but the collaborators themselves judge if the work is equitably distributed? Or whether the partnership increases rigor with multiple perspectives and checks, or whether the process is less rigorous because tasks are divided with little integration and crosschecking?

Clayton Railey: I think [collaborative writing] is a common occurrence in scholarly publication. To me, they're jointly researching, they're writing drafts, editing drafts together. It's kind of like a dialogue between two or more people who are engaged in the creation of a text.

Kerri Flinchbaugh: I was just writing down, I guess, words that were coming to mind, and they turned into binaries, and I'm not sure why. The first thing was energy because from collaborations, I feel like if I'm stuck then that's what gets me unstuck, and there's usually new questions, better answers. Also there's usually some kind of disruption from what I'm thinking, which I at first don't usually like and then learn to appreciate.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: In terms of collaboration, it needs a lot of negotiation between collaborators; it needs to define the role of how much one person will contribute to the project because otherwise it becomes a little slippery, then one person puts a lot of effort in because that person is passionate about that project but the other person is learning and is like, "I don't really know what you are doing, okay, so I'm just gonna follow." I think collaboration is cultural because for people who collaborate from different countries, international scholars who come from different countries, they may have a sense, the other collaborator is older than I am, so the other person would be more respected in the process of collaboration. Another thing is experience. Culture. If I want to collaborate with someone from Thailand who is older than I am or has more experience than I do, that person would have more say in the process than, say, I do.

Sabatino: It seems that in talking to some administrators in this process, the understanding of our collaboration was that it should somehow be quantified. Like a 50/50, or actually 60/40 process. But how can we work together and both be 60/40? We could see the logical fallacy in that reasoning...

Resa Bizzaro: My first thought when you guys talked about percentages was how are you going to certify that sixty percent of what you did was yours?

Clayton Railey: I don't know that I've ever been involved in a collaboration like that or heard of others in a collaboration like that where you could easily say, well, this was a 50/50 operation. Some did this part of it, others did that part of it, and so forth. So it's hard to

separate out a percentage of who did what. I don't think it's very easy to do that because the dialogue is so fluid it is hard, and influence is so ineffable that, for me, it would be hard for me to really do what you all are expected to do, where sixty percent is you, forty percent is, or whatever the ratios are, and the rest is collaboration. Or sixty percent is you and forty percent is collaboration. So I would find that difficult…

_____

Resa Bizzaro: I think that it's common in collaborations or maybe just in the field that we just hear things that other people have said and then, you know, a month later we write something up and somehow that's snuck into what we've done and we don't even realize sometimes that we've stolen it from somebody else, or collaborated in a way that it comes from someone else.

Pamela Takayoshi: Well I think collaboration is, the understanding of collaboration, is really bound to its context, like most things, right? So you know, editing a collection of essays, maybe the collaboration is to divide and conquer because you have 20 essays that all need to be responded to. Maybe you take half and I take half. But writing an essay, for a journal for example, is much more messy, I think. It's, you know when you were saying that you have this way of identifying, there were three different things, it was "single-author," "your voice," "your voice," then "the collaborative," I'm like, there are things I have written that I don't even know how I would begin to do that. And part of it is that even when, as a writer when I go back and re-read stuff that I've written a year ago, I don't remember writing it even though I know I was the only person that wrote it, right? So if I'm writing with somebody else, who knows where those words come from? A friend of mine and I are

editing a collection right now on research methods, well it's not on research methods, it's called *Literacy and Practice* and each chapter is somebody reporting research they've done on literacy in practice. And so he and I have divided some of those tasks. He is being the point person on the project because he's more organized and stays more on top of his email, etcetera. But when we start writing the proposal, he writes, then I write, then he writes, you know, it's back and forth on Google Docs so much that it just dissolves into one bigger text.

Laura Mangini: That has been our experience. We keep writing these smaller texts and going back and forth…

Sabatino Mangini: … and arranging the texts…

Laura Mangini: …until it becomes one larger text.

Pamela Takayoshi: What's so interesting is that it's like the implication is that these ideas are kind of discrete and autonomous and they come in contact with some other idea and then the two of them sit next to each other rather than ideas being people talking back and forth until they've moved to a place where neither one of them were before.

Virginia Carter: If you think about it, there is a collaborative process that often occurs between the dissertation chair and the student because the chair, if the chair is truly invested, spends a lot of time with the student pointing out different articles, often rewriting, strongly

editing, changing some chapters, so there is a basis for collaboration, but it just does not look like what you are trying to do.

Previous scholarly research has already pointed to the myriad interpretations of collaboration, which we cite in our literature review. Many of these notions hold true today. Many still consider collaboration as simple piecemealing or merely working from separate locations on an article that will be combined later to create a coherent voice. Through conversations with our participants, however, the notion genre and context have been reiterated to the point of serious consideration for our study. The genre of dissertation necessitates a particular level of checks and balances during the writing process in order for those in positions of power to be comfortable with the collaborative product. The level of distrust and need to clarify who wrote what is perhaps more deeply embedded in this genre than any other within our field.

Throughout our research, we have been part of many conversations where people talk about the collaboration between researcher and dissertations chairs, or researcher and committee members, or even between researcher and participants. We agree that these relationships constitute some sort of collaboration. But these collaborations aren't neutral. We don't think any collaboration is ever neutral, particularly in terms of the power dynamic. Even our own collaboration isn't neutral. Again, we return to this notion of, "What is collaboration? How do we define collaboration?" In the context of how collaboration is typically enacted in a traditional dissertation setting, the collaboration is a constant negotiation between committee, researcher, and participants, not to mention the graduate program administrators and the graduate school administrators. We think it can be

misleading to apply a sort of catchall term of collaboration to dissertation research and writing. So we've been discussing this term of coupled collaboration to explain the very specific type of collaboration we've been constructing as a married couple who is collaborating on a professional project but who also share an intimacy that probably could not and should not be shared between those in the administration, the committee, and the participants. We don't think a coupled collaboration necessarily needs to involve two people who are married or romantically involved, but it would have to involve some sort of personal and professional intimacy where the two people share time together outside of the academic sphere, likely those who live together and so share their lives together in personal ways. So two friends who are not involved romantically could share an intimate sort of relationship that could result in a coupled collaboration. But we are still working through this term.

It also became apparent that when scholars are deeply invested in their collaboration, there becomes a reciprocal collaboration, a back-and-forth that creates a stronger bond with the collaborator than with the original solo-authored portions of text. This type of collaboration is so in depth that it becomes hard to understand where one collaborator's voice ends and another one begins. Within the collaborative portions of this dissertation, it is rarely discernable who wrote which sentence. Our conversations about ideas, arrangement, and even syntax become so in depth that the meaningful collaborative process has conquered the need to clearly delineate ownership.

Question: How has Collaboration Impacted Your Professional Career, in Terms of Publication, Scholarship, Tenure and Promotion?

Laura arranged this section. Thus, she is listed as the lead author for this question.

Resa Bizzaro: I mean at IUP, if Pat and I had co-authored anything, I don't know how that would impact our tenure or promotion because at IUP they'll say, "Well, you can't count it unless you can say that this percentage was written while you were at IUP."

Kami Day: Michele managed to get tenure. I don't know how she does these things. She doesn't have a book that she wrote by herself, but she has managed to do that very well. But I think all of what you're saying is true and right. But...

Lisa Ede: But why is it like this?

Kami Day: Why don't some people who have power make things change?

Resa Bizzaro: I had applied for a position at a school where I was a temporary faculty member, and I had been a temporary faculty member for six or seven or eight years, and the person who was the chair of the committee for the position for which I had applied, came to my office one day and he said, "Listen, I am sorry it didn't work out for us to even bring you in for an interview." He said, "The one thing you really need to work on is, you need to start single authoring some stuff. You have too many co-authored publications." And the person they brought in was a person who was ABD who had no publications. It was very distressful.

Patrick Bizzaro: Was it a man?

Resa Bizzaro: Yes it was. Yes it was.

Lisa Ede: I would like to be hopeful in seeing the difference between your experience and your potential experience, and it's frustrating to have things change incrementally in a profoundly conservative institution.

Dana Driscoll: In my tenure process, which I just finished, all we had to do was have a statement from our co-author saying this is what we did. Usually we just said 50 percent of the text was mine, that included drafting, revisions, and so on […] If I ever had to do that in the future, I would be really concerned about that because most of the collaborative writing that I've done, it's so much more messy than that.

Patrick Bizzaro: I've collaborated on a number of textbooks and articles because I am old and have been doing this a long time, and at some point it just made sense to work with people who share a kind of vision on things. Some of the collaborations were great and some of them were not very good. Some of them didn't work out at all. You know, they get off to a little bit of a start and then, you know, two authors took separate directions, productive directions. This past summer, Resa and I were in... South Africa, the University of the Free State is developing an English literacy... the University paid Resa as a consultant, and it didn't occur to me, I think there was one article that I could find on husband and wife collaborating in English studies. I think it was published in 1982; it didn't really speak to our situation because we were in South Africa... And it was the first time I thought about that in terms of our relationship… as husband and wife, man and woman, and then we eventually worked it out, and they couldn't wait for me to shut up most days so that Resa could give

them some real insight, seriously, that's how it worked out. So this is a new experience. We're gonna explore that, we've thought about writing an article together, and when I knew that you were going to do this, it just seemed that, you know, we're kind of on the same track.

Resa Bizzaro: Pat talked about our experiences in South Africa. The one thing that struck me, you know, while we were talking about this, Pat and I have collaborated for a long time because we've known each other since the early 80s, likely before some people here were born, Pat said years ago when we was coaching his older son, Jason, in baseball, he said, "You know, Jason can never get away from his coach because when we leave the field, coach is in the car, still coaching, and it's constant." And for us, professional collaboration is constant, whether it's something that Pat publishes or something that I publish because we talk to each other about our ideas, we read each other's writing. I never send anything out without showing it to Pat. And I read his stuff too. And so we have this kind of private ongoing collaboration.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: When you go to conferences, we present our work, we listen to other people's presentations, and then we are like, "Oh, this person, it would be great to have this person on for our project." Right? So it becomes an organic form of collaboration. We don't really know that person. We just listened to their presentation. Now, I am going to approach that person and talk to that person and say, "Hey, I'm working on this project; would you be interested in being a part of this or not?" That person has to make a decision. [...] Once that person agrees to be on board with the project, now the negotiation needs to be worked out

because this person comes in with one understanding on the topic, the other person may come in with another lens at looking at the same picture, the same process, same project, we are going to look at the sociocultural or the critical pedagogy perspective or are we going to look at the constructive perspective? We have to make sure both collaborators have to understand it's from this lens.

Dana Driscoll: Some kinds of work require collaboration. What really pissed me off was that when I was doing the kind of work that required collaboration and still being told, "You're collaborating too much. You should be doing..." I'm like, "I'm doing groundbreaking work in the field, what the heck do you people want? I don't want to sit in my shack and be Thoreau out there." So it was kind of frustrating.

Jennifer Wells: It was a multi-institutional study to begin with. We had like two million data points in the end, so even to handle the amount of data; you have to have a team. There's no way one person or two people could do it. If the field wants to do these ambitious studies, we have to recognize in these studies, and the brainpower required in these studies, is going to require multiple people.

Dana Driscoll: I'm in a tenure-line position, and I am working with our Writing Center Director […] even things like the expectations for her, it's exactly what Jenn said. Even when I could get things done versus when she could get things done, or like we when were filling out the IRB, I had to be the PI because she wasn't a faculty member, and they didn't expect her to do research and so it was a really weird thing. Like when there were grants

available to me that weren't available to her. We ended up writing about it, which was really interesting. I definitely think that's one of the issues with collaboration that's really good to realize.

Jennifer Wells: One of the issues why I felt like a bad team member [for a two-year, forty participant collaborative multi-institutional research seminar on the study of writing transfer] was through the three years I was at Florida State, the administrative unexpected constant fires, I had 93 tutors I was supervising, it made it really hard for me to commit to, "I can Skype today at 2." I could say that I could, then someone would not show up to work, there was always the possibility that something was gonna happen because I was the only one running the ship. It was harder because I was a non tenure-track professor, faculty member, sorry, to make the assertion to my chair that I need time outside of this writing center situation to do research and to write because that wasn't part of my job responsibilities at all. I wasn't getting credit for it. I was 100 percent admin, even though I taught also. I felt like because of my position at the school and my position as a non tenure-track admin there were certain ways that I had to live my work life, I felt like, I used to be a little jealous of Dana when she would be like, "Tomorrow is my writing day," and I would be like, "Ugh." I want a writing day because the job didn't allow for it. Luckily, even though I am still non tenure-track admin at [my institution], it's a totally different situation because I have support and research is expected. Now I have a writing day. Mondays are my research and writing day. I think there are issues with collaboration that connect with issues of labor and professionalization in the field.

Dana Driscoll: I just interviewed successfully for a job that was very excited to see my collaborative work, which is very different than my current environment here. It largely depends on the institution and where they sit on this humanities versus social science spectrum. [...] It's not a field issue. It's an institutional issue. I came out of Purdue, which was very collaborative, we did everything together except write dissertations, but some people even did that together. I then I came into this isolated silo place. That's part of why I embrace collaborative research so much. I just needed a community of people to talk to about this stuff.

Our participants made it clear to us that collaborative scholarly writing could be risky in terms of yielding promotion, but it may be more of an institutional issue, rather now than an issue within the field of composition in general. Some schools embrace collaborative writing, while others are still requiring proof or an indication of percentages that were written solo-authored, with an assurance that these pieces were authored while you were employed at their institution.

Pisarn and Dana pointed to the pleasure of professional collaborative writing, the joy of being able to find "organic" forms of collaboration or produce research they consider "ground-breaking"; but there were also many materials matters that emerged through our engagement with this data: employment status (tenure/non-tenure, faculty/staff, tutor/instructor/professor), free time, family obligations, age, sex. For example, collaborative writers often choose who they write with based off of who is eligible for grant money due to tenure or non-tenure status. Those with tenure may have more freedom to write collaboratively because they are not reaching departmental quotas for solo-authored work.

Writing Center administrators may have full-time jobs, but may be ineligible for the funding granted to a full-time professor.

Question: Tell us About Your Dissertation as it Relates to Your Process of Choosing and Pursuing Your Dissertation Topic.

Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, he is listed as the lead author for this question.

Jessica Schreyer: Our program [Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Composition and TESOL Ph.D.] has people with different goals. I don't know very many people who are going into a Research I institution from our program. There are some people, but I don't think that's the norm. I think the norm is more people like me who work at small institutions or even community colleges and are look for a program with the teacher and the scholar thing, which is what they advertise. I think for small schools, community college, even secondary ed, maybe, for certain people, I think it's necessary to give people options that fit more with those types of programs.

Lorin Arnold: Well my dissertation was an ethnographic study that looked at, well I guess not everybody would've considered it ethnographic, I did, but I looked at people's experience with sexual socialization across the life course. I had 25 two-hour long interviews. I really considered my interviewees to be participants in the process of writing my dissertation. We did the interviews. They were very lightly constructed going in, and very spontaneous to the moment. I let them go where they wanted. I transcribed them. They got their data back to go through it, make editorial comments, add, subtract. I remember I had

one gentleman in his 80s who took out his grammatical errors. He didn't want those in the finished product, so they didn't go in the finished product. Once I started writing analyses that also got sent back to them to make comments on, so I really felt like it was a very participatory process, even though in the end my name was the only name on the document.

Laura Mangini: Do you think you collaborated with the committee at all, to the point that they were influencing your writing or would you consider the participants as more of the collaborators with you?

Lorin Arnold: In this project, I think that probably my participants were more the collaborators. My primary advisor was more involved than anyone else [on the dissertation committee]. But it wasn't sort of his major area of research. He does more friendship work, and I was doing more sex-gender work. He almost took it like I was teaching him things about that area, rather than the other way around. I don't know that I felt like we were really collaborating in the writing.

Sabatino Mangini: Much of the data we've collected shows our participants talking about how the way they collaborated with their committee was hierarchical, so you have this power distribution there. To be quite honest, you're the first person who kind of flipped that power dynamic. How do you think a power dynamic in a traditional dissertation committee kind of unfolds and how do you think that impacts the work? I know that's a general question, but we want to leave it as open-ended as possible.

Lorin Arnold: Obviously, there is that power dynamic there. I know I felt it during my [dissertation] process. I spent some time justifying that my project was even a communication project because people felt like it was more sociology. I had to spend some time on, "Is this really communication?" and "What are you studying?" I think that certainly impacts how the project unfolds, what direction it takes, and that was even with an advisor who was very supportive of me taking [the dissertation] in the directions I wanted to take it. I don't think at any point he ever he tried to push me back toward what I would kind of consider the center line, but I think that was partly because as people who were doing qualitative, critical research in interpersonal communication, he was already an outlier in that field, and I was doing outlier research in that field, so I think that probably decreased the tendency to shove toward, I don't know why I feel like that's the center line, that says something, but just sort of push toward the mainstream.

Virginia Carter: I did [a dissertation] that was both qualitative and quantitative, which some people would tell you, "You can never do it. Just confuses everything." But I saw that is was richer. I'm old, I'm 62 years old, so you know when I was going through my process it was very much in the past. I even had to do, in higher education and adult learning, I had to do a two-semester residency of taking 12 credits each semester. This was after they talked about the adult, how the adult learns, and how the adult has other things to deal with. So they talked about one thing but their system was archaic because they did it because that's the way they had always done it. I come from that perspective. I have seen things change. I thought it was horrible. I have seen things change for the better, but we are still caught in our systems,

instead of saying what brings value to this rather than doing something just because it's always been done that way.

Clayton Railey: […] for my own dissertation, which I singularly authored, how much of my dissertation came out as a result of conversations I had with my dissertation director and the rest of the people in my dissertation committee, and how much of my writing was a response to those conversations with them? I can remember, one of my dissertation directors, he and I had huge disagreements about Wordsworth. I would go back and rewrite based on those conversations, when we had one. Sometimes it was trying to adapt my writing to accommodate his perspective without giving up my central thesis. Other times, his and my conversation only clarified more cleanly my position, which he disagreed with significantly. His and my conversation was a very direct influence in my writing of the dissertation. Now, in the end, it was me doing that actual writing. But the influence was unmistakably derived from our conversations.

Jessica Schreyer: I guess I wouldn't call my dissertation collaborative, except for in a sense that my advisor and readers gave feedback that I had to use to change, so that was, I guess, collaborative but more directive, which was fine but I wouldn't say necessarily that I was collaborating on that.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: We all have different ways of mentorship in the dissertation writing process. It becomes a collaboration between the dissertation chair and the student, but I also think it becomes a sort of […] expected that the student would have more input and more say

in the dissertation process, the dissertation writing process. The dissertation chair is only working as guide or mentor that once you have run into the wall, now I need to talk to someone. You may talk to your friends and you figure something out, or if that doesn't really work, then, I guess, the next step would be you would go to the dissertation chair to talk about, "This is what I run into right now. How do we go about this?" Speaking from my experience in terms of writing dissertation, I think the negotiation starts from the very beginning of the process, which is choosing the topic. I went to talk to my dissertation chair and presented three or four topics I was interested in at the time and then we talked […] I was asked to read this book and then come back and talk. So the process begins […] We started a negotiation of how should we go about doing this topic, within the interest of mine, which is writing and second language learners. That's how we started to negotiate. During the process of writing, my chair didn't say anything much. He just let me go and explore whatever the path I was on at the moment. Once I have some sort of document, chapters right? I sent it to that person. The chair would be giving me feedback and I would revise it. We negotiate. Now this is done. Let's move on to the next one and the next one. In the process of my dissertation writing, my chair had some say in the style of writing, in the designs of the research, the data collection process and some sort of suggestions about the data collection process and data analysis. He would mentor me in terms of how you want to analyze your data; this is how you present your data. We negotiated that process. Once I had finished the product, I had the full manuscript, I sent it to all of my readers, my readers gave me some feedback, the feedback was also negotiated by my chair as well, so that becomes another process of collaboration because I talked to my chair about how I go about revising these and those kind of things. In a way, that's my experience. Other people with a different

chair may have had a different experience. In a way, we sort of had a shared interest on at least one, the topic. I think that dissertation writing is a collaboration of some kind because you are negotiating, you approach that person to be a part of your project because you're interested in that person's scholarship, you know how this person work, you know what kind of feedback or what kind of mentorship you will be getting from that person, so it's a collaboration of some kind. Even now, we are still talking about collaboration but we really haven't had time because we are so busy with other projects right now.

Kami Day: I didn't have a full-time job at the time. I was finding that my education was really transformative, and part of it was doing this dissertation that I cared about. And I was older, so I felt grumpy about it and just wanted to do it. I wanted it to be a transformative meaningful experience so I trusted that I'd be able to figure out [how to get hired if she and Michele Eodice's collaborative dissertation had been approved at Indiana University of Pennsylvania].

Nancy Welch: I wrote a dissertation that I thought looked like the books that I admired, so I had no idea either that the dissertation was actually, it had no lit review, for example, it didn't have any of that apparatus because I didn't know about it. I just went out and wrote what I thought was a book, and then came back and defended it.... Chuck Schuster, who was the series editor who published [my] dissertation, [was] at four Cs in a session about how to get published in this series, and he said, "Don't send me a dissertation. I never want to see a dissertation." And a friend of mine raised her hand and said, "But you published Nancy Welch's dissertation." And he said, "I didn't know it was a dissertation." But I guess what I

think about, why is it that we still have an idea of a dissertation that is still different than the books we publish in the field? It seems like that that's part of the issue as well […] we tell students that they need to write a dissertation, get it done, and then do a book, as opposed to imagining that the dissertation itself should be whatever kind of book it is that you want to write.

Jessica Schreyer: I think what I liked about our program [the summer-only residency option for Indiana University of Pennsylvania's Ph.D. Program in Composition and TESOL] it was kind of a mix of traditional and a kind of a new function. I did not want to do an online program at all. I started the program after having a job, a full-time job, but my job did want me to do a Ph.D., although it wasn't required, it became pretty clear it was going to be required in the future. I did it because I wanted to but also because it was a necessity for my job. I didn't really have the option to leave my job for five or six or seven or whatever number of years to do a Ph.D., so I decided to look into programs that I would want to do if I didn't do it for my job, only for myself. I wasn't willing to spend the massive amount of money I was about to spend just for work. Just was not gonna happen. I know people at my school who have gone to online degree programs like Capella and Walden and all of those things, and my department chair said, "Don't bother doing that. He didn't want me doing an EdD, which is what a lot of people are doing too. So I looked and looked and this was the only program that met my requirements, and I was actually excited about it. I applied and got in and so that's how that went. But I liked having the summers there to do more of the traditional coursework. My dissertation process was about as far from the traditional process as possible that I could imagine. I was working full-time, I was trying to work as much on it

as I could but it was sometimes difficult to contact people. There would be times where I'd be slow, or my advisor would be slow, or whatever was happening in life that made it difficult for us to communicate, which I think would have been a lot easier if I was on campus. I actually did go back to campus every summer for a short period of time, just to have some meetings and stuff because it made me feel better about the process. I mixed it in with little trips and stuff. I think meeting with Dr. Pagnucci at conferences and on campus a little bit was helpful. But I could see if I was doing a traditional dissertation and I could do that every two weeks, that would have been a lot better, and probably would have kept me on track and focused.

