This annotated bibliography is intended to help teachers of composition improve writing quality of entering college students. The main body of the report is preceded by a brief summary of sources for faculty interested in examining the causes attributed to the decline in college students' writing skills, including: "National Assessment and the Teaching of English" (Mellon 1975); "The National Reform of Education" (Ornstein 1992); "Score Decline" (Cameron and Guralnick 1997); and, "SAT Scores and Writing Skills" (Gossage 1976). Sources for understanding theoretical and historical underpinnings of collaborative learning include "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Many Faces of Constructivism" (Phillips 1995); "Collaborative Writing Interactions in One Ninth-Grade Classroom" (Dale 1994); "Strategies of Collaborative Writing and Intellectual Enrichment" (Haber 1994); and "Learning Together and Alone" (Johnson 1991). The major portion of the bibliography, with almost 100 entries, includes sources that report research findings on collaborative writing in the college classroom and cover strategies, methods, and research related to the implementation of collaborative writing. (CH)
An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Research on Collaborative Writing

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1999
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This annotated bibliography should prove useful to composition teachers in their effort to improve the writing quality of entering college students. It should also be useful to instructors who teach methods courses to prospective English teachers. The decline in college students’ writing skills has engendered great concern among faculty in higher education institutions. Some evidence of the decline in students’ writing skills is the continuous drop in the average scores on college entrance examinations, including the American College Test (ACT), the College Entrance Examination Boards (CEEB), and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Sources for faculty interested in examining the causes attributed to the decline in college students’ writing skills include John C. Mellon’s National Assessment and the Teaching of English: Results of the First National Assessment of Educational Progress in Writing, Reading, and Literature–Implications for Teaching and Measurement in the English Language Arts (1975), Ornstein’s “The National Reform of Education: Overview and Outlook” (1992), Cameron and Guralnick’s “Score Decline” (1977) and Gossage’s “SAT Scores and Writing Skills: A Two-Headed Beast” (1976). Dietrerich’s “The Decline in Students’ Writing Skills: An ERIC/RCS Interview” (1977) is an especially helpful source because it discusses strategies that ivy league schools are using to address the decline in students’ writing skills.

As a result of the decline in college students’ writing skills, institutions of higher learning have begun to examine new approaches for teaching writing. During the examinations, collaborative writing surfaced as one of the most preferred methods of teaching writing for many instructors. The research literature suggests that the major
reason that collaborative writing is preferred by instructors is that it has proven to be an
effective technique for improving college students' writing skills. Justifications for using
collaborative writing as an instructional approach are broadly based. Therefore, the
annotated bibliography includes selected sources which examine the theoretical and
historical underpinnings of collaborative learning. An important article for understanding
the theoretical background of collaborative learning is Phillips' "The Good, the Bad, and
discussion on constructivism, ranging from constructivist authors such as von Glaserfeld,
Kant, Alcoff, Kuhn, Piaget, and Dewey along with a discussion on the various forms of
constructivism based upon levels of complexity, including the individual psychology versus
public discipline, humans the creators versus nature the instructor, and an active process.
Meanwhile, Helen Dale’s "Collaborative Writing Interactions in One Ninth-Grade
Classroom" (1994) presents a brief overview of the theory and research on collaborative
writing and reports on factors that contribute to successful co-authoring (collaborative
writing). Marian Haber’s "Strategies of Collaborative Writing and Intellectual
Enrichment" (1994) traces the history of collaborative writing explaining the changing
attitudes toward collaboration while David Johnson and Roger Johnson’s Learning
Together and Alone: Cooperative, Competitive, and Individualistic Learning (1991)
provides a comprehensive overview of cooperative learning, focusing on the terms
competitive and individualistic.