Jennifer Wells: Do you remember the first time we talked?

Dana Driscoll: Yep. Do want me to talk about that? It was at Cs in either 2007 or 2008. I think it was 2008.

Jennifer Wells: Uh-huh.

Dana Driscoll: So how we met, Jenn and I were both doing dissertations on transfer. I graduated a year before you did, right?

Jenn: Yeah.

Dana: We both had intended on studying one thing, which was more like curriculum kind of stuff. But we ended up not studying that because our data led us to different directions to this concept of dispositions. But no one in the field was talking about it. Here we are. These two students. We have no idea how to read this issue. But we know that we found each other. We knew that we had found very similar things. We would talk to each other, "Ahhh man. Nobody's talking about this still. I know. We gotta finish our dissertations so we can write articles."

Jennifer Wells: I just couldn't remember where it all started. I couldn't remember. At this point it just feels like it's always been there. So Dana and I completed our dissertations totally independent of each other, and I don't think we actually started talking until after I had, I'm not sure I defended or was about to defend, so we both came to the same kind of conclusions completely separate and independent of each other. And that's why I think we were so excited to find each other because we were like, "Yeah, we found the same thing."

Dana Driscoll: And they were totally different data sets, too.

Sabatino: How interesting that you have two different Ph.D. students doing two separate dissertations that investigate the same concept of knowledge transfer—and they both get the same findings. I wonder if they had collaborated how they would have impacted that research?

We asked this question, as it was important to learn about the generative dissertation processes of our participants if we were to better understand their insights on collaborative dissertations. We also hoped to learn, and sometimes the question was explicitly asked, whether or not committees or dissertation chairs influenced the dissertators' writing. Typically, the power dynamic prevented committee members and dissertation chairs or advisors from being viewed as collaborators. Clayton Railey recalled how his dissertation director influenced his end product, admitting, "Sometimes it was trying to adapt my writing to accommodate his perspective without giving up my central thesis... Now, in the end, it was me doing that actual writing. But the influence was unmistakably derived from our conversations." Pisarn Chamcharatsri and Jessica Schreyer described their relationship with their advisors and committee as more of a mentorship than a collaboration.

We also asked this question to glean a better understanding of the "traditional," aka solo-authored dissertation. How can we evaluate the rigor of our collaborative work without a better understanding of others' solo efforts? What we learned here is that the processes are as varied and disparate as ours is from theirs. No two dissertations are alike, and there were no two dissertation processes described that were similar.

Question: Let's Talk a bit More About the Emotional Impact of Being an Isolated Doctoral Student.

Laura arranged this section. Thus, she is listed as the lead author for this question.

Lorin Arnold: Coming from a big university that was an RI, had a really strong research focus, I was doing collaborative work with faculty while I was doing my undergraduate degree, "yay for me," but that's not the normal experience that people have in their graduate

work. I think the dissertation process can be quite isolating, even if you've done collaborative work before you get ready to dissertate because it's sort of like being pregnant, a little bit, where there's only so much you could tell other people about, "Let me tell you about my pregnancy today" before their eyes kind of cloud over and they want to talk about something else.

Laura Mangini: I relate to that too. In that sense, I felt as if I was keeping silent about two of the most important time-consuming parts of my life, my pregnancy and my dissertation. Each was keeping me from doing the other as well as I thought I should be. You can't admit that kind of guilt to someone, and I was experiencing postpartum depression at the same time. Even now, I'm reluctant to admit the guilt of how the dissertation has taken time away from our daughter or how having a child has taken time away from completing this dissertation. Everyone sort of thinks their experience is the way that it is for everyone, or that dissertating with a baby was one way for this person, so it must be that way for you too. It's really isolating. I felt like I was failing at everything, but didn't want to admit it to anyone.

Lorin Arnold: After a couple of months of that, or week or a minute, you start to just think, "Okay. People don't want to hear about my sore feet. Similarly, people don't want to hear anymore about my dissertation." And you stop talking about. Then, weirdly, within the academic unit, so maybe that's at home or with your friends, but even within the academic unit, I know I went through a period where I started feeling a little paranoid about talking about it to anybody. I didn't want my ideas to get out before they were good, and then people would judge me because they wee cruddy so far and I was still working through them, or

somebody would tell somebody, yeah, they it was just big mess. So I didn't want to share, certainly outside of the university with anybody and I didn't want to totally talk to my other grad student colleagues, other than on the general sort of, "I don't know how to put the time aside. I was working for six hours today, and I think I wrote three words." Not about the kind of nitty gritty of really working through the process. Even though I felt like I had a supportive advisor for my dissertation, my relationship with him was certainly much more that I wanted to please him in terms of the output. So I didn't want to work through the ideas totally with him. I wanted to be able to present something and kind of go, "Ta-Dah. Here's Chapter 2." And have him say, "Yay." Not kind of be involved with my own moral, philosophical angst with the process.

Pamela Takayoshi: One time I remember in graduate school that I was working on a project, an article, and something came out in *Computers and Composition* that was about the exactly the same thing and I remember saying to Jim Porter that I was just crushed that I hadn't got it out fast enough and someone had beat me to it. And I remember him looking at me like I was crazy and saying, "They're completely different people; they could not have possibly ended up with the same product that you ended up with. So keep working on it." And I always remember that. Who you are as a writer informs so much what you do that the product you come up with is going to be completely different […] if you are working separately from the same data.

Laura Mangini: I think some of the anxiety in completing a project such as this is the notion that we have worked from that we are the first in composition to complete and defend a

dissertation of this sort—one where we can work collaboratively so much and share data. What if someone else managed to do this before we did? Then I tell myself that it doesn't mean we aren't contributing. This is a real artifact to study collaboration. That drives us.

Sabatino Mangini: And how exciting it is to construct data from our story working together as coresearchers.

Jessica Schreyer: I was ready to have a nervous breakdown right before my defense. The grad school said, "Now you have to have three inside readers." But they had already approved [my outside reader]. So I had to write a whole new proposal and then, of course, [Dr. Pagnucci and I] found out I was okay after I did all the work.

Laura Mangini: I would have a meltdown right now if they said...

Jessica Schreyer: I was. I was in my office crying, like literally crying. Of course, this lady comes down the hall. She was like, "Are you okay?" I was sobbing. It was ridiculous. You'd think people would be nice because you know them. Of course by the next day, everyone knew I was crying in my office. I was like, "I'd never tell people that if I'd ran into someone crying in their office."

Laura Mangini: I try to lock my door and cry quietly in my office so no one sees me.

Jessica Schreyer: I know. I should have. But I just was so shell shocked when I got the email. I was like having a breakdown…

The emotional toll of completing a dissertation is not discussed as openly in scholarship as the rigor of writing. We felt this was imperative to discuss as it pertains to our study, as collaboration can help with the emotional hardship described above by many of our participants. From a feminist rhetorical perspective, we see the importance of discussing the way the dissertation affects the whole person. Isolation is a topic that has been illustrated in past scholarship, but beyond this, Lorin Arnold pointed to another type of isolation, one which springs simply from outsider apathy. She said "it's sort of like being pregnant, a little bit, where there's only so much you could tell other people about... before their eyes kind of cloud over and they want to talk about something else." Beyond the hours upon hours of writing, alone, no one else really cares what you are writing about. Others became paranoid of talking about it at all, for fear that their ideas will be disseminated before they officially publish or finish the dissertation. Arnold also discussed a type of isolation brought on by herself by not wanting someone involved in the decisions she was making. She admitted that she wanted her advisor to "say, 'Yay'... not kind of be involved with my own moral, philosophical angst with the process."

Beyond mere isolation, there is the moral, philosophical angst that is mentioned above. In our research, another type of emotional toll emerged, which was anxiety and even fear. With more schools placing time limits on how quickly you must write your dissertation, there is the fear of not finishing. There is the fear of not being understood, the fear of failing.

Question: Upon Completion of Your Dissertation Writing, how Have you Enacted Collaboration in Terms of Your own Writing or Pedagogy?

Laura and Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, they are each listed as the lead authors for this question.

Nancy Welch: First, Pat, I don't know if you remember this, but my first experience with trying to collaborate on something was when I was a Master's student and I presented at 4Cs for the first time and you were on the panel and said, 'Why don't we put…"

Patrick Bizzaro: I do remember very well, yeah…

Nancy Welch: … yeah, 'we'll put our work together and send it out to *JAC* [Journal of Composition Theory].'And in that case it was a case of, I think, it would go under kind of co-authored. Like we put, this was in the days really before email. I remember we were mailing things back and forth to each other, but I really was just trying to put two conference talks together and the reviewers at JAC said, 'this looks like two different pieces.' So it ended up splitting apart. But that was still my first very real experience with; in that case I never would have thought to send my work out to JAC, so, I don't know, that kind of sponsorship, I think, was really important. But from there, I also, I had worked as an undergraduate with Hephzib Roskelly, and as a graduate student with Kate Ronald, and they have a very close collaborative relationship, and they always stressed the idea of writing in the third voice, two people who know each other and ideas are so much entwined that there's actually a third voice that they are able to write in. And I have spent much of my career not really having that person with whom I find that third voice but instead a number of key people who I have

written things with that are more, written more as a dialogue, so pieces of it are our voice but then my voice, your voice, my voice, your voice, including a chapter of my dissertation that I just didn't ask permission for, and Nebraska was a fairly hands-off place, and I was a closet anarchist, and so I just stuck it in there and nobody said anything, and so it's still in there. But that was written as a dialogue, so one of the chapters was written as a dialogue with somebody else. But I also wrote, I reviewed one of Mary Ann Kane's books as a back-and-forth dialogue between the two of us, and just a number of other pieces like that. But it really wasn't until the past year when for a special issue of *College English*, I was asked to contribute, and I thought, "I'm bored with myself," and so I asked Tony Scott if he wanted to write something with me, and that was somebody with whom I've done lots of conference presentations with and lots of talking with, and so finally to actually have that experience of feeling like of writing in the third voice. But this is for me some seventeen years out of graduate school, of having that experience. That said I don't think that it's a case of, "Oh, you have to be in the field for so many years before you can find that." I mean clearly that's not the case around this table. This year at my university, we also tried and were unsuccessful in hiring somebody who sent us, the writing sample she sent to us, was collaborative. It was written with two other people, and what struck me about that was that much of the committee thought it was great, thought it was a great piece, did ask if she could give an account of how it was written just so that for bringing it to the rest of the department people could have the context. Great story about how it came to be written and also sent along a further piece that they had written with their students out of the whole thing. You know, just fabulous. One member of the committee is a novelist who just had a co-authored novel released digitally by McSweeny's so he was, like, this was completely within the world of what's natural to him.

What struck me, though, was a younger colleague in composition was the one who criticized this and said, “This is unacceptable. This is not somebody who...” You know [this colleague] took the line, “We don’t know how much of this she wrote, we don’t know which words are hers.” And so it just, I guess it struck me that for all that I was brought up in the age of Lisa and Andrea and Kate [Ronald] and Hephzib [Roskelly] and Joy Ritchie that maybe this conversation has not been as foregrounded recently in composition studies so that there are people saying within our own field, looking suspiciously at co-authored pieces. I’ll stop there.

Sabatino Mangini: And like you said that conversation carries on into even if I am having a session when I am writing by myself, and we write together as well, I’m always writing with Laura as my first audience, and I write with her in mind, and she responds to that draft, whether it’s a Google Doc or whatever, so our voices are constantly merging, you know?

Laura Mangini: And we are also using this notion of intertexts, interchapters, between our chapters in the texts to reflect on our process, so we are constantly reflecting on what it’s like from my standpoint or what it’s like from Sabatino’s standpoint to be collaborating together. The material realities of being a married couple collaborating on a dissertation.

Jessica Schreyer: The experiences I’ve had with collaboration writing for composition classes or for my own writing has been kind of more of a back and forth conversation, sharing writing, and doing group writing versus taking different pieces and putting them together. I’ve seen that more with people I’ve worked with in the sciences. I do an

environmental literature class, and they had to do that more where they would work on research with a partner and they would more put their different pieces of the puzzle together. I think maybe the style of writing is more scientific so it's easier to do that, so I wonder if maybe that's why it's more common for people to see collaboration as separate pieces versus being able to actually pass writing back and forth and find a common voice.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: Collaboration is a complex process because we have the context that we want to collaborate and the people we want to collaborate with, it's a shared property, but it will never be a fifty-fifty project because it's hard to define who would collaborate more and who would contribute.

Laura Mangini: We are trying to separate it. How is this feminist and how is this critical? There's so much overlap. Just looking at the dissertation as this very masculine, hierarchal, patriarchal entity, I think that the dissertation is challenging that in a feminist way. Our dissertation has been informed by our pedagogy in that way. We teach that collaborative pedagogy. We teach that feminist social meaning-making every day. And it's definitely informed the dissertation.

Pamela Takayoshi: So I guess I would focus what I have to say in terms of collaboration, collaboration's been a part of my research life, my intellectual life, since I was a graduate student when I worked with Chris Boyer, we started thinking about editing that first edited collection I did, and from there, it's just been a constant for me to want to work with other people so that I'm not just thinking about things on my own. It seems to me that one of the

values of collaboration and having good colleagues is that they help me be better than I can be by myself and I like the learning process more than the writing process, so that really helps too.

Kami Day: Respect, trust, and care with co-authors carried into our teaching, having students work together, we did the research, we saw what happened when people worked together, so that became part of why we made those choices in our classes. If you're gonna spend so all of this time writing this thing, why shouldn't it be a meaningful experience and why shouldn't it contribute to your scholarship and your teaching?

Sabatino Mangini: That first dissertation I was working on felt like a hoop that I had to jump through. For me, this dissertation has impacted the way I look at teaching, who I want to be as a scholar, how I interact with people, I think that that's what the dissertation should be about. And if we can find ways to foster that type of transformation, I think that's such a wonderful and sustainable way for candidates to sustain their work through the completion.

Jessica Schreyer: I teach at a small private school, and we're really encouraged to do a lot of interdisciplinary activities. I do a team teaching of a class. We have a J-term where they want people to team-teach. So collaboration is actually something that they push. They want to have students moving across the disciplines, doing writing across the disciplines. It's interesting to me since I was a Ph.D. student while working [as college writing teacher] that my work was pushing collaboration and my grad school was pushing individual work much much more.

Kami Day: [mentions reading Jackie Royster connecting to her scholarship] My grad students are thinking, "Wow. I can connect personally to this. I can feel passionate about my scholarship and that's okay." They came into that class not knowing that. So this is 2013 and still they are sort of mired in that really traditional academic, don't tell my personal stories, don't even write in first person kind of thing. And to find out that they can admit that they are personally and passionately connected with what they are writing about and that they can tell their stories, that those authenticate what they're saying. These are students now, young students. We still have that idea about scholarship.

This reaffirmed our ideas that scholars in composition are collaborating constantly, and not because they have to. Of our fourteen participants, none of them scoffed at the idea of collaboration or said, "No, I don't do that." Despite the risks of scholars publishing collaborative work, our participants enjoyed talking more about the fulfilling work they are doing collaboratively in composition than anything else they discussed with us.

Nancy Welch's experiences are so varied and impressive that she had a lot of collaboration scenarios to share, from working with someone on a co-authored piece that ended up being two solo-authored pieces, to working with someone to the point that a seeming dialogue emerged, to writing and working so closely with someone that a third voice seemed to emerge. She added that finding a third voice with another took seventeen years for her because she had simply not written with the right collaborator.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri shared a concern that in his own collaborative work, there are issues that emerge such as ownership, "it's a shared property, but it will never be a fifty-fifty project because it's hard to define who would collaborate more and who would contribute."

He returned to a common theme in our research, which is the need to (and the fear of not being able to) quantify collaboration. Another issue raised here is that of negotiation. Chamcharatsri noted that coming to an agreed upon lens to view the world must be negotiated. This was something that we [Laura and Sabatino] had to discuss as well. Our project as a whole brings together critical pedagogy (Sabatino) and the feminist rhetorical (Laura), but how and when we use these lenses was a negotiation.

Question: How Does Your Collaborative Writing Process Work?

Laura and Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, they are each listed as the lead authors for this question.

Dana Driscoll: We sent in a collaborative post-proposal with a third person we had hooked up with at Cs named Ed Jones to the Elon *Critical Transitions: Writing the Questions of Transfer* seminar. From that various collaborations came forth, which maybe Jenn wants to talk about.

Jennifer Wells: […] You, me, and Ed presented at Cs together and from that we applied for, we call it transfer camp for short, so transfer camp was three summers in a row in Elon, North Carolina, and we would be together for a week with about 30 other people, I think, 30 other people looking at knowledge transfer.

Dana Driscoll: It was like 30 in the beginning and then it grew.

Jennifer Wells: It definitely grew. That's an interesting layer when you're talking about collaboration when you are actually physically sharing the same space for hours a day with each other and sort of the idiosyncrasies of how people work. Dana and I work really well together, I think because our thinking patterns are complimentary. I don't think they are identical. I think the things I am stronger at, or the things I am not stronger at, are the things that Dana is really really good at it […] One of the things I'm really good at is looking at a text and organizing it and figuring out how to move things around. And Dana is the most prolific writer I know, and is really good at just producing twice as many words as we need, which is good, we need that, right? So Dana and I work really well together, like again, I'm a slower thinker. It takes me longer to process than I think it does, it seems to for Dana. Dana just like says the most amazing things immediately, whereas it takes me a while to sit there and think. Sometimes I have to go off, Dana knows this, I have to go off in a little corner and think for a while, and then I'll come back...

Laura Mangini: See?

Sabatino Mangini: We share similar experiences in how the two of us each approach writing and meaning making.

Laura Mangini: Sabatino is the one who can produce a million thoughts in one session. I'm sitting quietly and trying to process, document, or think more fully about the first profound thing he's said and he's already thought of something else. Sometimes I just need to be in a quiet place to process all of the good ideas before I can come back at him with feedback. I

actually have learned to tell him, "I'm thinking, not ignoring," because sometimes I go away or get so quiet.

Jennifer Wells: Those processes worked really well when were doing the article because when Dana was like I can't look at this organization, and we still needed to cut out a couple hundred words, those are things I feel better about doing, I guess. That was my take on it […] Dana and I co-authored the article that ended up in *Composition Forum* where we both talked about, kind of, our story of finding each other, of finding that our research was similar, and sort of making the argument that the field needs to look at dispositions when they are looking at knowledge transfer.

Dana Driscoll: I think you guys should understand that this article was like giving birth. We kept revising and revising [...]. We ended up doing like basically three full revisions that completely rewrote it each time, so it wasn't like a traditional revise and resubmit. And part of that was because Jenn and I didn't really know how to make that kind of argument. A lot of it was us learning to be academics and not speak dissertation any more. Yeah. I think, and this is true of a lot of the successful collaborations that I do and have done, it's really important that you understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, and allow that person to sort of play to those strengths and hopefully your strengths kind of help with their weaknesses. I think that's truly the case with Jenn and I. We do have a really complementary skill set. It's actually really easy to write with Jenn because low and behold if stuff that I want to write isn't the stuff she wants to write, when I get frustrated is when she's like, "Oh no. I totally got this. I can do this." Or when she's frustrated, I'm like, "I completely see how

we need to do this." I think this is really important, sharing the ownership of the text, where literally it goes back and forth, and you're both comfortable enough with each other that one person isn't like, "Yes, I'll do that. I'll do that. I'll do that." And sort of like say, "Jenn is good at this. Jenn you take over." And Jenn is like, "Dana, you're good at this. You take over. It's almost like tennis or something."

Jennifer Wells: That's definitely how we wrote it […] it would kind of ping pong back and forth between us […] It was more like, to me, more like layers. So like someone would draft a piece or section and that person would go back to that section and maybe suggest moving things around or suggest rewording or there might be a line that's like, "I know we need to say this. I'm not sure how to say it." And then the next person would go back, it's almost like you're layering things on top of each other. At the end, I can't, other than certain phrases that I know are Dana's, I don't know, it would have been hard to say this paragraph is Dana's, this is Jennifer's, you know?

Dana Driscoll: […] I think that it really depends on the project and sort of how messy the revision process gets […] that even if at one point I would've been able to label what sections I had written and what sections Jenn had written, that wouldn't have been a helpful thing to do after probably the second major revision.

Jennifer Wells: Right.

Dana Driscoll: So it gets […] layered, like Jenn says. I really like that. That concept.

Sabatino: Me too.

Jennifer Wells: I would love to write again with Dana because I think the product was amazing, obviously. It was much better than anything I could've written alone.

Jennifer Wells: I am extroverted at work but other than that I'm actually drained by spending a lot of time with people, and half of our team is like that with the Elon group. Half of us or maybe two and a half of us are more, we need time away from each other to process and think. And when you're in this week long camp situation where you're like living together, eating together, working together, and you've got kind of type A sort of super extroverted people who don't necessarily understand that sometimes the best way for people to function and do work is to separate for a little bit. It's almost like there should be personality quizzes before you sign up to collaborate. You have to be complementary. You can't have two introverted people like me. I couldn't work with myself. It doesn't work as well when it's a clash, I guess.

Laura Mangini: I could never have collaborated with myself. I would have told myself to go away and let me figure it out on my own. I would have exceled at co-authoring with another me, but not collaborating. Sabatino and I collaborate so well together because we complement one another's skills.

Sabatino Mangini: Laura and I are each enormously supportive of each other's ideas and respectful of our own opinions, but we aren't afraid to discuss areas where we may disagree.

I don't know if all collaborators feed off of their differences and strengths like we do, but it's proven helpful.

Personality figured heavily in this section, as choosing your collaborators wisely has emerged as an area of importance. Jenn, for example, noted that she would not be able to work with herself, as she is extremely introverted. Similarly, we [Laura and Sabatino] work well together often because of our differences, not in spite of them. Similarly, Pamela Takayoshi added, "One of the values of collaboration and having good colleagues is that they help me be better than I can be by myself and I like the learning process more than the writing process."

Question: What are Some of the Arguments That Support a Collaborative Dissertation in a Ph.D. Composition Studies Program?

Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, he is listed as the lead author for this question.

Patrick Bizzaro: [Nancy Welch] had said something earlier about having been in the profession for seventeen years, which, to a certain extent, gives you license to collaborate, but maybe you didn't have that same option when you were younger. I want to tell a story. Forgive me. Laura and Sabatino were in my Rhetorical Traditions class. Two very good students. First paper, they both did real well. Then the second paper, I could see that they were starting to become a couple, a lot of flirting. And so Sabatino came to me in my office, and I just mentioned that to you, and he said, "I'd really like to collaborate with Laura." Of

course, the sick brain was like, “Well of course. I could see that.” But I was really kind of skeptical of that idea at first. But then Laura said, “Well how about Sabatino and I collaborating on this paper.” And we took it more seriously then. But I cannot say why. I am sorry, man. But now everything is played through, they are fully mature, their eyes are open, they are ready to write [a dissertation] together, and I haven’t had a second thought. But I wonder if that doesn’t play into Laura’s talk as well, about kind of, I was a little bit cynical about Sabatino’s seriousness in doing this. Do you remember, an issue I brought home and had to talk to Resa about it, “I am kind of uncomfortable because, you know, I like them both, and I know that they are going to do excellent work.” The paper you wrote was terrific; I thought that Laura did most of the work...

Sabatino Mangini: I think that’s one of my anxieties. Maybe some of it comes from our collaboration in that Rhetorical Traditions class. I got this sense that he thought I was not doing the work. I think I still bring the anxiety, this need to prove my ethos, to the people who are judging my work. I say this because I sometimes don’t think I fit the mold of what a scholar should look and sound like, as if I am an “outlier,” to use Lorin’s term. And I think Pat’s on our side. He’s been an advocate for us. I think he was trying to articulate the risk he took on as a teacher who permitted two grad students to collaborate on a course paper, and how as students we didn’t have much power in that situation, that as the teacher, he made the decision that would impact our work in that class. So he was drawing a parallel between being a grad student in class and maybe being a grad student working on a Ph.D.? Still, I think his story could be viewed in both positive and negative ways from other people who weren’t involved.

Laura Mangini: I remember the situation slightly different than Pat. I recall sitting across the room from you and I believe any flirting occurred after class, if not after the semester had ended. But I think it was clear that we were getting closer through working together in class. Our ability to work so well together could have been mistaken for something else.

Lorin Arnold: I think collaborative work [during the dissertation process] could kind of give somebody that space to really work through. We can pretend like by the time you get to the dissertation that you just know stuff, and you're just ready to apply this stuff that you know to some situation. I'm still, and it's 20 years later, digging through it and wrestling with it. You have eight ideas and seven are stupid. You kind of need somebody you can do that with. Steps off soapbox.

Laura Mangini: I try to remind myself that those who have already completed their dissertations are just that—people, other scholars, who have already finished their dissertations. I think that's one of the reasons collaboration makes sense to me. We are collaborating, like we do in the real world, with other scholars. Completing this "thing" by ourselves as opposed to with like-minded people doesn't make it come out on the other side as somehow more complete.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: For me, I'm okay with [a collaborative dissertation […] If two students approached me, I would say one thing that I need to see is the amount of work each student put into the dissertation, either counting how many words you write in there or how many hours you've put in there, in terms of talking or working together, how many hours

you've worked literally, if they have those documented along the way, it could be argued it's a collaborative dissertation but each of them also have done the work that one student would have done for one dissertation. I would need to see a clear documentation, sort of a documentation of like this how much we have done individually and this how much we have done together. It is a collaboration. We have to see both.

This section is thinner, but necessary; the narrow scope of this section speaks to the lack of knowledge people have about working collaboratively at the dissertation level. It is still a genre which people are not completely certain how to regard. We feel that the lack of findings from our participants can be as telling as a plethora of feedback. What is apparent is that our participants point out repeatedly that dissertators are scholars when they enter into dissertating, and they are still scholars once they receive a Ph.D. Lorin Arnold pointed out that having a partner would allow you more freedom to work through ideas and to broaden your own scope of knowledge. Others have echoed the notion that having someone to work with on the dissertation would have been more motivating and less isolating that working alone. There was so much data speaking about motivation that we have included it as a separate question to be answered below.

Question: How Would Writing a Collaborative Dissertation Affect Issues of Motivation or Lack/loss of Motivation in Dissertation Writing?

Laura arranged this section. Thus, she is listed as the lead author for this question.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: I talk about this issue a lot with my students, both graduate and undergraduate too. I let them choose their own topics for their papers. If a writer has passion to work on some topics, I think that writer or that author will be motivated to work on it because of their interest in the topic, no one needs to push them because they are so passionate about the topic, they want to learn more about the topic, they want to read, they want to find new knowledge or things about the topic. It is really important to be passionate, to be motivated in the dissertation writing process, it is a really really lonely experience to write the dissertation because once we enter into Chapter 1, Chapter 2, basically the only person you can talk to regarding the topic is your mentor, and that's it. Or other people who share the same interest. And the rest, if you talk to them, they're gonna be like, "Oh yeah. Okay." You know? And that's it. Because they don't even know anything about it. They can't even share or say anything about it. Motivation and passion is important to be able to finish the dissertation. It's not like you write your dissertation for a week or two weeks or a month. It becomes a baby of some form, right? You nurture that text for two years, three years, right? Of course, there will be times that your motivation will be like, "Oh my gosh. I'm so tired. I don't want to do this anymore. I'm done." Right? And then you have to pick yourself up, "Okay, let's do this one more time. Let's get it done."

Jessica Schreyer: I think about my own experience, and I think it would have been difficult to collaborate with somebody on that [dissertation] for that length of time. I also wonder, there were times when I was completely stalled on my dissertation for a variety of reasons, and I wonder if somebody else was stalling at different times and how they may have impacted me.

Laura Mangini: That was a constant concern of mine, stalling. Life stalls us. What is hopeful in terms of thinking of collaborative dissertations is that when we stall, it's helpful to have someone else to hold you accountable, someone else relying on you. It's a lot like motherhood, or parenthood, I should say. You make more responsible decisions sometimes when someone else is counting on you to pull yourself up. The dissertation is like a baby; we can't just let it lie there.

Sabatino: So we take turns between parent, writer, researcher, and teacher because so much of these identities fill our home. I know when I have to write alone in our home office and Laura is with Elyse, the first thing I do after the session is to summarize what I have been working on. I think it keeps us connected on the work, and it motivates me to talk to Laura, and I hope it motivates Laura for her writing session.

Jessica Schreyer: I had a few friends here who were kind of like that function for me, but they weren't writing, so they couldn't fully understand it. But they were trying to push me along. I had a goal of mailing my three chapters right before I had Fiona. So I literally mailed it the day before I had her. I think they were pushing me to say, "You're not going to want to do this the first 12 weeks she's born." So I ended up mailing it and I think it was because of their pushing, which I think having a partner, if it's the right partner, could be motivating for sure. I think having a dissertation group of some kind, which I didn't have; I think would also be helpful. I think that's part of the problem with the programs that are kind of developing right now, like our program and online programs, people don't have the kind of built-in social function that they would have if they were on campus, which I see working on a

dissertation with someone who is physically near you, especially. I think that's probably the most useful kind of collaboration for that size of project, at least for me.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: Writing the dissertation by ourselves is very challenging, I think. With collaborative dissertation writing, it can be also beneficial but it can also be, I don't want to say detrimental, but it could also be demotivating as well. Yes. Two people can be disappointing each other, right? On writing it. On finishing it. And they can be supporting each other to not to finish it because when one person is down, the other person is like, "Well, I sort of agree as well." I guess you have to be able to, a person or a partner are always sort of look at things from the bright side. That person who is always like, "Hey, let's get it done. Let's do this. Yes, you're tired. You can take off for a week and now we have to go back to it. We need to get it done." […] I think with a collaborative dissertation, it's also tricky. When you talked to each other at the beginning of the process, it was fresh, it was new, it was fun to imagine working with this person. But living with this person through work for so long, it become sort of like, "Oh my gosh. When are we getting done with this?" Or it might actually get into a personal level, get into a fight. They might get into an intellectual fight, those type of things. It could happen. It could go both ways, right? It could go really well. It could go bad.

Sabatino Mangini: I think our dissertation partnership has had a little of both motivation and demotivation, right? There were times where one of use really motivated the other. And then other times, we were like, "Let's just go to dinner tonight." I think the more intimate nature of our relationship, through each of its stages, dating, engaged, married, married with a

daughter, has impacted us in ways that may have been different if we were situated in the roles of just coresearchers. In fact, I am sure of it. I think we kind of read our lives in these moments and determine if and when is the right time to work together. We feel it out. Because we know what each of us is going through with work and family and all of the other personal stuff. If I know you are really stressed at work, I don't want to add onto that pressure with dissertation talk. Remember when you were working on that institutional self-study while you were pregnant? Now, I am working on my tenure project. I mean, these are difficult times to carve out the necessary time to also work on the dissertation, so we give each other space. Maybe too much space sometimes. We prioritize the personal over the professional. But if we weren't living together and sharing our lives, if we were just getting together to work, or communicating via email and phone, we might feel more pressure to produce work on a more regular basis because we wouldn't necessarily share our stresses or workloads with each other in the same way we do as husband and wife. I know in other collaborations, especially when the labor is divided in terms of the text itself and the physical spaces we occupy while we write, and communication occurs mainly through email, I always feel that pressure to prove to the other people that I am doing my share, on time. Because we are together all the time, we know the amount of work we are putting into the dissertation, so that pressure to prove our contributions gets muted a bit.

Patrick Bizzaro: I have three students who have now gone more than two years without sending me anything. If they could collaborate, that could loosen the whole thing.

Jessica Schreyer: Obviously having a child throws a whole other wrench in the timeline. So traditionally I would say I was totally off the rails.

Sabatino Mangini: Laura and I have been huge motivators for one another throughout this process, but being in a personal relationship with your partner can be demotivating at times too. There were times when I knew that Laura wasn't in the place to write or to talk about the dissertation. It was hard for both of us after Elyse [our daughter] to commit to writing regularly. When you have a colicky baby and are barely hanging on with four hours of sleep, talking about the dissertation was on the back burner for quite some time.

Laura Mangini: Having a child during the dissertation process is definitely something we don't talk about—it's not even considered in the "seven year, finish or perish" outlook that some women who dissertate may be, probably are, at a child-rearing age. I always felt as if putting a deadline on the amount of time we had to finish the dissertation was asking us to make some pretty major life choices ahead of time. When I started the dissertation, I wasn't married, but obviously the process needed to speed up or at times, slow down or halt because I was pregnant, dealing with morning sickness, or an unplanned C-section, or post partum. How do you work that real life stuff into your plan allotting a time limit to completing the dissertation? I wonder if working collaboratively made this take longer... but I definitely think it stopped me from giving up during the low points. I knew someone else was relying on me to work on it as well. Not just for me, which I may have been willing to give up on in those darker moments, to be honest.

Jessica Schreyer: As far as myself, I don't know that I would've wanted to do a dissertation collaboratively. I got frustrated enough with myself. I don't know if I would've been the best partner for that type of project. I like it for a more manageable size of project for myself, for an article or a book chapter or something. I think having a partner, but not writing a dissertation together, would have been my ideal situation, where maybe it's similar topics but different dissertations, or just similar personalities or maybe different personalities, I don't know. Someone that I felt like was a good match for pushing me forward. Me and K are still good friends and chat and stuff. We have totally different writing styles. She is very organized. She'll write down how many pages she's going to write and write those number of pages exactly and be done. That's just not me. Sometimes, I would sit down and write a ton and other times I'd sit down and end up with one page and just want to die. She was motivating to me because she was moving forward, but at times I'd be frustrated with myself because I'd be like, "Ugh, she wrote 20 pages this week, and I wrote two, and I suck." I think sometimes it was almost demotivating because I could not keep the pace, although she would have never wanted that. She wasn't making me feel that way. I just felt that way. Our lives are completely different, and so I knew that internally. But I think certain partners are better than others. People will probably will be more in my boat.

The notions of motivation and lack of motivation were factors we had never anticipated would play so prominently in our research and data collection. We soon realized, however, that the motivation to continue with a dissertation is directly connected to the level of isolation that the writer feels. Motherhood also played prominently in this section, as we

noticed that Laura was not the only one whose motivation was affected greatly by the becoming a mother.

The recent graduates we interviewed spoke of the need to have someone to function as motivators during the writing process, which is a built-in function of working collaboratively. Pisarn Chamcharatsri and Jessica Schreyer each mentioned how having a collaborative partner during the dissertation process could motivate the other not to give up, or stall, on the dissertation. Chamcharatsri cautions, however, that you may have momentum in the beginning of a product that could wane later on, especially if you grow tired of working with your partner.

Question: What are Some of the Material and Philosophical Concerns That may Arise When two Ph.D. Students Collaborate on a Dissertation?

Laura arranged this section. Thus, she is listed as the lead author for this question.

Pamela Takayoshi: Well we actually did have a conversation about [two students asking to dissertate collaboratively] in my department, in my program, because we had two students who have since decided not to do that, but they were sort of tossing around the idea and trying to work out what it would look like. Another faculty member in my program and I talked about it because it looked like possibly he would direct one of the students and I would direct another. And what ultimately we thought of a solution to this is that they would be collaboratively collecting data. We are a very social sciencey program, so people are collecting data and analyze data in their dissertations almost always here. We don't have very many theoretical dissertations. So we thought the model might be that the two of them would

collect their data, analyze it, work on a research team together, and then write their own thing from it, because the study itself was going to yield so much data than they could possibly deal with in one dissertation, so it seemed like a perfect model to have two different takes on this data. I thought this would be super cool because [my colleague] and I could further then maybe write something reflecting on how these two products came out of the same raw data, which I think is a really interesting project to think about doing. They ultimately ended up not doing it. They ended up going off in different directions on projects, so it didn't come to fruition.

Sabatino Mangini: Was there any level of concern about their [the two Ph.D. students who approached Pamela Takayoshi to write a collaborative dissertation] marketability once they received their degrees?

Pamela Takayoshi: We did talk through that, yeah. Because the problem on our end was thinking about the two of them going out on the market on the same time and looking too much alike. But we fear that in our program anyway. Next year's graduating class will be seven people, and that's a lot of Kent State people to go out on the market at once. And even though there are seven of them doing completely different projects, we still worry about a class that big and people getting mistaken for one another. So that was a concern for us with those two women. But you know, who knows what might have happened?

Jennifer Wells: You can collaborate on a book, you can collaborate on an article, you can collaborate on research, oh, but you cannot collaborate to do a dissertation together. So

everything else is totally fine and is modeled by professors at IUP. Ben [Rafoth] collaborates with his students on kinds of different stuff, you know? Until it's this. And then it's like nope.

Laura Mangini and Sabatino Mangini [via email to Laura Brady]: If two students asked you to chair or to serve as a reader for a collaborative dissertation, what would your response be?

Laura Brady: No. I welcome and support all sorts of other collaborative projects, but I think the candidates would do themselves a disservice with a collaborative dissertation... [...] A dissertation provides a key credential. Where other fields have certification boards/exams (such as law and medicine), our field largely relies on the completion of a sustained scholarly work to establish qualification for degree.

Virginia Carter: I think there are younger people such as yourself … [and] your wife [Laura Mangini] who are thinking differently. The big distinction, I think, has to be on quality and not on form. But we get stuck on form because that's how people have operated. Big institutions tend to operate, at Temple if you're going to be tenured in English you have to publish. You cannot publish with somebody else. You have to publish as a single author. That is part of it. It's almost like a written set of rules. Well that needs to be challenged, especially in an area such as writing, such as composition. We talk about the world working based upon collaboration. Even good research in the sciences is a collaborative process at some point. Yes, each person has to understand what it is value and what is quality, but one person alone is not going to bring about change. It takes a group. I think we are at the

precipice where people such as yourself raise these questions about our systems. Do they work? If they don't work, what other ways can we achieve the quality without doing it the way we've always done it?

Laura Mangini: We don't really know, but we found that people want to put an identity to certain sections of certain ideas, just based off of meeting us or talking to us. Oh, that sounds more like Sabatino or that sounds more like Laura... but we're really not sure.

Sabatino Mangini: I think one of the things we're trying to look at, even at our three chapter meeting, there were these kind of indications, "Well who? I thought you wrote that section. Is that true?"

Jessica Schreyer: If [the text] is not becoming one, if it's kind of separate, or like a back and forth conversation […] I think if you find at least some common features, I think it becomes less crucial that people know exactly who's saying what and more that you have a common message. [...]

Laura Mangini: Do you remember when they were asking you if you had written the sections about oppression? They assumed you were writing it because of your tone. For some reason, they associated a more liberal tone with you.

Sabatino Mangini: Yeah, I think they equate my louder voice, maybe, or my more aggressive personality compared to yours with the style of writing I would put into the text. I think they

also attribute the discourse of critical pedagogy to me more so than you. How many times have we talked about the tone of our language in the writing?

Laura Mangini: Totally. I think, probably, as a feminist, I am more likely to label a system as oppressive than you are. I think the sections they were attributing, or assuming attribution to you, were sections I had primarily written myself. I think you actually asked me if that's the tone we wanted to create.

Jessica Schreyer: For the literature review you're using other people's thoughts and ideas to construct some sort of understanding for your own dissertation, so you're like collaborating between the texts, but it's not the same as collaborating with a real live person.

Sabatino Mangini: Yet, the resistance exists. In the literature review and throughout the written texts of the dissertation, we are collaborating with other written scholarship intertextually. We collaborate with our committee members and our colleagues and our spouses. All of this comes into what we write, albeit through different social systems and social power. But "a real live person" raises so many concerns.

Lisa Ede: This is so complicated but, I was, last night at the Coalition of Women Scholars, part of a mentoring round table on mentoring people to full professor positions, and I think we don't have a Ph.D. in my department, and so this is not an issue that has arisen, but I think that the best, not argument and not defense, but I think that many people are unaware of just how extraordinarily deep, ideologically, and deep and wide institutionally, the resistance to

this kind of explicit co-authorship is. And we were talking last night about what it takes to be promoted to full professor. And it takes somebody, probably multiple people, mentoring you for two or three years, having an understanding of the institutional landscape and so we could, it's very easy for me to be angry, furious, pissed off, but on the other hand I think it's important to recognize that there are some people who are saying, "What's gonna to happen to these people when they go out on the job market and they have a collaborative Ph.D.? How are people gonna look at this?" And so it's not just all a kind of bad faith, they're not trusting people, but it's people who have an institutional kind of real politic savvy.

Pamela Takayoshi: I think your committee is probably concerned for you two in that they probably assume that you probably want to be at the same place. And it seems you might have stacked the deck against you there. Like if you both applied to Kent State. We would probably interview both of you, but if we only had one position, then what do we do? Which one of you would we take? And if we had two positions, would we want both of you, and then someone who did medical rhetoric or something, do you know what I mean? I think that is probably what we are concerned for.

Jennifer Wells: At Florida State, [these two people] had come in as a couple. They met as undergrads. They both wanted to do the same work throughout. I think, one, there was a concern about two people going out on the job market at the same time who had exactly the same qualifications. But the other issue was that one of those two people was carrying the weight. There was thinking that had been the case all along. So I think some of the pushback

they got wasn't about the product. It was about personal interpretations of how their relationship functioned and who was actually doing the work.

Dana Driscoll: Having sat on numerous hiring committees, I really think I can see why faculty might be resistant to a collaborative dissertation compared to anything else. Okay? When you're sitting down with your colleagues trying to decide who you are going to hire, all sorts of weird stuff comes up, and I can see a collaborative dissertation maybe being the difference between whether or not somebody got an offer or didn't. I wonder how much of that is in the minds of advisors when they are saying, "Hey, you know," because again it's a perception that you only did 50 percent of the work, you only did 50 percent of this dissertation […] I wonder if that's part of the perception. It's really like they want you to get a job, they want you to get hired, they want you to go off and do these great things. Is that collaborative dissertation going to be an impediment to doing that? I wonder if that's part of it. Part of what you guys are doing is interrogating that, which is great.

Laura Mangini: We've been questioned about ownership and we've wondered if we would be able to label our work as what is 60% labeled. It seems that in the university itself, it seems that we are not doing enough of our work on our own to be able to find a job of our own later on. So we have had some push back that way too.

Pamela Takayoshi: I think the ownership of ideas and the ownership of work differs from discipline to discipline. And I don't think that we've figured that out. You remind me when you were talking Laura, of a conversation we were having a couple of years ago in my

department when we came up with a checklist for what kind of credit you got for the work that you did. It started of course with the single-authored book and the single-authored article and then it got down to the point where people wanted to tally up how many co-authors you had and you got half credit if you had one co-author, but if you had another co-author, it went down another quarter. It was this weird, crazy... they just had to quantify it, but we're not people who quantify things and so we don't know how to do it. It's just crazy.

Resa Bizzaro: I'm curious as to how much this resistance to collaboration is connected to our notions of plagiarism and how the idea of stealing from someone is connected to working with someone. I bring that up because I know in our program we have a really significant international population and so sometimes there are people who we really have to reinforce to them that you have to document, you have to explain where your ideas came from, how they were developed, and we have had a couple of unfortunate incidents when people submitted qualifying portfolios where they just ripped off, they went to a website and they ripped off somebody's article from a journal and submitted it as their own. And we've had conversations as a faculty how notions of authorship and intellectually property, like Lisa [Ede] was alluding to earlier, are different in varying cultures, but I wonder how much of the resistance you're getting is connected to the notions of plagiarism. "It's mine. I don't want you take it." Like George Carlin says, "It's my stuff. I don't want anybody to have my stuff." And there's the issue of trust, of trusting your students to not do that. I think the percentages of students, especially grad students or Ph.D. students who do that is so tiny that it's not worth thinking about. You got people who are watching you go through this process, if you're the committee, you know these people, why can't you trust them?

Lisa Ede: […] in the session I just came from, people talked about how the academy is one of the most conservative institutions that there could be, and that kind of risk that people have to take when they want to do something different, it's huge. And people who want to see Ph.D. students succeed, and they have an understanding of what that means, I don't think they are just afraid or not trusting or having antediluvian notions of intellectual property, although I think notions of intellectual property and authorship really go deep, but it's really, really complicated.

Jessica Schreyer: …it would be better for research if people were less territorial about their ideas and words than more so because it's a very Western ideal that we all get credit for our work. That's one of the things we actually work with our Asian students, especially our Saudi Arabian students, because they don't see the value necessarily in identifying all the time who wrote what when and where, and we have to teach them that. Sometimes, it is a struggle to say why this is so important that we're gonna spend all of our time doing citation. They don't get it because it's so American and Western.

We phrased this question to include "material concerns" to differentiate these emergent themes from those more philosophical in nature. For example, those mentioned above include citation concerns, marking ownership/giving credit, finding employment after graduation, hiring committees, tenure and promotion. Virginia Carter spoke to us about getting tenure at larger universities, such as Temple, where, she said, "[You] have to publish. You cannot publish with somebody else. You have to publish as a single author. That

is part of it. It's almost like a written set of rules." But a set of rules that she believes needs to be challenged. Lisa Ede agreed, but said that "I think that many people are unaware of just how extraordinarily deep, ideologically, and deep and wide institutionally, the resistance to this kind of explicit co-authorship is."

Along with our participants, we [Sabatino and Laura] discussed our own situations with material concerns that others had with our collaboration. Who said what? How do you divide two dissertations 60/40? What content will be yours and what new content will be in his/her dissertation that isn't in yours? At our three-chapter defense, we even noticed that there was a misconception about who had a more liberal voice within the writing. Some of our readers admitted the desire to assign a voice or identity to the pieces we had marked as collaborative.

Additional materials concerns arose when the job market was discussed. If two graduates enter the job market at the same time with identical (or in our case, nearly identical) dissertations, would that affect their marketability? Jennifer Wells and Dana Driscoll noted that the pushback may be more from the process or lack of understanding about the process rather than the quality of the actual end collaborative product. Driscoll echoed a sentiment we had when asking, "I wonder how much of that is in the minds of advisors... because again it's a perception that you only did 50 percent of the work, you only did 50 percent of this dissertation […] I wonder if that's part of the perception?"

Resa Bizzaro and Lisa Ede questioned if the resistance could be in part due to fears of plagiarism and academic property because, as R. Bizzaro noted,"the idea of stealing from someone is connected to working with someone." She said, however, that if you are being guided and watched over by your committee, that you should be trusted.

Question: How Does Composition's Position/location in the Academy Affect the Ways in Which we View Collaboration?

Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, he is listed as the lead author for this question.

Pamela Takayoshi: I think of writing programs as being sort of on a spectrum of humanities based programs or humanities affiliated programs and then more social science programs, which I think of IUP at the social sciencey end and certainly Kent State is at the social sciencey end of things. It would be interesting to see if those social science leaning programs are more likely to support [a collaborative dissertation] than the humanities, because it seems to me that not recognizing collaboration is a very humanities-based thing where humanities scholars sit in their office and have their discrete thoughts. Even the method of reading a literary text, you know I go in my office and I'm going to write my dissertations on *Orlando* and other Virginia Woolf books. The methodology isn't even very transparent; it's really focused just on that individual scholar and I wonder if that's part of the connection.

Resa Bizzaro: Pat and I found through our collaborating and working with people at our school of medicine, we've found out that a lot of times for scientists, collaboration means you have a tech in your lab who does all of the experiments and gathers the data for you, you have some big shot whose name has to be on there second, otherwise nobody will look at your stuff, and then there's usually a whole string of people who are listed as authors who really don't do very much. And one of the workshops that Pat ran with these people in the school of medicine was a workshop about how to determine who really is an author and why you're putting people on and what their roles and responsibilities are. And so I believe that

Lisa [Ede] is right in pointing out how the development of our university system historically presents a problem for people who want to do collaborative work.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: I think the emphasis in the Western culture is on intellectual property. I think in a way, let me give you an example, I think in the social sciences field, the text, or the ideas we come up with is very slippery […] In business or engineering or STEM, education, those ideas they are sometimes multimillion dollar ideas, right? In engineering they have a concept of an idea, and they are like, "Hey, let's build something." And they build it and they become sort of a mass-market product, or an idea of some sort. The concept of ownership is dependent on the field we are in, I think. We are not going to make money out of redefining collaborative writing. You know what I mean? How much money are we going to make? If you have a book and a book deal, that's it. Okay. Whatever.

Resa Bizzaro: When I was at ECU, I taught Writing for Business and Industry frequently, every semester, and I had my students work on collaborative projects that they all had to write together...there's a real disconnect between what's happening in business and industry and what's happening in academia, and I think that's being really short sighted on our part.

Dana Driscoll: I think the entirety of graduate study is oppressive in some ways. From prelim exams and so on. I think this has a lot to do with the field's ambiguous place sitting between the humanities and the social sciences, okay? When I look at my colleagues that have finished their Ph.D.s in the social sciences, I think about psychologists who I spend a lot of time with, they all worked in labs, even though they didn't really write dissertations in the

way we do, they wrote articles or they wrote a series of overlapping articles, and many other people's names were on them because those were other people who contributed in the lab setting, and then we look at the opposite of that, sort of like I had mentioned earlier, Thoreau in his hut writing great things away from anyone else, which in some ways appeals to me but that's my own personal weirdness. Going off in the corner right? I think what happens is that in our field some of us are doing work rooted in the social sciences, empirical studies rooted in the social sciences, but others are working from a humanities leaning viewpoint. You think about classical rhetorical theory, critical theory, and those sorts of things. The humanities folks can't fathom why you would need anybody else. A lot of the degree programs and so on, the original group of people were lit folk that designed these programs. It makes sense. Even like my faculty at Purdue, many of them had degrees in lit. They didn't have degrees in rhet comp cause there weren't degrees in rhet comp when they started. A lot of this [resistance toward a collaborative dissertation] has to do with that. I think that's exactly what happened to me here. I had the hardest time articulating why [my] research was important and why it had to be done collaboratively, and how I was not doing this to shirk my responsibility of being a scholar. But I was doing this because of the questions I wanted to ask. We inhabit two different realms.

Pamela Takayoshi: The reason I kind of things it's linked to the humanities versus social science nature is because in the hard sciences, people don't write dissertations like this. They write dissertations that are groups of chapters that are written together with their research team in the Biology lab and they just put them together and weave them together into a dissertation. And that's in the College of Arts and Sciences. Those people are writing

dissertations in the same college as our students are writing the dissertation, and so I don't know what that is.

Resa Bizzaro: We have this notion that in the sciences frequently people's names are put on articles who really haven't contributed much. And I'm afraid that that mindset can lead people to believe that maybe Sabatino is doing all the work and Laura is just riding his coattails (I'm sorry, Laura) or that Laura is doing all the work and Sabatino is riding her coattails. And I think that that's really kind of a limited perception but I do believe that that's something that you're going to have to fight against.

This question was one that we had not anticipated being answered repeatedly throughout our research. This topic organically emerged as we discussed why some departments may have more resistance to collaboration than others. It became a common opinion that composition's position between the social sciences and the humanities has much to do with how readily a department may welcome collaboration. Pam Takayoshi pointed out that our graduate institution is more on the social science end of the spectrum, which may be why we are more likely to be able to complete a dissertation such as this one. In the humanities, there is more of an expectation to toil alone in an office, creating the next great work (or interpretation of a work).

Pisarn Chamcharatsri suggested that our position in social sciences makes it easier to collaborate because we are not in a lucrative field, one which pays us heavily for a new idea, such as Engineering, for example. The extent of our contribution would be a potential book.

Question: What are the Professional Implications/risks of Writing a Collaborative Dissertation?

Laura arranged this section. Thus, she is listed as the lead author for this question.

Laura Brady: A collaborative dissertation--as distinct from other collaborative projects--would call into question the individual's qualifications. The risk, then, would be one of ethos or identity. That risk could then raise questions in terms of employment unless perhaps doing a joint hire.

Sabatino Mangini: I think Laura and I present a new type of scholar or burgeoning, trying to become scholars. In the past two weeks, I've been offered two tenure-track positions at two different institutions. If I choose to work at the community college, they're not necessarily concerned with my scholarship. They even said that. It has no basis in my ability to be promoted or receive a pay raise...

Laura Mangini: And they're not measuring your work in terms of collaborative or co-authored so that plays into the positions we accept...

Jessica Schreyer: In Research I, I don't think it would be a good idea to even consider doing a collaborative dissertation because they're probably not as receptive to those types of things just because of their whole tenure process and all of that. Whereas for me it is actually is considered a bonus, and you can like work with other people, which is what we want. We

actually have problems on a small campus with people who can't work with other people, so you could advertise that as a positive thing.

Lisa Ede: In the session that I just came from, it seems the consensus was, of course we want to take risks and we just have to be informed and strategic, and you were talking about different, what kind of institution to you want to teach in. Two of the presenters at the round table, one is an untenured assistant professor in his first year and one is a Ph.D. student and they're both doing really interesting and unusual types of work and they talked about they planned how they attempt to negotiate that. So I don't mean to suggest that we should just roll over and say, "This is how it is," but it's really, how prepared, each person has to say I'm prepared to have my dean to say to me, "You will never be promoted to full professor." And you say, "Okay. That doesn't matter. I'm continuing to do it." I think it's a major tension in the profession but it's also a major tension in the academy. How did Jackie put it in our session? She said, "The academy rewards just having a little bit more, kind of doing the same thing and saying here's this scholarly project and here's this little bit I'm adding more." She said, "What we have to do is get out of that mindset. We have to say, no, we are going to do it completely differently." […] taking risks can really pay off. But I don't know that I would want to say unilaterally for somebody else, you should take that risk. It's kind of for each person to decide.

Kami Day: You have to decide what it important to you. If you really want to collaborate and co-author, a community college is a great place to be. I was doing a lot of writing as a community college faculty member. Not everybody can do that. It depends on where you are and how many classes you have to teach. It can be brutal. They're hiring more and more

Ph.D.s but there is less than that, but again it's because the academy looks at community college faculty as down here on the hierarchy, so you've got that problem too. It's an answer in one way and not a good answer in another way.

Virginia Carter: Being a change agent is not easy. Sounds like you and your wife want to be change agents, and I applaud that. But you have to understand, people tend to find comfort in the way things have always happened. I do think that the doctorate has its own initiation rights, and, this is sort of a personal thing, I've always challenged things, that's just in my nature, consider my age, that often didn't sit well when I was the only female administrator. But I had a mentor who said some very wise things to me, he said, "If you want to change things, you need to go through a system, excel in the system, and then people will take you seriously, if you really want to change it." [You and Laura] are in a higher ed system, you've done your masters' at reputable institutions, and now you wish to do some change. My personal advice, if you have to call a cooperative versus a collaborative, well talk about that in the dissertation and then do an article once you've got a degree. My advice, do not think by taking a line in the sand on this one that that will bring about the change. The only way change will occur is by more people knowing that other people share similar thoughts.

Laura Mangini: I think it's a good follow-up to talk about risk in completing a dissertation where other people in the field or in your discipline aren't seeing things the same way you are. Do you think the dissertation is the place to take on the risk of challenging people to think differently?

Sabatino Mangini: And why are you willing to do so?

Lorin Arnold: That is a good question, and I don't know that I really have an excellent answer for it. I think I'm not super risk-adverse […] I've been thinking about [your cooperative dissertation study] a lot. I've actually been thinking about it a lot since the time we talked about way back, just the whole idea of it, because even though I buy the idea that nothing you write, even if it is solo-authored in the sense that there's one name [...] nothing is really authored by yourself. But when you first told me about it, my first impulse was to go, "Hmmm? Oh, wow. That's tricky for a dissertation. I mean how would you know who did what?" So that kind of desire to quantify the work, I felt it kind of well up in me, even though I don't have a theoretical opposition to it. The pragmatics immediately started going, "What would that look like? Who and how? What would the power dimensions be like within the relationship? How would that play out if you were the faculty member sort of advising that?" I've done co-authored work where it was not very co-authored, and co-authored work that was really co-authored. If I decide to co-author with someone, I approach it with the understanding that I'm going to do all of it, so if then they do half of it, then I'm just happy. But if they don't, I'm not disappointed or I don't feel angry because I was just assuming that if I took on that task, I've made space in my life to do the whole thing. I guess what I wondered with a co-authored dissertation, what do you do, if you're doing a project like that, and you're either in the project and suddenly you feel like your co-author isn't pulling even weight, or if you are one of the faculty advisors or on someone's committee and you see that happening, and how do you kind of interject in that moment?

Sabatino Mangini: Part of the rationale behind the project was, we don't have a lot of data [at the dissertation level] to answer those types of questions you are raising. Of course, we didn't enter this project with the thoughts that our partnership would dissolve, we would go separate ways, but not everybody would be married, and even marriages don't last, so there's all of that that goes into it. I guess part of what our argument was, if that were to happen, then that's data, right? And then how do you negotiate that, how do you transform that, how can we contribute to our knowledge there? We tried to be open to the data in this project, obviously we had our biases, but we were open for whatever. We looked at it all as possible data. We think we understand how administrators look at the risks that we are taking [...]

It became apparent that the professional implications and risks of writing a collaborative dissertation were not rooted in concern about the authors of a dissertation not learning, or not having a meaningful learning experience from the dissertation produced. In most cases, the risks and implications grew from the fears or concerns that those in power had about the division of labor. Phrases such as "individual qualifications," "division of labor," and "quantify the work" came up as reasons not to take on this type of project. There was at least the mention of "how will we divide and label" among nearly every participant. We talk a bit more about this in the question about the material concerns with writing a collaborative dissertation.

The implication is that if you work on a collaborative dissertation, you should not be surprised if you cannot get hired by a Research I university. This further implies that your writing is somehow less rigorous or less worthy of being taken seriously by a university that would expect you to do extensive research in your career. A community college or small

liberal arts college, on the other hand, would not be as averse to collaboration. Even Lorin Arnold, who strongly supports our project "in theory" said "The pragmatics immediately started going, 'What would that look like? Who and how? What would the power dimensions be like within the relationship? How would that play out if you were the faculty member sort of advising that?'"

Question: In What Ways Should a Composition Dissertation System Adapt to a Graduate Student Population That Brings Myriad Histories and Literacies to Their Research Studies?

Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, he is listed as the lead author for this question.

Sabatino: At our three-chapter defense, there was discussion about how patriarchal ideologies shape composition's dissertation system. I felt as if that conversation yielded some consensus. But the committee problematized, challenged even, the notion of oppression and how were applying it to our dissertation study. Of course, they made smart arguments about the ways we would need to distinguish the type of oppression we were claiming happens at the dissertation level, if we even chose to continue using the word oppression in the text. That we wouldn't want to conflate the concept with notions of oppression and of workers in developing countries and the like. Laura and I acknowledged that we had discussed our rhetorical choice to use that word, a few different times, and whether or not other people would agree. So we left it in. At the three chapter defense, Laura and I mentioned Gramsci's cultural hegemony and how the composition's dissertation system promoted a dominant ideology that attempted to normalize its doctoral students and privileged one way of

knowing. So we share this story to be transparent and to contextualize our question about the composition dissertation system.

Lisa Ede: Over the years, [Andrea and I] have been contacted by a number of graduate students, including Michele and Kami, who have asked us to write letters of support for collaborative dissertations, and there's only one that was successful […] these are two Ph.D. students at a psychological institution, so they're not in English, they're not in rhetoric and writing. They did a collaborative dissertation on male-female collaboration. I think that, I'm pretty sure that they told Andrea and me that, they were at the Fielding Institute […], which is a specialized psychological study, something or other, and that the Fielding Institute allowed them to collaborate and then said nobody else can ever do this again. And so that's the one lone instance that I have. And I would just say that I just came from a session that was focused on responding to Jackie Brewster and Giza Kirch's feminist rhetorical practices, […] and during that question and answer period, a number of people commented on the importance of and the impossibility of doing collaborative dissertations. And I just would say, quickly kind of anticipating the discussion that I think, setting aside everything having to do with notions of intellectual property and authorship and sole, you know, patriarchal person that the structure of the university as it devolved from the German model, plays a pretty important role in what makes it hard for people to do [a collaborative dissertation].

Pamela Takayoshi: I think I would be hesitant to use the word oppression because when I think of the word oppression I think of transgender youth not being allowed to express themselves in their classrooms, but I do totally agree with you when you said that

it privileges one way of knowing. I think that is absolutely right. I think that's true. I think we're seeing pushback along those lines in parallel with the tenure and promotion case. People like Cheryl Ball and those in the Computers and Writing community have really pushed on the value of the tenure and promotion case being all based on print products. There are lots of ways people make knowledge and contribute to this field of knowledge and do good work and meaningful work and useful work for lots of people that don't end up on the printed page.

Laura Brady: The very patterns that you may be reading as oppression could be challenged. [...] The dissertation system--at least within our field--does favor single-authorship, but that pattern does not by itself constitute oppression.

Clayton Railey: I don't buy into that rhetoric [an oppressive dissertation process]. That's one reason I chose not to go into a four-year English department because I don't agree with the rhetoric of postmodernist criticism. I don't understand the oppression here. Is it the only way that people can establish credentials that would be worthy for hiring for a position in the academy? Probably not. I'm not sure yet what the alternative is emerging to be. I think that higher education is changing before our very eyes. I'm using higher ed in a very broad sense, so let me be more specific. I think learning in higher education is changing very quickly, and the skills that a teacher, instructor, is going to need to prepare students to learn to make it in the world, I think those skills are changing, but I'm not sure we know exactly what they are yet. Therefore, I'm not sure what the credential is going to look like that is going to establish

someone's authority and credibility to be hired for a position to enable student learning in this next century.

Lorin Arnold: I think [the dissertation] really can be an oppressive process. It depends on literally where you are, what university you're at, what sort of the culture at that university is regarding the collaborative dissertation. Purdue was a everybody's writing three to five hundred page dissertation sort of culture when I was there. It was really pretty well known the professors that maybe could get done in five years your Ph.D. work and then maybe the ones that it would probably it would take seven. Four of those would be your dissertation because that's just how they were gonna be, and you're not getting out of here until you get a book done. And then other universities are much more sort of, you need to show that you can do this, but this is not, "We are going to beat you until you're bloody" sort of process. I think it can be very oppressive in the sense of sort of a kind of weird testing ground and you know this sort of a last chance to put-you-in-your-place sort of process.

Virginia Carter: You have to adapt to the system or you will never finish the dissertation […] If you're going to study with someone in the area, different, fairly important psychologists, who happen to have been professors at Swarthmore, Temple, and Penn, so I know of three instances, each one had their own particular interests, and if you were a grad student and you wanted one of them to be your chair, you were going to do the piece that that person at that time, your chair, was interested in. That is a form of a oppression. It's not free thought. You know, on some level, there are even in those situations, groups who work on gathering data together, to ever participate in a huge data and metadata study, I mean you sit and you look at

this and you spend weeks parsing out who's going to take which aspect of studying the metadata. It's not a system I wanted to be a part of, but I have been involved in those type of things, it wasn't how I did my dissertation, but the system is oppressive but that's a hard one to sell to the people who are going to give you your degree or higher you, if they're not of the mindset that that sounds like a challenge to them. That's more of "If not's broken then don't fix it. If it's worked for us, then why can't it work for you?" Or this is part of the initiation process into the world of research.

Lorin Arnold: […] there is kind of part of me that feels like by the time people are working on their Ph.D., we should be helping, if our goal is then to do, to have that transition from that process into being part of this larger ongoing life in academia, that is totally collaborative, where do we start that? Just do we make people wait until they graduate? And then say, "Off you go. Collaborate. You figure it out." Which seems to be kind of what happens…

This section yielded a lot of data regarding how the current dissertation model has some inadequacies. The dissertation still follows the German model in which an autonomous author toils away to create a great "original" work, which can then be defended to prove the author's worth and knowledge. Laura Brady reminded us that although the current system does in fact privilege solo authored dissertations, that we should not hasten to equate that with oppression. Brady received her Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in 1988, and her dissertation title was, notably, "Collaborative Literary Writing."

Others, such as Lorin Arnold, disagreed, stating that the dissertation "really can be oppressive" and serves as a "a kind of weird testing ground and you know this sort of a last chance to put-you-in-your-place sort of process." Lorin Arnold received her Ph.D. in 1996 from Purdue University. She confirmed one of our contentions, which is that the system should be preparing us for the writing we will be doing beyond the Ph.D., which is largely collaborative.

Pam Takayoshi, who earned her Ph.D. from Purdue in 1994, talked about the important work that Cheryl Ball and the like have done to point out how much the current system privileges print products over digital. Clayton Railey commented that the credentialing to establish one's credibility for hiring is in fact changing, but how remains to be seen clearly. Virginia Carter suggested the current system is oppressive, pointing out that "You have to adapt to the system or you will never finish the dissertation."

Question (Primary Research Question): How Does a Collaborative Dissertation Challenge the Status quo in the Field of Composition?

Laura and Sabatino arranged this section. Thus, they are listed as collaborative authors for this question.

Dana Driscoll: What is the quo that you are challenging? Are you challenging at the level of getting your degree done? Are you challenging it at the level of being on the job search? Are you challenging it at conferences? Are you challenging it in articles and publications? If you are able to challenge it at those multiple levels then certainly you could be, as you said, engaging in the act of resistance. I think the story of the act of resistance is just as important

as whatever findings you find about collaboration, frankly. I think getting that story out there is really critical to that.

Laura Mangini: We are primarily challenging the status quo of "getting the degree done." If two more students can make an intelligent argument for why they want to collaborate on a dissertation, then what is the rationale behind saying "no" to these people?
Sabatino Mangini: Yes. We are asking questions in our study "at the level of being on the job search" to provide context for our story as collaborative dissertation researchers and to get data that allows us to problematize the assertion that a collaborative dissertation makes it more difficult to get hired.

Laura Mangini: We haven't had an issue with getting hired, yet. Most likely because our career goals are more in line with working at a community college, small college, or university, like the institutions where we now occupy tenure-track positions.

Sabatino Mangini: Sure. We landed these jobs prior to completing our Ph.D.. Still, we understand on some levels the risks we are taking with this collaborative dissertation research. I think this dissertating process…

Laura Mangini: The proposal process and the semi-structured interviews…

Sabatino Mangini: …right. This dissertation process has helped us make more sense, have an even stronger understanding, of the job market and how people view a dissertation as a credential.

Jennifer Wells: I think there's always the fear on the part of the advisor that if you allow a student to do something out of the expected norm, that you're therefore setting those students up for, not failure, but definitely making things a lot of harder. Yes, I do think writing a collaborative dissertation is definitely against the status quo in our field, again because of our connection to literature, more. I think that will continue to be that way until this fears are not warranted. I mean, I don't think that they are unwarranted. I think, as Dana said being on a hiring committee, if it's between someone with a collaborative dissertation and someone with not, I think all of these questions about who wrote it, who did the work, I think those things would be present there. So I don't think it's going to change.

Jessica Schreyer: A collaborative dissertation challenges the status quo in composition by opening up new avenues for people to consider how people compose and how collaboration with other writers influences our own writing. By working collaboratively, people may find new insights on composition that were impossible to find independently. Collaboration generally allows for people to consider information in new and unique ways. Furthermore, on several list servs I follow, there has been much discussion about the state of Ph.D. programs and the usefulness of dissertations given the current academic climate and job market. A collaborative dissertation may more accurately model what many teacher/scholars are expected to do upon graduation and entrance to the field, that is, it may encourage them to

work with others. As a professor at a small, liberal arts college, one of the expectations is to work closely with others in my department and across disciplines to meet student needs. Modeling this progress during a graduate program may help make students more marketable, particularly those who expect to work at a teaching college rather than a research university. Furthermore, some people are arguing that Ph.D. programs should also be preparing students for work outside academia, and most careers require intensive collaborative work.

Patrick Bizzaro: I don't think we've evolved very much. I think that Lisa [Ede] and Andrea [Lunsford] had to make the argument that for collaborative writing to exist as a concept, we needed to really think about authorship and what that means, and if there is such a thing as an author. And the section on authorship is just brilliant. Just amazing. I'd never even thought of Martin Luther saying, "All of our ideas come from God, so when we write them down, no one really owns them, God owns them." So I mean this is wild stuff but very real.

Kami Day: I offered my grad students the opportunity to work together, and they looked at me like I had two heads, like, "We can do that?" They've gotten to that point in their education and nobody's ever offered them the opportunity to work collaboratively with somebody.

Pamela Takayoshi: Yeah. I can [see a collaborative dissertation challenging the status quo], and for the reason that you said earlier, I think, Laura. Until you do it, you can't talk to people about how it can be done and what needs to be figured out so that it can be done well. Because it's hard to work on research teams. So Chris Haas and I worked on a team together for three years together and ended up with three pieces about instant messaging discourse.

That was a lot of work to end up with those three articles. There were many times during that process that I thought, "God, if we were just sitting in our own offices, we would have been done with this project and go one." But until you do that, you don't figure out and know how hard it is to work. It is a bigger project, but in the end, I came away from those three years, a changed person, a changed researcher, from the value of having worked it, but it's more work. It's not half the work. It's not a third of the work or whatever.

Dana Driscoll: […] okay, the problem of the collaborative dissertation [such as the cooperative dissertation study] isn't one that a single person could solve. And so when we question what are the problems we need each other to solve? [...] As the field sort of embraces the really difficult of learning to write and learning to write together, some of these other issues that require multiple people and when we can face that then I think the whole idea of collaborative dissertations and other kinds of collaborative work becomes easier. Part of it is sort of shifting the field's focus and the kinds of questions we ask, too.

Pisarn Chamcharatsri: I think we are ready for [a collaborative dissertation]. The field, we have been talking about, Lisa Ede works on collaborative work, and I think, as you can see they have done the work for 20 or 30 years now. Change is really difficult. They publish for so long. People read their work. People try to use their work. When you see the actual publications, how many pieces do we see that are collaborative? When you see the journal publications, especially in composition. I see more collaborative like in publications in TESOL Quarterly, other fields, more than in composition. I guess because of the rhetorics that one person brings in might not be able to complement with the another person's

rhetorical analysis or moves that that person use. I guess the collaborative thought of work is difficult. It's not just the data that they are working on, it becomes the rhetorical aspect that two people won't be able to reconcile with a talk at conferences, those kind of things. I think we are ready to have new breeds of dissertation writing. It will be more interesting, I guess. One person writing a dissertation can come up with this product, but if two people come up with a dissertation, I think it would bring out so much of the scholarship. Because when two people negotiate meaning, it becomes more in-depth and [provides] more insight when presented in the writing.

Kami Day: I am listening to this [conversation about composition's resistance toward a collaborative dissertation] and thinking have we really not made any progress? Because Michele and I were at IUP, we met each other there, our story is very similar to yours, and were working together, and the ethos there was very collaborative, it was a wonderful, wonderful experience for us. And so we began to think about, we were working together all the time anyway, writing together, so we met with Don McAndrew and asked him if he would chair a committee for a collaborative dissertation and he said, "Yes, of course." And we went to Taco Bell and we sketched these things out on a napkin and said this is how this could work and we were all excited and we got the committee together. We had Mark Hurlbert and Pat Hartwell and Don, and they agreed to be the committee for our dissertation, and we then took it to the Graduate School and Research and they said, "No, no. no. That's not going to happen." Before that, we wrote a very long rationale for writing this collaborative dissertation, did all the research, the scholarship, and we wrote that word-for-word together, and that showed up in my dissertation. So that was absolutely co-authored in

my dissertation, and showed up in the book that we wrote later. But that whole process was, Pat assured us that he could make it happen, and then we became a political football and it didn't happen, so we were gonna do, I was doing a study of academic co-authors, Michele was doing a classroom study, we were doing those studies together, absolutely together, writing it, everything was together, and then we were gonna do another part about our process together, and so we had to split those. She did the classroom study, she did the classroom study [laughter]. The study of co-authors became mine, and we had to set aside the other part. But so much of both of our dissertations were written by both of us word-for-word. But we couldn't say that out loud. We weren't supposed to do that. And our committee knew it but they didn't tell anybody either, so the committee became Michele's committee and also my committee so it was the same people on each committee. We had to meet for our IRB. We had to meet with the committee, and the room was full of people. I mean nobody ever came to those meetings and it was full of people. Our trying to explain to people, you know, everything was fine, the ethical part and all that. Finally they said, "No it wasn't even. You have to show which parts you write." So Laura and Sabaitno, you've made a lot of progress.

Kami Day: At least you [Sabatino Mangini and Laura Mangini] can admit out loud that you worked together. We didn't. Our committee knew but nobody could say it. When I went to Michele's defense, she wasn't at mine but I was at hers, Pat Hartwell was a very funny man, and wonderful man, so we were sitting at this table and he said, "I have some real concerns about this. He said, "You knew you weren't supposed to co-author this dissertation." He said, "In Michele's dissertation I've found a lot of words the same." We all just died. So they

knew what we were doing. They helped us do it as much as they could but we couldn't say out loud. A lot of it was co-authored. It was word-for-word together that we wrote. The irony to me was, listen to me, it upsets when I even think about it, the irony is that that program is so collaborative. I mean I never could have survived if it were not. And to then say to us, just as you [Sabatino Mangini and Laura Mangini] said, "We are collaborating." We've all said this. We all collaborate all the time. So why not acknowledge it? Michele and I since then have written a lot of things together, articles and chapters, and I've written with other people, so this has just been a large part of our academic and scholarly life. I don't know. Yeah. Frustrating. I mean, I just think it's ridiculous. Hypocritical. We thought, okay, this will put IUP on the map, the first collaborative dissertation. This will be wonderful, and then, no, no, no, they're [Graduate Studies and Research] not gonna be brave enough to do that.

Sabatino: Laura and I thank you and Michele for fighting the good fight.

Laura: Hopefully our story can continue the fight and continue the conversation.

Dana Driscoll's question allowed us to articulate what status quo we were questioning, but what she pushed us to do was important as well. She said in our interview, "*I think the story of the act of resistance is just as important as whatever findings you find about collaboration, frankly. I think getting that story out there is really critical to that." That is at the heart of how we plan to challenge the status quo—not only in challenging the repeated notion of "Just get your degree" but in sharing our own story, we hope to show that a meaningful dissertation can be completed when two researchers work together. Writing a*

collaborative dissertation challenges the status quo by broadening the scope of possibilities for meaning making among dissertating students. It challenges the status quo by being unafraid to take risks and by being unafraid to face distrust. It challenges the status quo by embracing that writing together is messy and difficult and requires situated sets of problem-solving processes and social constructions of knowledge.

Patrick Bizzaro said that he doesn't think we have evolved very much in terms of how we view collaborative writing. Through our cooperative dissertation study, we hope to challenge that assertion—particularly in the context of the composition dissertation system—and prove that change has been made and we are working to make progress as advocates for collaborative ways of writing a dissertation. Until we do it and share our stories about it, how can others begin to do it and talk about their stories, and so on? Progress has to start. There must be a progression from Ede and Lunsford talking about the need for collaborative dissertations and from Day and Eodice writing about attempting to write a collaborative dissertation and being denied the space. We are one step closer, and that challenges the status quo and paves the way for the next step in progress.

INTERTEXT

INTERPRETING THE DATA

In this intertext, we provide excerpts of our recorded dialogue that illustrates our processes of interpreting the data and building an in-text structure for the presentation of our data's themes in chapter five. Due to our personal and work obligations, we had to be flexible with the times and locations of our research dialogue. We decided we could not rely alone on setting aside specific times to discuss our dissertation. In addition to our planned dissertation talk sessions, we enacted a process of dialogue that accommodated our impromptu conversations about our research. When we began discussing the dissertation in the moments of our everyday lives, we used our iPhones to record the conversations. As such, this intertext reveals our constant construction of data analysis and interpretation as well as our constant composing of our dissertation texts.

Of course, we used some of these conversations to vent our frustrations over the complication in our work. We assessed the risk of providing intertexts that demonstrate the sometimes raw emotions and frustrations we were sharing with each other in the intimacy of our home lives. We didn't want to create a false narrative of us being unhappy or ungrateful about the scope and progress of our cooperative dissertation: that we are able to compose another intertext before chapter five of a nontraditional study illustrates how much personal and disciplinary progress we have made with our dissertation inquiry. We hope readers will appreciate the transparency of the dialogic processes we present here, and we imagine many readers will identify with our struggles as partners who are trying to make sense of our research's complexities. In particular, this intertext reveals our dialogue about our frustrations with using each of our primary and secondary questions to organize chapter five

(which resulted in too much overlapping of themes and a marginalization of our story) and about our decision to instead use our themes to structure a conversation that responds to what we deem as the two most meaningful research questions: 1) How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in composition? and 2) When two people collaborate on a composition dissertation, what experiential data can they construct via a narrative inquiry? With this as a backdrop, the purpose of this intertext is threefold:

- To show we are human and that we experience frustrations in our research and writing.
- To show how we rely on our partnership and use dialogue to negotiate our frustrations and to problem-solve research and writing difficulties.
- To show how our dialogue emerged impromptu within our daily lives as , husband and wife, and parents.

Sabatino's Intertext[12]

[Our baby, Elyse, moans in the background]

Sabatino: So we have to all of these interviews to provide context about the institution, about the dissertation as a genre, about epistemologies, all of these other things that have been talked about a whole bunch, and our whole point is there isn't enough data about what's it like when people collaborate [on a dissertation], and could this be a valuable contribution to the dissertation process?

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[12] Appears in Sabatino's Dissertation Only

Sabatino: The things I am so excited to write about, I think we are both so excited to write about, that we feel like are really relevant and specific to our research, that isn't going to be the emphasis in this chapter (five) because [Elyse says "hi" and disrupts the conversation] but we are gonna have to find a way to make it part of it. We're gonna have to add more of our story into chapter four because otherwise it just looks like we are adding stuff to chapter five. We need a clear connection. [Elyse's moans get louder]. We need data in chapter four and our discussion in chapter five about it.

Laura: Going in, it's not even something I considered. I always knew chapter four is where we laid everything our and chapter five is where we discussed it but I felt like there was more room in chapter five to where we can bring in more of our own stories without it [appearing in chapter four]. But it is our data so it has to be in chapter four. Right?

Sabatino. Yeah. I mean...

Laura: Or does it?

Sabatino: We mentioned knowledge transfer and we mentioned postpartum and emotional [toll] so I guess we could just expand upon those concepts in chapter five.

Laura: I mean when we started the dissertation, postpartum, these are things we didn't expect to come out. Like we expected resistance, we expected all the things to come out that have been said before because we've read about them, we knew it. But our own experiences, those kind of things, we didn't foresee that, so it's not necessarily showing as being something we were looking for. You know what I mean? Our questions can't reflect things we weren't anticipating. So it's hard to organize [chapter five] around questions that, you know, does that make sense?

Sabatino: Makes a lot of sense. What if...

Laura: It's almost like a dissertation should be in two parts. You should be able to do your dissertation and then go back and do the whole thing over again.

Laura: [Looks toward Elyse] Where's your sippy? Sippy?

Sabatino: What if what we were trying to do in chapter four at first and we wound up going off the path, instead of organizing by research questions, which I still think could work, what if we organized chapter five by themes?

Laura: You mean chapter four?

Sabatino. Chapter five. What if we organized it by the themes [as they respond to our two major research questions]? Dissertation as a genre. Postpartum. Knowledge transfer. Social belonging. Patriarchal privileging or epistemological privileging. These are some of the major, this is what our data is showing us. And so how does it resist? What if we had an introduction that discussed our questions and how obviously how they framed our inquiry. Talk about how we really see value in our story and really focus on how our data responds to the primary question. Instead of organizing by all the questions because there is a lot of overlap there, which isn't a bad thing, it's just the dissertation's embedded in composition which is embedded in grad school which is embedded in academia which responds to the profession at large which impacts teaching so all of the questions we were asking, they're not these discrete entities, there's overlap there. If we just try to organize it by [two major research questions, one with data about challenging the status quo and one with data about our collaboration]…

Laura: Continuing our conversation about chapter five.

Sabatino: I think whether you agree or not with the dissertation system being oppressive or not, I think a collaborative dissertation by its very nature is not traditional, especially when its shared between a man and woman who are married. We have a child. It calls into question what the standard expectations are for you to do as a dissertating student […] It almost, well it doesn't almost seem to, it does, it makes an argument that this is what we consider to be rigorous and scholarly. And if it doesn't match this model, then we have to call it into question. We've had that happen a lot to us throughout our study. But we could say that, I don't know if we even have to make the argument that the dissertation system is oppressive. We could say that collaboration calls into question, it challenges whether or not it is oppressive, whether it does privilege certain epistemologies, voices, identities. I think that's valuable enough in and of itself.

Laura: We don't even have to call it that. We're just presenting the data and it's sort of apparent in certain instances that it is.

Sabatino: I think so. I also think, to go back to your original point about the dissertation is a genre, because when you were talking about the postpartum and the genre, we were saying we've been discussing the idea of the dissertation as a system, dissertation as a genre, I think we could, to simplify things a bit, we might just go right to dissertation as a genre because genre is a system. The way we define it, it's a space where social activity can happen or transform, so…

Laura: …you mind I'm eating all the blue cheese?

Sabatino: No. I think the genre itself, there's always this, when it comes down to getting your degree, the emphasis is so much on the product and that's one of the things we

wanted to talk about, what are the processes? How can we become aware of the processes? And that's always embedded within the genre. We'll have to think about that a little bit.

Sabatino: Yeah. Another thing we could consider, again we can still format our responses to this idea of collaboration. That's kind of the lens. We're looking at all our data through how did collaboration impact, how did collaboration respond to, cause we had research questions that specifically ask what is like when two people get together to collaborate. Maybe we don't just slim the chapter [five] to just responding to the primary question. I don't think it has to, I think what I'm getting at is that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. It doesn't have to be we have to hit every secondary and tertiary question or we just focus on one. I think we could articulate some of our secondary questions, by their very nature they overlap with the primary question. To tease them out and have each one as a subheading seems redundant. [Elyse moans louder].

Laura: Uh-huh.

Sabatino: But a specific question about what's it like when two people [collaborate on a dissertation], that our participants, the majority of them can't respond to, then that's where we put our stuff in.

Laura: I'm nodding.

Sabatino: [Laughter] I think that's okay. I think we can talk about that and say these are the research questions that we feel are [most connected to the status quo we are critiquing and to our narrative as partners collaborating on a dissertation].

[Elyse drops ice cube on floor]

Sabatino: What do you think about that?

Laura: I got distracted with her with the ice cube in her mouth. We don't have to answer all of them. Some of them [Elyse moans louder] I'm so distracted by her. I'm sorry. [Laura laughs at Elyse]. [Inaudible comment].

Sabatino: We'll return to this later.

Laura: We'll return to this.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERPRETATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> I think the story of the act of resistance is just as important as whatever findings you find about collaboration, frankly. I think getting that story out there is really critical to that.
> -Dana Driscoll, commenting on our cooperative dissertation study via a semi-structured interview.

Overview

Collaborative: In chapter five, we share our interpretations of the cooperative dissertation study data. As researcher-participants, we contend we have constructed this data with our participants and with ourselves. The data presented here, then, emerged through a multivoiced dialogue that at times responded directly to our research questions, whether we had asked them explicility or not, and other times responded to conversation-specific questions we or other participants had asked within the context of our interviews. This chapter is organized in response to our primary and secondary research questions: 1) How does a collaborative dissertation challenge the status quo in the field of composition? and 2) When two people collaborate on a composition dissertation, what experiential data can they construct via a narrative inquiry?" Themes developed within the answers to these questions, which emerged from both our experiential data as coresearchers who are writing and researching our dissertation and our conversations with our research pariticipants. We use the primary and secondary questions as subheadings to organize our discussion of the themes in chapter five. We conclude the chapter with a call for future research.

Primary Research Question: How Does a Collaborative Dissertation Challenge the Status quo in the Field of Composition?

Collaborative: In response to our primary research question, our participant interviews and experiential data as co-researchers reveal that composition's resistance to a collaborative dissertaton is real, contextual, and can be negotiated. In the following discussion, we explore how each of our cooperative dissertation study's six themes:

- Challenges composition's disciplinary location in the humanities and social sciences
- Challenges the dissertation system's dominant ideologies
- Challenges the conventions of the dissertation genre
- Challenges the narrative of risk as it relates to a nontraditional dissertation
- Challenges notions of collaboration at the dissertation level
- Challenges the purpose of a dissertation

Challenges Composition's Disciplinary Location in the Humanities and Social Sciences

Collaborative: Much of our participant conversations revolved around composition's location in the academy. Pamela Takayoshi represented the overall theme of these conversations when she stated:

> I think of writing programs as being sort of on a spectrum of humanities based programs or humanities affiliated programs and then more social science programs, which I think of IUP at the social sciencey end and certainly Kent State is at the social sciencey end of things. It would be interesting to see if those social science

> leaning programs are more likely to support [a collaborative dissertation] than the humanities, because it seems to me that not recognizing collaboration is a very humanities-based thing where humanities scholars sit in their office and have their discrete thoughts. Even the method of reading a literary text, you know I go in my office and I'm going to write my dissertation on *Orlando* and other Virginia Woolf books. The methodology isn't even very transparent; it's really focused just on that individual scholar and I wonder if that's part of the connection.

Sabatino: Other participants corroborated Takayoshi's theory that many humanities' scholars value the narrative of a lone author who writes a theoretical dissertation where he can create discrete thoughts and contribute original ideas to the discipline. Resa Bizzaro emerged as one of many participants who presented scenarios that illustrated the hierarchical design of collaboration in the social sciences and the hard sciences. She shared the following example at our round table discussion:

> Pat [Bizzaro] and I found through our collaborating and working with people at our school of medicine, we've found out that a lot of times for scientists collaboration means you have a tech in your lab who does all of the experiments and gathers the data for you, you have some big shot whose name has to be on there second, otherwise nobody will look at your stuff, and then there's usually a whole string of people who are listed as authors who really don't do very much. And one of the workshops that Pat ran with these people in the school of medicine was a workshop about how to determine who really is an author and why you're putting people on and what their roles and responsibilities are. And so I believe that Lisa [Ede] is right in

> pointing out how the development of our university system historically presents a problem for people who want to do collaborative work.

Laura: This scenario suggests a top-down process that relies on a science scholar's status to divide specific work tasks among group members and an ambiguous process of determining authorship. Resa Bizzaro notes this understanding of collaboration informs an academic dissertation system that resists the type of collaborative dissertation we wanted to write. Building off Resa Bizzaro's observations, Dana Driscoll explained:

> I think what happens is that in our field [of composition] some of us are doing work rooted in the social sciences, empirical studies rooted in the social sciences, but others are working from a humanities leaning viewpoint. You think about classical rhetorical theory, critical theory, and those sorts of things. The humanities folks can't fathom why you would need anybody else. A lot of the degree programs and so on, the original group of people were lit folk that designed these programs. It makes sense. Even like my faculty at Purdue, many of them had degrees in lit. They didn't have degrees in rhet comp cause there weren't degrees in rhet comp when they started. A lot of this [resistance toward a collaborative dissertation] has to do with that […] we inhabit two different realms.

Collaborative: Resa Bizzaro and Driscoll contributed to a consensus opinion shared among our participants: composition dissertations that are grounded in a social science research framework are also impacted by the theoretical and methodological values of the humanities and hard sciences. The data also suggests an historical privileging of humanities-based approaches to writing a dissertation, a privileging that promotes scholarship valued in English Literature and limits the scope of a composition dissertation study that asks different

types of research questions and seeks to construct different types of data. Our cooperative dissertation study problematizes both the theoretical and material realities of such a dissertation system. We write our dissertation texts to fulfill the final requirement of our doctoral education in the Graduate Studies in Composition & TESOL program, which is located in an English Department. Composition, TESOL, and English represent three distinct disciplines that communicate with each other but, at the same time, are informed by diverse bodies of knowledge. We must submit our dissertation to a graduate school populated by people who possess a multiplicity of backgrounds, educations, and literacies and who therefore are not trained to understand the nuances of each discipline's dissertation scholarship. Our cooperative dissertation study emerges as one of many types of dissertations our graduate school must interpret and approve for publication. Throughout our processes of constructing our study, we were concerned about whether our graduate school would accept the nontraditional design and implementation of our research. We believe our cooperative dissertation study responds to this possible resistance and provides an exigency for future inquiry into the impact a graduate school has on dissertations in composition. In terms of our Ph.D. program and our English department, our study reveals a level of willingness to support a collaborative dissertation that is grounded in a social sciences empirical study framework but also accommodates humanities' ideologies of authorship, ownership, and scholarship credentials.

Challenges the Dissertation System's Dominant Ideologies

Sabatino: Our data configures the dissertation system as a complex construct of dominant ideologies that reify patriarchal epistemologies and capitalistic notions of intellectual property (and ownership of ideas). Lisa Ede commented, "…setting aside

everything having to do with notions of intellectual property and authorship and sole, you know, patriarchal person, that the structure of the university as it devolved from the German model, plays a pretty important role in what makes it hard for people to do [a collaborative dissertation]." Our participants noted how the dissertation system privileges one way of knowing, namely that a dissertation should be solo-authored. Part of this discussion necessarily led to a critique of the relevance and impact of intellectual property in academia. Participant consensus emerged during discussions about intellectual property as a Western and capitalistic ideology that shapes the academy and the dissertation system's epistemologies and material practices. Clayton Railey suggested intellectual property should not belong in the academy. Our participants problematized a dissertation system that privileges intellectual property and ownership of ideas. Part of this problematization involved questions about alternative dissertation systems and processes.

Laura: We contend our cooperative dissertation responds in some ways to the discussion about alternative models of dissertating because our study challenges notions of intellectual property, ownership of ideas, and the privileging of epistemologies that are influenced by patriarchal ideologies of the rational man working alone to make meaning. Our participants' use of terms such as "initiation" and "written set of rules" and "credential" and "doorway into the field" position the dissertation as a fixed phenomenon that in some ways can be viewed as a deterministic and limiting event and in other ways can be viewed as an event that promotes a familiarity among a community of academics who must find common places to start or continue conversations about scholarship in terms of granting a degree, offering a job, promoting a candidate, or offering tenure. Still, our participants disagreed about whether the dissertation system could be labeled as oppressive. Although some

participants agreed that the dissertation system is a type of oppression and others balked at the use of the word, there was a consensus that Ph.D. students must respond to a standard model of researching and writing a dissertation. Of course, our cooperative dissertation signals a movement from scholars in positions of power toward a more inclusive dissertating system that permits more social and feminist ways of knowing. But our data suggests a commonality among participants that the field of composition has not enacted much epistemological change to accommodate nontraditional dissertations, including our own dissertation. Our shared social constructionist epistemology along with our critical pedagogy and feminist rhetorical worldviews enable us to further problematize this consensus, if only to ask more questions.

Laura: If the dissertation system is not oppressive, what do we call a system that privileges certain ways of knowing and asks Ph.D. students to create a dissertation project that conforms to this system's traditional processes and products? Is normalization a form of oppression? Is cultural hegemony a form of oppression? Is it an act of oppression to require Ph.D. students to label their work as proof of ownership when these students' epistemologies and worldviews reject Western notions of individual intellectual property?

Sabatino: Our future scholarship aims to investigate these questions. We conclude this section with experiential data that responds to our assertion that the dissertation system requires Ph.D. students to assimilate their identities, worldviews, and meaning-making processes toward an historical standard of patriarchal epistemologies and dominate ideologies. We have chosen this particular data set because we feel it represents a powerful composite of the myriad material realities Ph.D. students must negotiate when they enact a dissertation study within their personal and professional academic spheres.

Sabatino: When we began working on a cooperative dissertation, we could not fully realize the materials realities that would transpire over the years of working together. Once we got married and began a family with the birth of our daughter, Elyse, we expected to become busy and have *some* delays and setbacks with the progress of our dissertation. We posited, however, that Laura would be able to work even more on the dissertation during the school semester that Elyse was born, as she only worked through the beginning of October that school year (2013) and did not have to return to work until mid-January 2014. Soon after Elyse's complicated birth via a thirty-three hour labor and emergency cesarean section, two unexpected realities came our way—colic and postpartum depression.

Laura: Laura's psychotherapist, Stephanie J. Schneider, MS, LPC, described Laura's condition:

> Postpartum depression is both a medical and mental health disorder, caused by a significant drop in serotonin processing in the brain due to dramatic hormonal shifts in the brain and body during pregnancy and immediately after birth. Approximately 15% of women giving birth experience symptoms of postpartum depression, which include not only depressed mood, but also depressed psychomotor activity (energy needed to follow-though on daily tasks) and diminished ability to concentrate. In my teaching, I often ask my students to conceptualize depression as the worst flu that you have ever had and having to function like everyone else not only feeling sick but wearing a 100 lb. weighted vest.
>
> Laura's depression has been classified as moderate (on a scale of mild-moderate-severe), which means that she has experienced some

> deterioration in her occupational and family functioning. (personal communication, September 29, 2014)

Collaborative: We soon recognized that the dissertation's current ideological system does not make apparent alternative processes that could account for the time lost and needed in times such as these when a personal issue (in our situation a medical condition) poses a real threat to completing the dissertation, particularly for the solo dissertator. Where in our dissertation handbook when discussing the allotted time to complete a dissertation (seven years from the beginning of your first doctoral class) is there a clause that warns, "The future you may have a colicky infant, or you or your spouse may suffer from postpartum depression. Please be aware that this may significantly affect your dissertation timeline"? No, there is no such clause or warning. We use this example as a way to stage the social context and implications of writing a dissertation in real-world situations. We understand many people might argue a timeline of seven years provides enough time to navigate personal obstacles such as postpartumdepression. We are not suggesting postpartum depression—or other medial conditions and personal obstacles—necessitates the elimination of a seven-year timeline. Dr. Schneider's personal communication with us, however, illustrates how important she felt it was to explain to a nonsufferer of postpartum depression the depths of powerlessness felt by those who do suffer with postpartum depression. When we began working together, we did not know we would marry or have children; we certainly did not know that we would have additional hurdles such as postpartum depression. The current dissertation system provides little to no thoughtful solutions that account for a woman who might suffer from postpartum depression, other than possibly going through the potentially embarrasing process of providing written proof of her postpartum depression as part of a request for a deadline

extension, or going through the patriarchally oppressive process of choosing to postpone attempts at getting pregnant so she can complete a dissertation. In sum, this system positions a Ph.D. student as someone who must acknowledge that no matter what comes her way she must complete the dissertation and coursework within seven years. We feel this discussion about Laura's postpartum depression warrants more inquiry into our current dissertation system's lack of flexibility in addressing the material realities of women who might be struggling to overcome debilitating personal obstacles within the limit situtation of a writing a dissertation in a seven-year timeline..

Challenges the Conventions of the Dissertation Genre

Collaborative: The dissertation is a genre. This is a notion we initially began writing about on our blog, but has gained substantial momentum through our conversations with our participants. Lisa Ede pointed to the lack of research on dissertation as genre at our roundtable discussion, "The power of genre. I don't think people who have written about collaborative work have really raised a question of genre at all. I don't think Andrea [Lunsford] and I did." Miller (1984) writes that a "definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (p. 151). She adds that genres are embedded within recurrent rhetorical situations: social constructs that require us to "interpret the indeterminate material environment" before we are able to "act" (p. 156). Miller proposes that for students, "genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community" (p. 165). As Ph.D. students, we continue to interpret how our doctoral program and graduate school system construct rhetorical situations and genres that delimit our actions within these communities and within our own dissertation study. To contextualize our discussion of the dissertation as a genre, we want to share the

traditional composition dissertation model at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, where one Ph.D. student:

- selects a research topic
- invites three scholars to sit on his dissertation committee
- writes and submits a Research Topic Approval Form
- submits an Institutional Review Board Application
- writes the first three chapters of the dissertation
- participates in a three-chapter defense where the three-person committee determines if the student receives a rating of "pass," "revise," or "fail"
- writes chapters four and five
- participates in a final defense of the dissertation

Sabatino: Of course, this is a general overview of a model that can and has been modified to accommodate nontraditional formats and dissertation projects for composition students in our doctoral program. Still, our course instructors taught to and promoted this dissertation model in our doctoral classes. Although we studied dissertation research under different instructors in different semesters, we both received the same instructions on how to write our doctoral program's encouraged five-chapter dissertation. In many ways, we appreciate how our instructors shared the five-chapter dissertation model with us because the conventions provided us with a fixed pathway into our own dissertation research. So much of the spirit of our dissertation, however, challenges the conventions of a traditional dissertation. Our dissertation questions the ways we can disrupt these conventions, the ways we can reintepret and possbily reshape these conventions to suit our purposes as collaborative researchers. Our

data reveals we are not the first Ph.D. composition students to enact this disruption. We hope we are not the last.

Laura: Nancy Welch discussed how she wasn't aware of the dissertation genre, so she wrote a book and her program was so hands-off that no one noticed. She also suggested that we should encourage students to write dissertations that could be books. Lorin Arnold shared how her research challenged the status quo and how her committee chair was an outlier in their field. She discussed how in her situation she challenged the traditional roles of the dissertation chair providing expertise to the student because she took on the role of teaching her dissertation chair about her specialized topic area.

Sabatino: From the onset, the processes of constructing our cooperative dissertation study disrupted the genre conventions of a traditional dissertation. As two researchers who proposed a collaborative dissertation project, we negotiated the dean's intial rejection of our topic by scheduling an in-person meeting where we presented our rationale through a PowerPoint presentation. From there, our dissertation chair joined us in negotiating a common ground where our differing understandings of collaboration could co-exist, meaning we could collaborate throughout the processes of writing and researching the dissertation as long as we also composed two separate, individually titled texts that were clearly labeled to illustrate 60 percent solo-authorship. Following this negotiation, we created two distinct "paper trails" by submitting individually titled and written Research Topic Approval Forms and Institutional Review Board forms—a nontraditional process of dual submissions that further distinguished our work as "independent." At the three-chapter defense, a stage of the dissertation process our doctoral program instituted to increase graduation success rates, we met with our committee at the same time to enact a joint defense, a phenemonon our

dissertation chair noted had never occurred before in our doctoral program. The three-chapter defense also served as the place where our committee decided our final defense should follow the same joint-defense model. In addition to the systematic processes we challenged throughout each stage of writing our dissertation, we embodied unconventional interpersonal processes of meaning-making that we discuss later in this chapter.

Collaborative: In terms of our dissertation products, we view our texts as cultural narrative artifacts that resist the conventions of a traditonal dissertation. First, we use a scrpit attribution format to illustrate "authorship" of specific sections in our dissertation texts. At first, we considered this attribution style a compromise with the dean that served the better good of our study—that this type of labeling within the text conflicted with the spirit of how we defined a collaborative dissertation but we could not win each battle. Since then, we have come to value the labeling in our text for three specific reasons: (a) it illustrates the resistance we encountered in attempting to construct a collaborative dissertation that would build from the same data and result in one text; (b) it makes explicit the multivocal and social nature of composing a dissertation; (c) it provides us with a seamless model to structure and arrange the data in chapter four (we present the data in the same dialogic script format we use in the first three chapters; thus, chapter four emerges as a transparent reconstruction of the multivocal, polyphonic conversations we shared and continue to share with ourselves and our participants). Second, our dissertation texts extend beyond the traditional five-chapter model. Intertexts are embedded before, during, and after the chapters to reveal our ways of knowing and to build our epistemological argument that our research and writing is dialogic and intertextual—an argument we contend extends to all dissertations because these doctoral studies must be situated within a body of knowledge that informs the inquiry and inspires

data collection and findings that continue the scholary conversation. In addition, our intertexts disrput the standard academic discourse that is typically privileged within dissertation texts. At our three-chapter defense, in fact, a committee member complimented the poetic nature of some of our passages, and, at the same time, advised us to "start with the familiar" so our audience would not reject our work before we had the opportunity to present our findings. Sound and thoughtful advice that led us to revisit the rhetorical impact of using intertexts to illustrate the mulitiplicty of genres and modes—public and private, academic and "nonacademic"—that we embodied in our knowledge construction. After much discussion and deliberation, we (Laura and Sabatino) decided to maintain the marginalized discursive genres and modes in our intertexts and to sustain their arrangement before, during, and after our chapters. We posit these intertexts enact an textual argument that our dissertation products are intertextual, in relation to the ways our cooperative study enabled us to share meaning-making processes, to share the same data and findings in our "independent" products, and to share our research and voices with the research and "voices of others, many physically present, many others distantly echoed, which animate our text" (Lunsford and Ede, 1990, p. 142).

Challenges the Narrative of Risk as it Relates to a Nontraditional Dissertation

Collaborative: The nontraditional nature of our cooperative dissertation involves risk. From the beginning stages of this study, we have discussed the risks we are taking as co-researchers, and we have heard from many people that we are taking on much risk by pursuing a collaborative dissertation. While these conversations about risk ranged from getting our research topic approved and sustaining a fruitful collaborative partnership to getting hired and promoted as college professors, we have narrowed the dissertation-

associated risk to three main subsets of data: (a) risk of a negative stigma being attached to our academic identities; (b) risk of being job candidates with dissertation research that is too similar; (c) risk of the collaborative dissertation being viewed as "less than" on job interviews.

Laura: In terms of a negative stigma, our participants pointed to prospects of administrators who would question the rigor of our dissertatoin scholarship because they would not be able to quantify the amount of work we had each contributed to the study. Furthermore, participant discussions revealed how scholars might question the integrity of our partnership—that we chose to collaborate on our dissertation so one person could "ride on the coattails" of the other. Jennifer Wells talked about a man-and-woman couple who were denied the space to collaborate at a large state university because

> there was a concern about two people going out on the job market at the same time who had exactly the same qualifications. But the other issue was that one of those two people was carrying the weight. There was thinking that had been the case all along. So I think some of the pushback they got wasn't about the product. It was about personal interpretations of how their relationship functioned and who was actually doing the work.

Collaborative: As Ph.D. students, we have experienced similar issues. At our dissertation roundtable, Patrick Bizzaro shared a story about the time when we collaborated on a course paper in his Rhetorcial Traditions class. He revealed his reservations about approving our parternship. Bizzaro said he percevied a budding romantic interest shared between the two of us [Sabatino and Laura], and he felt as if Sabatino had alterior motives behind his decision to work with Laura. Bizzaro also commented he thought the paper we wrote together was

"good" and that Laura had done much of the work. For that course paper, we shared the workload evenly and participated in what we considered a dialogic collaboration. We share a personal relationship with Pat Bizzaro, so we know his example came from an honest place—that he we was pointing out how our collaborative scholarship will ellict resistance from folks in positions of power, even from people with close ties to us. But what if one of us had contributed more work in that course paper? Whatever the percentage of work distribution, why is it necessarily a negtaive stigma if the two partners are satisifed with the amount of work each contributed? We acknowledge that a college course and a dissertation system exist in part to measure students' knowledges and abilities. We ask these questions to further problematize the status quo of such contexts and to question if such contexts should continue to institute standard practices in educational situations that are multiple and fluid.

Sabatino: In addtion to the risk of a negative stigma being attached to our academic identities, our participants suggested we might face difficulties distinguishing our dissertation credentials as we interviewed for jobs. Laura Brady pointed to particular issues related to how a collaborative dissertation could diminish a candidate's credentials and marketability. Brady noted, "A collaborative dissertation—as distinct from other collaborative projects—would call into question the individual's qualifications. The risk, then, would be one of ethos or identity. That risk could then raise questions in terms of employment unless perhaps doing a joint hire."

Sabatino: Participant discussions explored the increased likelihood that a research university search committee would not value a collaborative dissertation as a credential as much as a traditional dissertation. Laura Brady, who works at a land grant research university, revealed she supports collaborative projects but she would not agree to chair a

collaborative dissertation because, "the candidates would do themselves a disservice with a collaborative dissertation... [...] A dissertation provides a key credential. Where other fields have certification boards/exams (such as law and medicine), our field largely relies on the completion of a sustained scholarly work to establish qualification for degree." When asked if she would consider it problematic for a job candidate to have a collaborative dissertation, Brady responded:

> Yes: a huge problem. Not only would there be a question of individual ethos, but also looking ahead, how would any committee be able to gauge whether the partnership would continue. When making a hire for a research position, I look for evidence of continuing and future productivity. If the basic credential is collaborative, would all future work depend on the same partnership? What happens if the partnership dissolves or changes?

Laura: Pamela Takayoshi shared she had explored the ramifications of a job candidate establishing individual ethos when two Ph.D. students discussed the possiblities of writing a collaborative dissertation at Kent University, a project she supported:

> …the problem on our end was thinking about the two of them going out on the market on the same time and looking too much alike. But we fear that in our program anyway. Next year's graduating class will be seven people, and that's a lot of Kent State people to go out on the market at once. And even though there are seven of them doing completely different projects, we still worry about a class that big and people getting mistaken for one another. So that was a concern for us with those two women. But you know, who knows what might have happened?

Sabatino: This quote illustrates Takayoshi's concern for these students' abilities to differentiate themselves as candidates on the job market. At the same time, Takayoshi raised her concerns that the size of her program's graduating class could also pose a risk of graduating candidates whose individual credentials are too similar. Takayoshi's concerns are valid and thoughtful. These concerns are also contextual. Our data suggests the context of the hiring institution impacts how a job candidate is viewed. According to Ginny Carter, who has held administrative positions at a research university and a community college, some search committee members will value where the candidate earned a Ph.D. more than the actual dissertation itself. When we interviewed Ginny, Clayton Railey, and Lorin Arnold, each one said that our collaborative dissertation would not serve as a deterrent toward our abilities to be hired at each person's respective institutions. We mention this because these three participants hired us for our current jobs (Lorin hired both Sabatino and Laura during separate job searches). We are not suggesting that a collaborative dissertation would be valued as much at all institutions of higher education, but we are attempting to illustrate that the risk of two Ph.D. students sharing similar credentials is contextual and can be negotiated.

Laura: Ginny, Clayton, and Lorin each responded to the third major risk of a collaborative dissertation being viewed as "less than" on job interviews. A common rationale informed their decisions to hire us: they said they would want to discuss with us the quality of the dissertation research, rather than focus on the authorship. In both of our experiences in interviewing for tenure-track instructor positions at Lorin's institution, we didn't need to discuss our dissertation because the job responsibilities focused on teaching and not on scholarship. The new hire would not be required to conduct academic research or publish academic articles. Sabatino experienced the same context when he interviewed for the

tenure-track assistant professor position at Ginny's and Clay's institution. This position does not require a candidate to publish in order to get hired, or to receive tenure and promotion. Ginny mentioned that if she considered a candidate's dissertation research, she would privilege a realm of study and expertise that department lacked. Clay commented that he would be most interested in the quality of the work and how the dissertation informed a candidate's pedagogy.

Collaborative: In our interviews, none of these three participants attributed a "less than" moniker to a collaborative dissertation. Our present narrative cannot directly answer questions about our abilities to be hired at a research university versus a teaching university. At this point, we question how much of an impact our dissertation would play into our application materials at such a research institution, given we have held full-time jobs for over four years and would likely need multiple scholarly publications to supplement our dissertation research. If we choose to pursue employment at a research institution, we would use narrative inquiry to investigate and report on that process through a scholarly paper, article, or book chapter.

Challenges Notions of Collaboration at the Dissertation Level

Collaborative: Much of our participant discussion revovled around the collaborative nature of a dissertation project. We contend our cooperative study challenges entrenched notions of collaboration at the dissertation level. These notions include the assumption that collaboration is already ingrained within the dissertation writing process through interactions with the committee members and readers, namely the dissertation chair, but that collaboration does not extend to a shared writing partnership. We use three major subthemes to organize our following discussion about the ways in which our cooperative study (a)

makes explicit the social interaction of a dissertation; (b) enacts our discipline's social turn; and (c) problematizes understandings of collaboration at the dissertation level.

Sabatino: We participated in stories with our interviewees that revealed how their social interactions with dissertation chairs and secondary readers influenced their research and writing—how certain conversations with their chairs emerged within the writing of the dissertation. At times, the dissertation chair's opinions shaped the content in the dissertation or, at a more prescrpitve level, appeared almost "untouched" in the text itself. Rather than offer a commentary on the power dynamic of a dissertation chair and secondary readers' impact on a Ph.D. student's end dissertation product, our participants mainly reported on their social experiences as if this type of collaboration is a typical component of the dissertation process. Other conversations explored a nuanced view of social interaction within the text of a dissertation, how a type of collboration occurs when dissertation writers incorporate the voices and ideas of other scholars into their work.

Laura: We have embraced the intertextual, multivocal interactions we have shared with ourselves, our committee members, our participants, and our textual representations of previous scholarship. Of course, we enacted social interactions with our dissertation committee members. We value their feedback and their expertise—as both have helped to challenge our worldviews and shape our cooperative study. In this way, our dissertation experiences share similiarities with those of our participants. The space we have negotiated with our committee members and graduate school, however, has allowed us to collaborate in ways our pariticpants could not. As of our cooperative study, we have composed a shared narrative that makes explicit the social interactions of our dissertation: our shared writing processes, our intertextual communications of past, present, and future scholarship, our three-

chapter meeting, our qualitative field research with partiticipants, and our five-chapter defense. We hope that by integrating our pariticpants' data and voices with our own experiential data and voices, we have provided a textual representation of the dissertation as a social construction of knowledge.

Sabatino: Our cooperative dissertation's social constructionist epistemology enacts composition's "social turn," an exploration of social meaning-making processes that challenge positivistic notions of knowledge. Our data reveals disconnects between the theory and practice in composition doctoral classes and dissertation projects. Jessica Schreyer mentioned that her doctoral class about teaching writing explored social theories of knowledge but the students in the class did not participate in much social writing processes. Kami Day noted her frustration that although her Ph.D. program encouraged social inquiry, she and Michele Eodice were denied the opportunity to colloborate on a dissertation. Participant conversation attributed some of this disconnect to composition's location between the humanities and social sciences.

Laura: Our Ph.D. program priveleged social theories of knowledge—a major influence on our epistemologies, pedagogies, and decision to collborate on a dissertation. Within our program, we have received positive support for our cooperative dissertation study. We did ask one faculty member to sit on our dissertation committee because he has been an advocate for collaborative dissertations and pedagogies that challenge the status quo. He did not accept our invitation on the basis that the project would pose too much risk for us as Ph.D. students who possess little power in our location within the academy. That aside, our dissertation chair and committee members have championed our enactment of social knoweldge theory at the dissertation level, and they have helped deepen our conviction that

our inquiry into collaborative dissertations will prove to be a relevant contribution to composition's scholarship about both dissertations and collaboration.

Sabatino: Part of composition's social turn has prompted scholars to investigate what we mean when we say "collaboration." Multiple disciplines, including but not limited to rhetoric, linguistics, literary criticism, sociology, and music theory, have contributed to composition's understanding of collaboration. We mention the multidisciplinary influence on defining collaboration because our cooperative dissertation study inhabits spaces filled with people who bring to bear myriad social and academic backgrounds that determine the scope of our research. In particular, the graduate school dean has a science background and as we have chronicled throughout our dissertation narrative, he defined collaboration differently than we did as students immersed in a composition discipline that informs our views of collaboration. As a discipline itself, composition has not arrived at a consensus on how to define "collaboration," primarily because the scholarship does not necessarily aim to arrive at a consensus and because collaboration is a complex phenomenon that is contextual and fluid. Still, our data provides emergent commonalities in a collective understanding about collaboration—from participants with backgrounds in composition, rhetoric, English literature, and education, to name a few. Participants used terms and metaphors such as "messy"; "dialogue"; "talk"; "back-and-forth"; "shared"; and "ping pong" to characterize their definitions of collaboration. Within these definitions, participants acknowledged that their definition of a *quality* or *true* collaboration would involve two or more people who work together throughout the processes of composing a shared end product. They noted how having writers occupy the same physical space would impact the collaboration in ways

different, not necessarily better, than a collaboration where the partners do not occupy the same physical space when writing the text.

Collaborative: A primary goal of our cooperative study involved problematizing understandings of collaboration at the dissertation level. Some of our data outlines a need for documenting the amount of work each of us [Sabatino and Laura] had contributed to our cooperative dissertation study. Consensus opinion did not see much value in asking us to label our work within the text, however. Participants pointed to the "messy" and "back-and-forth" nature of any collaboration and, in particular, a collaboration during a dissertation that requires years and hundreds of pages to complete. Later in this chapter, we explore the power dynamics that emerge in the traditional labeling of collaborations that occur between researchers, administrators, committee members, and participants. To contextualize this discussion, we want to mention that our participant data supports our belief that the traditional social interactions shared among stakeholders in a dissertation do not necessarily equate to an enacted collaboration shared between two co-researchers who join together to write, research, and defend a dissertation.

Challenges the Purpose of a Dissertation

Collaborative: Our participants critiqued the purpose of a dissertation. The data illustrates a plurailty of purpose in that a dissertation study serves as a Ph.D. student's contrbution to a body of knowledge and as a framework for future scholarship. Participants further explored pluratily of purpose when they described the dissertation as an "initiation" into a field and as a "credential" on the job market. Within this pluraility of purpose, our data also reveales hierachies of purpose because of the hierarchical status of stakeholders who inhabit and shape a dissertation. Our interview data presents a theme that the dissertation as a

credential sits atop the hierarchies of purpose. Laura Brady questioned how a collaborative dissertation could demonstrate individual expertise and serve as a credential for future scholarship. Jessica Schreyer pondered how a collaborative dissertation could serve as a valuable credential for the co-researchers who enter a field of myriad institutions that require professors to collaborate in their professional duties. She also pointed to a trend of Ph.D.s leaving academia (by choice or necessity due to lack of job oppoturnities) to pursue careers in other fields. Lorin Arnold provided the following commentary on the complexity of a dissertation's purpose:

> I think it works mostly as credential. I don't know if that's what it should be. But I feel like that's how it functions. I think we all know people, I have a spouse who's one, we all know people who are ABD and never finish the dissertation and will always be ABD, right, and will always be treated differently in the field, even though they did exactly the same coursework, even though they may publish otherwise, so it does function very importantly as a credential that you have to have in the field. I don't know if that's what it should be. It should be what we say it is. We say it's this opportunity to really fully investigate something you're passionate about, in a way that you'll probably never be able to do again until you get enough space to write your big book, and a chance to pull together everything you've learned over your graduate work and really make it your own. That would be good. That would be great, if that's what people could do with it. I don't know how often that happens? I just feel like more often I hear people talking about how much they hate their dissertation project, how painful it is, and how much they wish they didn't have to do it, which doesn't really sound like a chance to investigate your passion.

Sabatino: Arnold argued that the dissertation's purpose as a credential subjugates its purpose as an investigation of a "passion." Our cooperative study presents tangible evidence that a dissertation positions stakeholders in negotitations of purposes that ultimately respond to one grand purpose: the dissertation as a credential. In the following discussion, we investigate our study's three representative stakeholders' purposes. We do not include our dissertation participants in this discussion. Our pariticipants have joined our study's shared meaning-making processes—contextualizing, challenging, and shaping the primary purpose of enacting a dissertation that challenges the status quo in composition—but they have not necessarily responded to the purpose of a dissertation as a credential, other than adding the necessary expertise and rhetorical credibiltiy to the rigor our study. In the context of negotiating the purpose of our dissertation as a credential, we present three distinct representative stakeholders: (a) our graduate school, represented by the dean; (b) our Ph.D. program, represented by our three-person committee; (c) our co-researcher partnership, represented by Laura and Sabatino. Our data shows that each of the three representative stakeholders acknowlegde our dissertation can fulfill the purposes of contributing to the field of composition.

Laura: We interpret our dean's and committee's questioning of our study's authorship as an inquiry into assessing ownership of ideas and establishing invidiual expertise—phenomena that relate more to our credentials as scholars than to our dissertation research's exigency and contribution to compostion's body of knowledge. The graduate dean and our committee have not expressed much suspicion about the rigor of our cooperative study as qualitative research entity; however, both of these representative stakeholders have expressed concern about how we can represent the individual rigor of our contributions in the

texts of our dissertation. We understand the graduate school dean and our dissertation committee must adhere to institutional polices that regulate the dissertation credentialing system and to a job market system that dictates the types of credentials a job candidate must possess to get hired as a college professor. Both the dissertation system and the job market system privilege the dissertation as a credential, which, in turn, impacts our stakeholders' views of a dissertation's purpose. Both of our stakeholders expressed their interest in helping us write a dissertation that would get approved and published—and make us marektable job candidates. Of course, we shared this same interest with our stakeholders. Still, our primary purpose did not relate to the dissertation as a credential. Within the first year of enacting our dissertation study, we held full-time jobs at the same university. In our present situation, we both hold full-time tenure-track jobs at institutions with people who hired us prior to earning our Ph.D. and who valued our dissertation research. In addition, we do not have a present want or need to apply for a position at a research university, an institution our research suggests would likely be resistant to our cooperative dissertation.

Laura: We recognize that the dissertation as a credential remains such a high priority in the academy because of the high financial costs encrued by a student who completes a dissertation study and the limited supply of jobs in the current market. The dissertation as a credential signifies particular types of commitment and expertise—intellectually, emotionally, financially—that strengthen the value of a Ph.D. degree and respond to the material realities of scholars who seek both scholarly engagement and gainful employment. In short, we appreciate how a Ph.D. credential can benefit our careers. Still, from the onset of our cooperative study, our primary purpose involved the "passion" that Lorin Arnold mentioned. We had a passion to collaborate on one of the most meaningful research projects

of our lives, and we wanted to embody a qualitative study that resisted the model of solo-authorship in composition's dissertation system. Our purpose, then, focused less on the dissertation as a credential and more on our scholarly contribution. Throughout our study, we have negotiated a systematic privelging of the dissertation's purpose as a credential with our priveleging of the dissertation's purpose as a contribution to a gap in composition's body of knowledge about why the discpiline does not permit collaborative dissertations. We hope our study continues the conversation about the ways stakeholders negotiate the purpose of a dissertation and problematizes the hierarchial impact on who has (and should have) the most influence on the decision of a dissertation's purpose.

Secondary Research Question: When two People Collaborate on a Composition Dissertation, What Experiential Data can They Construct via a Narrative Inquiry?

Collaborative: The conversation that follows responds to this research question: When two people collaborate on a composition dissertation, what experiential data can they construct via narrative inquiry? This section explores four major themes and two subthemes as they relate to motivation and being unmotivated:

- Our collaboration problematizes co-researcher negotiation
- Our collaboration problematizes postpartum depression
- Our collaboration problematizes motivation and being unmotivated
    - Our collaboration problematizes our sense of social belonging
    - Our collaboration problematizes knowledge transfer
- Our coupled collaboration problematizes understandings of collaboration

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Our Collaboration Problematizes Co-researcher Negotiation

Collaborative: Our participants stressed the importance of dialogue in helping two people sustain a collaborative writing process. They discussed how dialogue is part of a "messy" "back-and-forth" process where people negotiate both tasks and meaning. Our experiential data as co-researchers substantiates these claims because our collaboration relied on dialogue to build commonalities of understanding as we composed our dissertation texts. Our narrative inquiry revealed another theme that connects to the importance of dialogue: collaboration is not neutral. Here we want to unpack what we mean by saying collaboration is not neutral and how we used dialogue to negotiate our non-neutral collaborative meaning-making processes.

Collaborative: In our situation as co-researchers who constructed a cooperative dissertation study, the resultant collaboration invoked non-neutral, hierarchical power dynamics each of us negotiated to facilitate a productive partnership. As we performed research tasks—whether the task required one of us to ask more questions in an interview, email participants to schedule and interview, or manage the technologies needed to conduct and record the participant interviews—that required us to negotiate the power distribution within our partnership. Thus, the social and intellectual components of our collaborative writing processes, whether explicit or implicit, impacted our collaboration. The ongoing multiplicity of each of our social situations, social statuses, and knowledges (institutions, disciplines, job titles, previous scholarship, epistemologies, pedagogies, work experiences, personal and professional relationships with each other, genders, sexes, races, ages, and literacies to name a few) challenges the equitable framework of collaboration. Our

participants' stories merge with our own in that even in a dialogic collaboration, one where each participant works toward egalitarian and democratic processes of working together, the fluid nature of a sustained collaboration will situate folks in various roles and positions, within different locations and moments of time, that will destabilize power distributions—even if for the briefest of moments. *Sabatino*: The material realities of our personal and professional lives posed a recurring challenge to our abilities of sustaining a dialogic collaboration. Job schedules and childcare commitments alone limited the time and space for our shoulder-to-shoulder collaborative processes. Of course we shared sessions of reading, writing, and talking about our dissertation. In these instances, we worked together to create a space of equality—in our dissertation identities, in our voices, and in our respect for each other's ideas. We are not suggesting one person invented an idea as part of his or her act of genius; rather, we always acknowledged "our ideas" built off of previous scholarship and our joint meaning-making processes. Still, we noticed how our increasingly limited ability to work together at the same time had in turn stalled our progress in completing our cooperative study. Therefore, we negotiated processes that included working alone and working together—with the mutual commitment to always join together in workshops where we shared with each other not only the research texts we had read, annotated, and transcribed but also the texts we had written and added to our dissertation chapters. In these workshops, we critiqued and revised texts together as part of our ongoing commitment for intertextual and social processes of building knowledge.

Collaborative: Our workshops also enabled us to negotiate the potential power shifts in our collaboration because we were able to enact moments of consensus and dissensus that served as cross-checks for our dissertation materials. When we convened over our texts, we

noticed how often we agreed about the scope and direction of our research and writing. We connected much of the consensus to our shared personal lives as a couple with compatible personalities, epistemological ideology, and worldviews (critical pedagogy and feminist). Still, a negotiation of power emerged even when we built consensus about concepts related to our dissertation: perhaps one of us had read a bit more about a theory or had transcribed more of a particular interview or had built off of a previous idea and suggested another idea—by the nature of his or her more situated knowledge on the subject this person would then gain more ethos in that moment of the conversation. Thus, each of us shared temporary positions of a leadership role. Neither of us felt as if the other partner abused this temporary construction of power for two primary reasons. First, we both entered into these negotiations with a shared commitment that we did not care who assumed the lead for an idea or where the ideas came from; we cared that our work emerged from our collaboration and it responded to our research questions. Second, throughout these negotiations we relied on what we called *power check-ins* to gauge how the conversations impacted our egalitarian attempts at neutralizing the fluid hierarchical constructs within our co-researcher partnership. To implement the *power check-ins,* we identified three modes of discourse—linguistic (written and oral), gestural, and visual—to both bridge the gaps between the multiplicity of composing processes we were using to construct our study and to accommodate our situated literacies. In previous chapters and intertexts, we shared how Sabatino is more oral and Laura prefers to write down her thoughts before sharing her ideas. We also acknowledged how we learned to comment on each other's non-verbal cues to gain a shared understanding of what each of us is communicating through gesture. In addition, various times we translated texts from written or spoken words into charts, tables, and graphics to lessen our collaboration's

privileging of one way of knowing. In this way, *power check-ins* provided us with a meta-mechanism to interpret power distribution and proclivities for certain literacies. During oral conversations, for example, we would ask questions such as:

- "Am I overtaking the direction of the work here?"
- "Do you feel as if you've been able to voice your ideas in full?"
- "Should we take some time to reflect on this and talk again later?"
- "You didn't respond to my comments. Does that mean you do or do not agree? Do you need more time to process this?"
- "When I revise this section, should I note in the margins the concepts we just shared so we are using the same contextual lens to view the work?"

Laura: In much the same way, when we couldn't write together at the same time, we would write *power check-ins* in the text of our dissertations. These written *power check-ins* mirrored the questions we provided above and were directed to the other partner as part of an on-going conversation about myriad rhetorical and epistemological choices, including the direction of the writing, the interpretation of data, or the structure of the chapter. We acknowledge the lone process of asking questions cannot neutralize power or guarantee one person feels as if he or she is a valuable member of a collaboration. Still, we have communicated to each other that the act of asking questions about power at the very least provided us with a transparent process of critiquing hierarchies within our collaboration and helped us create a sustained space to acknowledge potential power shifts.

Sabatino: Dissensus also proved to be an essential part of the rigor we constructed for our cooperative dissertation study. We view two particular entry points into our collaborative dissensus: disagreement and problematizing. While we engaged in continuous conversations

that challenged our ideologies and rhetorical choices as writers, we seldom disagreed on global issues such as the theoretical framework or arguments we were building in and around our cooperative dissertation study. At the level of dissensus as disagreement, one of us might suggest eliminating an interview question or two because it did not suit the context of the interview we were conducting. Other examples of disagreement occurred within the text: removing a paragraph, shortening a quote, or rewriting a passage where the other partner had taken the lead in composing the text. We viewed these moves as part of dissensus because one partner disagreed with the choices of the other partner. Of course, we welcomed this type of dissensus because a primary goal of our partnership was to create the best work possible. This dissensus represented the back-and-forth nature of a collaboration that positioned us at times in the role of writer and other times in the role of editor. In a way, this dissensus is also temporary. We have no record in our journals or memories of either of us engaging in an entrenched dissensus about the choices one of us had made about the other partner's writing or about the ideologies and methodologies that shaped of our research and collaboration.

Laura: We negotiated dissensus as problematizing with a mutual commitment toward problem-solving. If one or both of us struggled with a theoretical, rhetorical, or practical concept about our cooperative dissertation study, we presented ideas to each other and enacted devil's advocate roles to investigate the problem. Thus, one partner would offer alternatives to problematize the other partner's idea or we would join together to counter-argue an idea we were both agreed made the most sense for our research. We both remarked in our research journals that our processes of dissensus as problematizing helped us work through complex ideas and reinforced our epistemological understanding that ideas are not found in isolation from the other.

Collaborative: In instances of consensus and dissensus—and in the ambiguous points in between these to binaries—we noted our non-neutral collaboration required negotiations of power shifts. We contend we avoided sustained hierarchies in our collaboration and entrenched battles over ideas because neither of us claimed ownership of a role or of an idea, which provided us both with the space to facilitate a joint negotiation of our social construction of knowledge. This interpretation of our non-neutral collaborative research and writing processes does not mean some collaborations are not more dialogic (non-hierarchical) than others; what it could mean, however, is that those who enter into a collaboration could and should enact a transparent, ongoing, and open dialogue about how each partner can negotiate the power distribution in their shared research and writing processes.

Our collaboration Problematizes Motivation and Being Unmotivated

Collaborative: Participants discussed issues of motivation and being unmotivated: how the dissertation process requires a Ph.D. student to negotiate strategies to sustain their research and writing. Pariticipant conversations yeilded a matrix of motivational stratgies such as initiating inspirational self-talks to continue the dissertation work, focusing on the personal rewards of finishing the dissertation and moving onto future scholarship, and sharing personal struggles with people who were not a part of the dissertation committee. These sorts of motivation helped our participants combat factors of not being motivated—including lonlieness, anxiety, and stress—as they relate to time management, personal drive to finish the dissertation, balancing personal and professional schedules, family obligations, and writer's block. Some participants wondered how a collaboration such as ours would have motivated and "demotivated" their own dissertation processes. Some data suggested the

social function of a collaboration could help two people motivate each other through a mutual commitment toward navigating the complexities of dissertation process in ways somone may not be able to do alone. Other data created scenarios where two people could hinder each other's motivation. Here, we provide two quotes from participants who critique the potential of being unmotivated in a collaborative dissertation, and then we respond to this critique with our own narrative experiential data as who shared motivational strategies to complete a collaborative dissertation.

Laura: Pisarn Chamcharatsri pondered the potential drawbacks of a collaborative dissertation when he stated:

> Writing the dissertation by ourselves is very challenging, I think. With collaborative dissertation writing, it can be also beneficial but it can also be, I don't want to say detrimental, but it could also be demotivating as well. Yes. Two people can be disappointing each other, right? On writing it. On finishing it. And they can be supporting each other to not to finish it because when one person is down, the other person is like, "Well, I sort of agree as well." I guess you have to be able to, a person or a partner are always sort of looking at things from the bright side. That person who is always like, "Hey, let's get it done. Let's do this. Yes, you're tired. You can take off for a week and now we have to go back to it. We need to get it done." […] I think with a collaborative dissertation, it's also tricky. When you talked to each other at the beginning of the process, it was fresh, it was new, it was fun to imagine working with this person. But living with this person through work for so long, it become sort of like, "Oh my gosh. When are we getting done with this?" Or it might actually get into a personal level, get into a fight. They might get into an intellectual fight, those

type of things. It could happen. It could go both ways, right? It could go really well. It could go bad.

Laura: Jessica Schreyer echoed similar sentiments when she mentioned:

> I think about my own experience, and I think it would have been difficult to collaborate with somebody on that [dissertation] for that length of time. I also wonder, there were times when I was completely stalled on my dissertation for a variety of reasons, and I wonder if somebody else was stalling at different times and how they may have impacted me.

Laura: Both participants provided situations where one partner's lack of motivation to work on the dissertation could influence the other partner to lack motivation as well. Chamcharatsri suggested the length of time required to complete a dissertation could drain the partnership's initial shared motivation to work on the project. He warned this form of being unmotivated could spill into the partners' personal lives and lead to arguments. In a first-person hypothetical situation, Schreyer pointed to the difficulties two people might encounter when working together throughout the duration of an entire dissertation process; she also questioned how one partner's stalling on the dissertation could impact the other partner. Schreyer did not offer a definitive answer to her questions about one partner stalling on a dissertation, nor did Chamcharatsri claim with certainty how being unmotivated could affect the partner's dissertation processes and personal lives. Neither participant could provide specific stories about two people collaborating on a dissertation because each one had never enacted an inquiry into this construct. This spirit of speculation was consistent with our other participant conversations about a collaborative partnership's factors of motivation and being unmotivated. Our co-researcher narrative provides experiential data

that responds to our participants' ponderings about how collaborative dissertations could lead to instances of being unmotivated.

Sabatino: Our research journals and co-researcher conversations illustrate two main factors not being motivated to complete our dissertation study: (a) how the resistance we encountered slowed our momentum and (b) how our distance from campus and our dissertation committee backgrounded our study. The resistance we encountered attacked our collective energy toward writing a collaborative dissertation. We anticipated such a resistance. But the anticipation did not fully prepare us for our active embodiment of responding to the resistance. Over the course of one year, we suggested our topic to our dissertation chair and the topic received immediate rejection from the graduate school. We again proposed the topic through an in-person PowerPoint presentation with the graduate school dean, negotiated and renegotiated the scope of the study, including the processes and end products we were permitted to construct within the confines of the current dissertation system. We constructed solutions that met institutional requirements of authorship and ownership of ideas that did not align with our theoretical ideologies and epistemologies. Although this resistance proved painful and, at times, limited our motivation, we contend it also strengthened our argument that a collaboration disrupts the status quo of composition dissertation; therefore, we can now look back on this resistance with more of an appreciation than we could have mustered in the moments of living through the resistance.

Laura: We both wrote how the physical distance from our university created a metaphorical distance from our research because we could not meet face-to-face with our dissertation chair or interact with other Ph.D. students. In personal conversations with each other, we commented how the "academic energy" we felt as students on campus could not be

recreated at home. At home, our identities shifted away from that of a Ph.D. student and more toward our personal identities as a couple who shared a life together as well as our professional identities as college writing teachers. As such, too often we foregrounded our personal and professional exigencies instead of working on the dissertation. The physical and metaphorical distancing from our responsibilities as Ph.D. students led to periods of a non-motivational avoidance when we did not discuss the dissertation with each other, let alone work on the dissertation.

Collaborative: On the other hand, we motivated each other through a shared belief that our cooperative dissertation study could be groundbreaking, that our shared personal and professional lives would benefit by completing the dissertation, that we held each other accountable for completing the work together, and that our social meaning-making processes provided emotional and intellectual support and inspiration.

Laura: In our dissertatiom texts, we have admitted that our first pursuit of individual dissertations left us uninspired and unmotivated. When we decided to instead propose a collaborative dissertation, we both felt the passion and motivation we knew would be necessary to complete a dissertation—namely because we would be able to work together on a study with the potential to break new ground in composition. Our motivation wasn't tied as much to gaining name recognition for ourselves as it was about creating a shared resistance into a dissertation system with a bias toward one way of knowing. To us, this type of scholarly contribution proved more meaningful, more motivational, than any solo-authored dissertation we might have written alone.

Laura: By constructing a collaborative study that interrogates its own dissertation system we encountered resistance that tested our motivation. In addition to the belief that our

research had the potential to be groundbreaking, we also frequently discussed how a completed dissertation study would benefit our personal and professional lives. Of course, we could have improved our personal and professional lives if we had chosen to write two independent dissertations that answer entirely different research questions. We wonder, however, how our personal and professional lives would have been impacted if each of us had written two independent dissertations with separate research agendas. How would our personal lives be affected if one of us lacked motivation to complete his or her dissertation while the other person completed his or her dissertation? If one of us earned a Ph.D. credential and the other did not, how would our professional lives be altered? Would our commitment to motivating each other match the level of engagement we shared as of the same dissertation study? These questions prompt future inquiry into the professonal and personal impact on couples who collaborate; we respond to some of these questions at the end of this chapter with a discussion of what we are calling coupled collaboration.

Sabatino: We contend that throughout the stages of our personal relationship—dating, engagement, marriage, parenthood—our cooperative dissertation study mattered more to us and promoted more interpersonal motivation than we would have experienced as writers of different dissertations because our lives were so intertwined. We shared equally in the success or failure of completing the dissertation study, the result of which would affect our personal relationship as well as our professional relationship. We were confident our personal relationship could withstand an unsuccessful dissertation process. Still, we did not want to experience the types of negotiations necessary for us to protect our personal happiness as a married couple. In fact, we never discussed the possibility of not completing the dissertation. As we write this chapter, we are for the first time exploring on a meta-level

the potential personal and professional outcomes of an incomplete dissertation. The uncomfortable process of putting this scenario of failure into words reveals to us now that we avoided talking about such negative outcomes as part of our motivational processes. In other words, our motivational conversations focused on the positive outcomes of completing the dissertation. Throughout the majority of our dissertation process, we both held full-time jobs that did not require a Ph.D. to maintain our positions as college teachers or to earn tenure, so our motivation to complete the dissertation manifested itself as a way to protect our scholarly parternship—as opposed to earning a credential to secure a job.

Laura: In the same way we did not discuss how an incomplete dissertation could impact our personal lives, we did not allow ourselves to ponder how an incomplete dissertation would alter our professional goals to collaborate on future scholarship: conference presentations, journal articles, book chapters, etc. Because we did not want to jeopardize either facet of our personal and professional lives, in times of being unmotivated we reiterated to each other how a completed dissertation would enable us to realize our shared personal and professional goals. We discussed the shared sense of accomplishment we would feel as partners who resisted the staus quo and contributed necessary and meaningul data to a gap in composition's scholarship about writing a dissertation. We envisioned a graduation scene where we would received our Ph.D. degrees together and share our success with our families, which now includes our daughter. In sum, we motivated each other by sharing positive discussions and positive visualizations about completing the dissertation.

Sabatino: We also held each other accountable for the amount of work each of us contributed to the dissertation study. Our research journals and collective memories of our dissertating processes do not illustrate the two of us arguing about an unequal distribution of

work. Rather, we relied on a mutual understanding that each of us would share the work as equally as possible—given the 60/40 authorship requirements of our dissertation texts. Our mutual understanding emerged as a successful motivational construct because both of us agreed that we did not want to "let the other person down" in terms of workload, which has resulted in the two of us intepreting and creating an equal amount of research and written materials for our cooperative dissertation study. Perhaps more important, we viewed this accountabilty through the lens of social meaning-making processes that situated our accountability as a pheneomenon that did not pin us against each other (making sure each person held his or her own weight) but rather reminded us to stay collectively accountable to our epistemological beliefs. An additional benefit of this epistemelogical accountabiy is that we experienced higher levels of motivation when we worked together. Because we could not remove ourselves from our collaborative construct, we cannot address how much motivation we may or may not have experienced as lone dissertators who worked on separate studies. But our small sample size as two Ph.D. students who started and stopped individual dissertations before parterning to write a dissertation together suggests our collaborative construct proved motivational for the both of us.

Laura: This mutual understanding of epistemological accountability served as a core element in our social meaning-making processes. We noted that during time periods when we did not talk to each other about our dissertation, we did not work on our dissertation. In our research journals and dicussions, we explored this phenomena and questioned whether the work initiated our talk or if the talk iniated the work. We agree that we both used talk as a an entry point into resuming our work on the dissertation—that our discussions of theory and

scholarship, of how to analyze and interpret data, of sharing of ideas about the structure and shape of our writing most often motivated us to work together on our coopeartive study.

Collaborative: Social belonging and knowledge transfer are two subthemes that emerged from our research. The current multidiscplinary scholarship on these subthemes, in part, relate to how students can sustain motivation throughout their higher education at large; we posit that the research on social belonging and knowledge transfer can relate directly to how Ph.D. students can construct motivation as they write a collaborative dissertation.

Our collaboration problematizes our sense of social belonging

Laura: Recently, more research has been aimed at indicating how important a sense of belonging is for student success and motivation in college. According to Taylor (2014), "Experiments have shown that even one instance of social isolation can undermine well-being, performance on IQ tests, self-control and critical functioning." We cannot imagine an undertaking more isolating in education than completing the dissertation alone, off-campus, away from colleagues and peers. This is the case for most dissertating students, and this would have been the case for us as well, had we not been working on our research collaboratively.

Laura: In our interview with recent Ph.D. graduate, Jessica Schreyer, she provided her feelings on motivation and social isolation as a dissertator:

> I had a few friends here who were kind of like that [motivating] function for me, but they weren't writing, so they couldn't fully understand it. But they were trying to push me along. I had a goal of mailing my three chapters right before I had Fiona. So I literally mailed it the day before I had her. I think they were pushing me to say, "You're not going to want to do this the first 12 weeks she's born." So I ended up

> mailing it and I think it was because of their pushing, which I think having a partner, if it'a the right partner, could be motivating for sure. I think having a dissertation group of some kind, which I didn't have, I think would also be helpful. I think that's part of the problem with the programs that are kind of developing right now, like our program and online programs, people don't have the kind of built-in social function that they would have if they were on campus, which I see working on a dissertation with someone who is physically near you, especially. I think that's probably the most useful kind of collaboration for that size of project, at least for me.

Sabatino: This kind of "built-in social function" is what a collaborative partnership provides that is often absent for a lone dissertator. Our partnership provided a communal sense of belonging we could not achieve as students who did not live on campus while writing the dissertation. In addition, we posit our co-researcher collaboration created a sense of social belonging we would not have been able to achieve as resident Ph.D. student who worked alone on a dissertation. Pisarn Chamcharatsi shared his story with us about motivation and the need for another person who understands what you are writing about to prevent feelings of isolation:

> It is really important to be passionate, to be motivated in the dissertation writing process, it is a really really lonely experience to write the dissertation because once we enter into chapter one, chapter two, basically the only person you can talk to regarding the topic is your mentor, and that's it. Or other people who share the same interest. And the rest, if you talk to them, they're gonna be like, 'Oh yeah. Okay.' You know? And that's it. Because they don't even know anything about it. They can't even share

> or say anything about it. Motivation and passion is important to be able to finish the dissertation.

Laura: The social aspect of working together and sharing our work with one another helped maintain passion and motivation that Chamcharatsi indicates. These positive motivational processes helped us negotiate moments of being unmotivated.

Our Collaboration Problematizes Knowledge Transfer

Sabatino: When we started our research, we did not consider how the concept of knowledge transfer could be applied to our cooperative dissertation study, but when Dana Driscoll discussed student dispositions and different learning environments, we recognized that she was pointing to an area of research that has not been investigated in the context of collaboration—especially at the dissertation level. This realization prompted the question: How can collaborative researchers working on a dissertation apply previous knowledge of collaboration to inform their collaborative writing? Dana elaborated:

> In the case of your dissertation, it seems that a key here for transfer is what you've learned about collaboration in the past and how that impacts your ability to do current collaborative work. Even though the genre [dissertation] is new, the act of collaboration, of laying out a problem, and of coming to a shared understanding, is not. And if you can be able to abstract that knowledge about collaboration enough to successfully transfer it into the [dissertation] writing process, then that's great.

Laura: Sabatino had experiences with knowledge transfer in the workplace because in his prior professional career as a writer, reporter, and copywriter he had been part of collaborative writing teams. For us as a collaborative team, it was apparent that working together on previous academic endeavors had indeed informed our ability to work together

on a larger project, such as a dissertation study. Before we even formed a romantic, personal relationship and enacted a dissertation collaboration, we had worked together on classroom assignments, conference papers, and presentations. Through working together on doctoral coursework and conference length papers, for example, Laura began to learn about Sabatino's collaborative tendencies. She wrote in her research journal:

> I remember the first time I went to Sabatino's apartment in Indiana [Pennsylvania] to work on a paper together. It would have been late 2008, probably. Sabatino and I were just becoming friends, but had decided to work together when we realized after a group work session in Dr. [M. Claude] Hurlbert's class one afternoon that we had underlined or highlighted almost identical passages throughout our reading. We were a clear match of minds. When I arrived to work on a paper with him that afternoon, he shouted, without looking up, "Come on in; it's unlocked" through the window... I could see him writing from the parking lot. When I went in, he was pounding on the keyboard of his old Sony Vaio laptop and he never looked up. I got out my laptop and starting getting together my notes and organizing my outline for the paper. Eventually, after 30 minutes or so had passed, I asked Sabatino, "Did I do something wrong? Are you mad?" He was dumbfounded. Now he knows that he needs to pause and inform me of where he's at in the writing process, what he's thinking, or merely let me know when he's in the moment of writing. Now I take this as a good sign if I hear the forceful typing and the faraway look. He has entered his zone and cannot be interrupted.

Collaborative: This is an instance where collaborators are learning from one another; but for us, we were able to transfer that knowledge of previous collaboration with one another and

use it for our dissertation work. This is an area of knowledge transfer that needs further research in the field, particularly if others begin to produce collaborative or cooperative dissertations.

Our Collaboration Problematizes Postpartum Depression

Collaborative: Earlier in this chapter, Laura shared how her postpartum depression affected her abilities to work on our dissertation. Clearly, Laura did not have postpartum for seven years, nor are we claiming that her postpartum caused the entire delay in our completion. We do feel, however, that this is a topic that is not openly discussed in academia, and deserves further discussion in terms of our collaborative work. Here we continue the conversation about the impact on Laura, as well as the impact on Sabatino and our partnership as co-researchers. Later in this chapter, we will discuss postpartum's impact on the intersections of our academic and personal relationship—as both speak to our partnered abilties to complete of our dissertation study.

Collaborative: Laura, as her psychotherapist explained to her, was "textbook postpartum" in her symptoms: feeling overwhelmed, numb, hopeless, and at times, suicidal. These feelings were compounded by the pressures of needing to stay on track with a dissertation that was already taking a long time to complete due to the resistance encountered throughout the process. In her private journal, Laura, four months postpartum, shared some of the affects on the dissertating process:

> It's like I've lost my ability to read more than two sentences. My mind can't stay on one thought before I start to spiral. What else should I be doing? Was that Elyse crying? Is she breathing? What if I drop her when I'm walking down the stairs? I'm scared I won't be able to write anymore.

I'm scared I'm ruining this for Sabatino. Our collaboration isn't supposed to be like this. I can't think about this anymore.

Laura (writing in first-person): The added pressure led to guilt that I described as debilitating, only exacerbating my inability to concentrate. I went weeks without writing or even talking about the dissertation. It was just another weight on my shoulders that I began to pretend was not there to help myself cope. Without the pressures to complete the dissertation, however, I may not have sought treatment. Our daughter was nearly a year old when I admitted to Sabatino that I was feeling suicidal and felt that it would not get better without treatment.

Laura: Not surprisingly, mental health treatment was difficult to obtain; there were waiting lists and doctors who claimed they "didn't deal with postpartum" although it is a very real mental illness. In the meantime, this was not an illness that affected me alone. Sabatino and his writing processes were affected as well. He too felt anxiety; he was afraid to talk to me about the dissertation for weeks at a time out of concern that I would spiral into guilt and worry. When he worked on it alone in those darker months of my depression, he felt perhaps even more isolated than a lone dissertator feels. He could not talk to me about ideas or progress, as he had grown accustomed to, unless he picked just the right window of hope. He had learned that the window was all too often shut in his face before he was ready.

Collaborative: It was a time that neither Laura nor Sabatino were productive as writers and scholars, as they had to be there for one another first and foremost. Collaboration was part of the remedy for Laura's motivation for recovery. Laura admits now that without a partner, she would have given up on the dissertation altogether. Having someone else who relied on her to write, to read, and to remain a scholar, helped her begin to engage again.

Laura: Given that the average doctoral student graduates at age 33 (Berger, 2007) and the average age a woman now begins having children has risen to 30, we imagine that Laura is not the first woman writing a dissertation in the midst of postpartum depression. We believe that this is an area of future study. At our graduate institution, we have seven years to complete doctoral coursework, write the dissertation, and defend. Consider this:

> The average student takes 8.2 years to get a Ph.D.; in education, that figure surpasses 13 years. Fifty percent of students drop out along the way, with dissertations the major stumbling block. At commencement, the typical doctoral holder is 33, an age when peers are well along in their professions... (Berger, 2007)

Laura: It would be interesting to explore how motherhood affects the fifty percent of students who are not completing the dissertation, and this inquiry should not be limited to women alone. Our experience with postpartum has shown how the mother and the father are affected by postpartum and it could certainly impact male and female scholars' abilities to complete a dissertation.

Our Coupled Collaboration Problematizes Understandings of Collaboration

Collaborative: As we stated in chapter one, early in our disseration topic approval process we realized our understanding of collaborative writing processes and products differed from the graduate school dean's understanding of these two concepts. We sought to understand how others defined it as well, and we feel that throughout conversations with our participants, we developed a better understanding of the ways scholars define collaboration. While we value the myriad perspectives we received from participants who occupy varied locations (disciplines, credentials, institutions, heirarchical status) in higher education, we

soon realized their definitions or understandings of collaboration could not fully address our specific and situated experiences as collaborators. As such, we elaborate here on what we are calling *coupled collaboration.* At present, we use three criteria to define a coupled collaboration: *intimate, inhabited, indefinite*. These layers are multiple and fluid.

Sabatino: In our present definition, a coupled collaboration occurs when the construct is intimate (two people are romantically involved and sharing their lives together), inhabited (two people live together), and indefinite (two people cannot delineate when and where the collaboration ends). Because our personal relationship—dating, engagement, marriage, parenthood—is closely intertwined with our collaboration, we feel that this provided the room for a type of collaboration that is often conducted in our field between intimate partners. For us, our intimacy is grounded in our marriage. Still, we do not presume to define intimacy for other partners. We welcome other scholars to build off of our definition or to redefine the defintion to suit the context and purposes of their coupled collaborations.

Laura: In this way, two people who are very intimate (but perhaps not romantically involved) and share a physical and personal space where they live and work could potentially have a coupled collaboration. Among our participants, Patrick and Resa Bizzaro have been coupled collaborators; Kami Day and our dissertation committee member, Michele Eodice, have also enacted coupled collaboration in their scholarship. We want to make clear that a coupled collaboration is a nuanced type of collaboration specific to our situation and dissertation study. It is not the only type of collaboration two people can construct as part of a dissertation study. We hope the data in this section can continue to problematize our understandings of collaboration and create a space for scholars to continue defining and

perhaps redefining the concept of collaborative writing, particularly in the situation of a composition dissertation.

Sabatino: What do we mean when we say coupled collaboration is intimate, inhabited, and indefinite? These three criteria distinguish our collaboration from the collaboration most often described by collaborating scholars. Before we explicate each criteria on its own merit, we want to share one specific example from our coupled collaboration to illustrate how the three criteria intersect each other. We have noted in our research journals and conversations with each other that our dissertation discussions have shaped the way we speak to each other in our day-to-day lives. Our *power check-ins* have provided our marriage with a linguistic tool that allows us to be mindful of how each partner processes information and communicates ideas in our non-academic lives. Our constant joint explorations of complex ideas related to the dissertation have improved our abilities as husband and wife to use talk as a negotiation of our "at-home" emotional and intellectual approaches to personal reflection and social interaction. The intertext conversations that appear before chapter five illustrates how we discussed both the framework about chapter five and about Laura's postpartum. To be transparent, that intertext conversation represents the first time we discussed with each other how Laura's postpartum depression impacted our personal relationship and our professional dissertation scholarship. In short, the dissertation discussion about postpartum provided us with the space to share our personal experiences with postpartum as well. We feel this intertextual representation of our conversation provides a tangible example of our coupled collaboration and how the intimate, inhabited, and indefinite criteria intersect each other: an intimate married couple inhabits both their home and their dissertation where their conversations of life and scholarship cross over borderless

locations in indefinite variations and indefinite lengths of time. In this way, the collaboration never leaves us, and we cannot predict if the impact of our collaboration will ever end. Even when we receive our Ph.D. degrees, our dissertation collaboration has shaped our partnership for future shared scholarship, for future job searches, and for future marital interactions in how we interact with and speak to each other as husband and wife.

Laura: Our marriage situates us as intimate partners. We have the same career goals and scholarly pursuits. We share our lives together as partners in everyday activities; our dissertation is embedded within the fabric of our everyday shared lives. Because we share our lives with one another and rely on the other's success, trust between us as a collaborating couple is paramount because we share risk. We need the other to complete the dissertation; our shared livelihoods depend upon our shared success. Our salaries and combined income are influenced by our success or failure in completing our dissertation study. Consequently, the stakes for writing a dissertation together are perhaps higher for us as coupled collaborators than for other collaborators who are not coupled.

Laura: Building upon our intimacy, our collaboration is also inhabited; it takes place in physical proximity to one another. We live together. Even when only one of us is working on the dissertation, the other is nearby or is responsible for the care of our child in order for the other to work. If we work in our home office, it is a shared office. If we work at the dining room table, it is side-by-side at our dining room table. We cannot leave and end this collaboration at the end of the work day or writing session. We are literally living in the collaboration, both physically and professionally. We inhabit our collaboration; we bring it home with us, and it travels with us. It's the dinner conversation, driving conversation, and

often pillow talk. Many nights, we have gone to bed with our heads facing one another talking about our collaboration.

Collaborative: We also describe our coupled collaboration as indefinite. Patrick and Resa Bizzaro are two of our participants that we would also categorize as coupled collaborators; they are married and have known each other for thirty years. At our roundtable discussion, Resa described this type of seemingly interminable collaboration:

> Pat and I have collaborated for a long time because we've known each other since the early 80s [laughter], likely before some people here were born [laughter]. Pat said years ago when he was coaching his older son, Jason, in baseball, he said, "You know, Jason can never get away from his coach because when we leave the field, coach is in the car, still coaching, and it's constant." And for us, professional collaboration is constant, whether it's something that Pat publishes or something that I publish because we talk to each other about our ideas, we read each other's writing. I never send anything out without showing it to Pat. And I read his stuff too. And so we have this kind of private ongoing collaboration.

Collaborative: Similarly, we found that our collaboration was ongoing. In our dissertation processes, we shared everything, every thought, every consideration, every definition, every source, and sometimes every word choice with one another. In this way, coupled collaboration may seem stifling, but we argue that the affordances of such an intimate, inhabited, and indefinite collaboration are abundant and worthy of further research.

Future Research

Collaborative: Although this section concludes chapter five, we do not see our story, research, and resistance as reaching their end points. We imagine our cooperative dissertation study not only serves as an intertextual artifact that represents the resistance we enacted as Ph.D. students but also serves future scholarship that interrogates and disrupts the status quo in composition studies. Our future goals? We will form conference panels, write scholarly texts for publication, enact collaborative research projects that problematize hierarchies in academia, build course assignments that use critical and feminist pedagogical lenses to problematize social systems and identities, and use social media to construct digital spaces where other scholars can participate in disrupting the narratives and policies that shape composition's dissertating system. For each of these goals, we want to join together with folks who embody a multiplicity of identities, literacies, and epistemologies. For the next chapter in this multivocal, intertextual story, we consider others as we share questions for future inquiry:

- How can composition's dissertation system provide a more flexible space for students who possess varied histories, identities, academic goals and literacies?
- How can scholarship on knowledge transfer be applied to students who are transitioning from ABD status to completing a composition dissertation?
- How can the multidisciplinary scholarship on social belonging impact motivation and being unmotivated in composition's dissertation system?
- Is the composition dissertation system an oppressive construct?
- How can the composition system respond to woman scholars who must negotiate material realities that are different than men?

- Does the genre of a composition dissertation overly limit Ph.D. students' choices in terms of writing processes and products?
- What alternative dissertation models can be constructed in composition?
- Should composition distance its dissertation system from the humanities-influenced model?
- When two people collaborate on a composition dissertation that results in one text, what experiential data can they construct via a narrartive inquiry?

INTERTEXT

THE COMPOSITION DISSERTATION COOPERATIVE

The Dissertation Cooperative

From this final intertext onward, we transition from our cooperative dissertation study to construct our dissertation cooperative, a social movement populated by multiple scholars and located in multiple intersecting environments. For the dissertation cooperative, we will work with other composition scholars to sustain a commitment toward inclusiveness so those who enter into the community can feel a sense of social belonging and can join in an ongoing dialogue that supports collaborative and other nontraditional dissertations in composition. We hope that our cooperative dissertation study, although resulting in two dissertation texts, can serve as a springboard for other cooperative or collaborative dissertations within the field.

Sabatino: So Gramsci's concept of "organic intellectuals" could be a relevant way to frame our discussion about the dissertation cooperative?

Laura: Yeah. Right away, I see how it ties together the Slow Food and food cooperative theme of organic with a more academic or intellecutal theme of organic.

Sabatino: And we should go with this quote to contextualize the final intertext?

Laura: I think so.

Sabatino: Should we read it aloud to get a better sense of the langauge and message?

Laura: Yes. Go ahead. You read it.

Sabatino: Okay. So on page 129 in Villanueva's *Bootstraps*, he talks about Gramsci's concept of an organic intellectual. I am going to read this to you now:

> Among those who do intellectual work, there are traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals. At times, Gramsci suggests that organic intellectuals are only those who remain intimately tied to the organizations which are part of their class or group, like a Caesar Chavez. At other times, Gramsci describes organic intellectuals as those whose work remains tied to the classes from which they orginated, even if they work outside their original communities. That is, organic intellectuals might function within more traditional intellecutal organizations, like the univeristy, yet remain organic if the functions they undertake have them conceptualizing and articulating the social, economic, and political interests of the group or class from which they came. Organic intellectuals are involved in a dialectical and rhetorical enterprise: reliance on personal experiences and the experiences of the groups from which they came in order to attract other groups…

Laura: I think that captures what we are trying to communicate in the final intertext. Once we complete the dissertation, we can become the organic intellectuals.

Sabatino: Right. We wouldn't be saying that we are attempting a military coup or a revolution of the government or anything like that. We could argue that once we receive our doctoral degrees, we then enter into another strata of the academy where we could and should continue our research and advocacy for Ph.D. students who wish to collaborate on composition dissertations and who wish to write other nontraditional dissertations. But at the core of all our advocacy is the social function of meaning making. For some Ph.D. students the dissertation cooperative can serve the sole pupose of a discourse community where students can feel supported and can construct a sense of belonging outside of their dissertation committees, graduate programs, and institutions.

Laura: I think that is so important. We can share our story of writing a disssertation together and invite others to share their dissertation experiences. We could share more of the personal side of writing the dissertation. The experiences we left out or were asked to leave out of the dissertation. We could welcome the Ph.D. people to contribute their experiences, expertise, and social connections with other academics who could support the types of nontraditional dissertations that we hope doctoral programs become more receptive to approving and publishing.

Sabatino: Right. And that way our post-dissertation scholarship continues to be tied or connected to the class of the Ph.D. student.

Laura: We already know a few of our dissertation participants are interested in helping to disseminate our research and advocate for future collaborative dissertations.

Sabatino: The more voices the better...we

Laura: You think this is so multivocal and intertextual don't you? Reading aloud Villanueva's discussion of Gramsci's work. The two of us talking about integrating our stories with other Ph.D. students' stories…

Sabatino: [laughter]. And connecting all of this to our goals for the dissertation cooperative. Yes. Very multivocal and intertextual. Do you?

Laura: Yes.

Laura: I've been thinking a lot about the final intertext and I want to remind the audience that the dissertation cooperative is a feminist rhetorical space where we can actively reenvision the genre of the dissertation. Not just reenvision as in re-create, but as in expand. Can I share a quote I found today?

Sabatino: Of course.

Laura: This is from Micciche's chapter in *Rhetorica in Motion*, "Questions necessitate intentionality and assertion of agency—even, perhaps a willingness to be disobedient in the long shadow of tradition..."

Sabatino: I love that. From the jump, writing a collaborative or cooperative dissertation is cast as a form of disobedience.

Laura: Exactly! She goes on to say, "Feminism's directional disturbance generates alternatives to an established line, often interrupting the repetition of norms in order to draw new lines of possibility" (2010, p. 176).

Sabatino: That is awesome. Maybe we should include that quote on our cooperative homepage?

Laura: It certainly embodies feminist rhetorical action.

Collaborative Action Plan

To enact the beginning stages of our dissertation cooperative, we have developed a four-part collborative action plan:

☑ Compose a statement to post on the homepage of our disseration cooperative website. The statement should communicate the title and purpose of the cooperative and invite others to join the movement.

☐ Construct a strong digital presence on social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

☐ Create conference papers, journal articles, and book chapters that share our story as a couple who collaborated on a composition dissertation.

☐ Contact our research participants and other colleagues who communicated an interest in working with us to present and publish our work in mutliple academic environments.

☑ Compose a statement to post on the homepage of our disseration cooperative website. The statement should communicate the title and purpose of the cooperative and invite others to join the movement.

Homepage Statement

Welcome to the Composition Dissertation Cooperative: a social movement toward collaborative and other nontraditional dissertations in composition studies. This website serves as a digital entrypoint for composition scholars who wish to advocate for a cooperative, feminist, and critical reshaping of a composition dissertation system that priveleges solo-authored dissertations. We invite you to join our shared resistance, to join us as we enact a more inclusive composition dissertation environment—one that supports collaborative inquiry and myriad social meaning-making processes.

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