A major portion of the annotated bibliography includes sources that report
research findings on collaborative writing in the college classroom. In Graves' Research
Update: A New Look at Writing Research (1980), he reports that writing research was
scant from 1955 to 1972, noting that eighty-four percent of all studies were conducted by
dissertation. During this period many of the research studies were qualitative in nature.
However, Emig's study on the *Composing Process of Twelfth Grade Students* (1975) was in the vanguard of the movement toward more quantitative research. Cecelia A. McBride Robinson's *Peer and Traditional Instruction: A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Peer Tutoring/Editing and Traditional Instruction on the Writing Abilities of Freshman Composition Students* (1986) investigates the effectiveness of peer tutoring/editing and traditional instruction on the writing abilities of freshman composition students, based on the numerical scores made on a pretest and posttest writing sample. Mary Francine Danis' *Peer-Response Groups in a College Writing Workshop: Students' Suggestions for Revising Compositions* (1980) studies recorded discussions of peer-response groups in a writing workshop class in an attempt to fill a gap in research concerning students' revision strategies. Martha Boger Shrewsbury's *The Effects of Collaborative Learning on Writing Quality, Writing Apprehension, and Writing Attitude of College Students in a Developmental English Program* (1995) examines the effectiveness of collaborative learning on the writing quality, writing process, writing apprehension, and writing attitude of native and non-native college students in a writing program by focusing on their prewriting and revision strategies.

Finally, the annotated bibliography of selected sources should be useful for instructors interested in implementing collaborative writing assignments in the college classroom. In Margaret Fleming's "Getting Out of the Writing Vacuum" (1988), she recommends that collaborative writing assignments should occur during all stages of the writing process. Romana Hillebrand explores the roles of the instructor and the student in collaborative activities by providing a list of do's and don'ts in "Control and Cohesion: Collaborative Learning and Writing" (1994). Meanwhile, Dennis Adams and Mary E. Hamm's *Cooperative Learning: Critical Thinking and Collaboration across the*
Curriculum (1996) provides diverse strategies for teachers who wish to employ collaborative learning activities in the college classroom.

Overall, this annotated bibliography includes strategies, methods, and research related to the implementation of collaborative writing in the college classroom.

Adams, Dennis, and Mary E. Hamm. Cooperative Learning: Critical Thinking & Collaboration across the Curriculum. 2nd ed. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1996. Introduces teachers to various ways they can plan and employ collaborative learning activities in the classroom and addresses some of the concerns and trends concerning collaborative learning practices along with examples of specific content matter, including writing, reading, math, and science.

Aghbar, Ali Asghar and Mohammed Alam. Teaching the Writing Process through Full Dyadic Writing. Reports-Descriptive 141 ED 352808, FL020784, 1992: 19. Investigates co-authoring or full dyadic writing to ascertain how it affects individual students’ writing and to identify and examine the procedures they used in co-authoring. Finds that the positive effects of co-authoring transferred to individual student writing and that the co-authored essays were more clearly focused and unified than the individually written essays.


skills of college freshman because it gives a more accurate assessment of
students' overall writing quality.

Bishop, Arthur, ed. *The Concern for Writing. Focus 5. Reports-Research* 143
ED 159674, CS 204311, 1978: 18. Outlines factors that contribute to the decline
in writing skills among first year college students. Offers a holistic approach for
teachers to evaluate student writing.

Bishop, Wendy. “Co-authoring Changes the Writing Classroom: Students Authorizing
the Self, Authoring Together.” *Composition Studies Freshman English News*
writing classroom and discusses issues, including signs of the crisis, origin of the
problem, evaluation, solutions, etc. regarding collaborative writing and its
techniques. States holistic scoring is the answer to reducing cost of scoring
essays.

Bleich, David. “Collaboration and the Pedagogy of Disclosure.” *College English* 57.1
(1995): 43-61. Provides a critical analysis of collaboration in regards to teaching,
learning and research and a discussion on a “pedagogy of disclosure.”

Bosworth, Kris. “Developing Collaborative Skills in College Students.” *Collaborative
Learning: Underlying Processes and Effective Techniques.* Kris Bosworth and
Sharon J. Hamilton, Eds. New Directions for Teaching and Learning, no. 59. San
Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994, 25-31. Draws attention to some of the skills
students need in order to participate in collaborative exercises.

Bosworth, Kris, and Sharon J. Hamilton, eds. *Collaborative Learning: Underlying
how collaborative learning techniques can improve students’ performance and
their enjoyment of learning, placing special emphasis on the relationship between collaborative learning and critical thinking.


Braddock, Richard, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer. "Is Cooperation Un-American?" *Educational Leadership* 45.3 (1987): 3. Argues that our ancestors emphasized self-sufficiency and individuality but in order for America to move forward "cooperation" must be in schools, hospitals, military, industry, etc.


---. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *College English* 46.7 (1984): 635-653. Discusses the importance of peer conversation as contexts for enculturating students into real worlds of readers and writers by enabling them to relate what they know and extend this knowledge through participation in "the conversation of mankind."

that higher education institutions view themselves as institutions of reacculturation; that professors see themselves as agents of cultural change; and that higher education institutions consider revising their antiquated assumptions about the authority of knowledge.

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"Collaborative Learning: Some Practical Models." *College English* 34.5 (1973): 634-43. Cites examples to show how collaborative learning is implemented throughout society. Draws upon personal failures and successes in using collaborative learning in the classroom and outlines seven collaborative learning rules which enable students to teach each other interdependence.

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"Sharing Our Toys: Cooperative Learning Versus Collaborative Learning:"


Bushman, John H. *The Teaching of Writing: A Practical Program to the Composing Process that Works*. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, 1984. Contends that working in groups may be the most effective learning strategy because students learn a great deal from each other. Provides a broad spectrum of classroom activities in prewriting, writing and revising.

Cameron, Robert G., and Elissa Guralnick. "Score Decline." *Journal of the National Association of College Admissions Counselors* 21.4 (1977): 7-12. Results from state and national testing programs indicate that the writing skills of high school students is a national trend. Suggests this provides teachers an opportunity to reemphasize writing in the classroom.


---. “Collaborative Writing Interactions in One Ninth-Grade Classroom.” *Journal of Educational Research* 87.6 (1994): 334-344. Presents a brief overview of the theory and research on collaborative writing and reports on a study using eight triads in one class to determine factors that contribute to successful co-authoring: amount and kinds of engagement during the writing process, level of cognitive conflict, and the kinds of social interactions.

Ann Arbor: UMI, 1980. AAI8112066. Examines recorded discussions of peer-response groups in a writing workshop class in an attempt to fill a gap in research concerning students' revision strategies. Finds that students' self-confidence level about their writing increased.

Davis, Wesley K. *Educational Implications of a Study on Grammar and Basic Writing Skills in Developmental English Course*. Reports-Research 143 ED 392 067, CS 215241, 1996: 15. Uses a presentational mode synergized with a limited writing-process approach to discover differences in the writing of developmental English students between their pretests and posttest on students' overall writing quality and skills in grammar and writing mechanics on the College Placement Exam (CPE). Presentational mode of instruction has significant impact upon students' growth of writing and grammar skills.

Dewey, John. *Democracy in Education*. New York: Macmillan, 1944. Asserts that the pedagogical and social ramifications suggest from the constructivist position that the knower is participant rather than a spectator; therefore, advocating the use of the activity method in the classroom.


Elbow, Peter. *Writing without Teachers.* New York: Oxford University P, 1973. Examines a program that can be used in writing classes or by individuals to improve their writing ability. Discusses the nature and importance of freewriting and collaborative learning exercises.

Emig, Janet. *Composing Process of Twelfth Grade Students.* Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1975. Conducts a case study on the composing process of twelfth-grade writers. Finds that there is a need to change the teaching pedagogues in high school composition classes and that the teaching of rigid rules differed from students' own experiences with writing and that students' fear of the instructor's critical comments tended to prevent them from sharing their real feelings.


strengthen collaborative writing because they provide an opportunity for a professor to “facilitates groups by responding to individual journal entries.”


Graves, Donald H. Research Update: A New Look at Writing Research Language Arts 57.8 (1980): 913-18. Provides an extensive review of the literature on the research that has been conducted on teaching writing.


and illustrates examples of successful collaborative learning strategies used by teachers. Groups strategies into five categories: instructing, raising student motivation, organizing class, handling homework, testing and grading, and producing meaningful learning.

Hart, Robert L. *An Investigation of the Effects of Collaborative Learning on the Writing Skills of Composition II Students at Gloucester County College: Applied Educational Research and Evaluation Seminar*. Investigates two groups of students to determine whether peer editing and critiquing techniques helped to improve their writing skills. Finds that there is a positive relationship between peer editing and the improvement of college students’ writing skills. ED 341058, CS 213138, 1991: 47.


Hillebrand, Romana P. “Control and Cohesion: Collaborative Learning and Writing.” *English Journal* 83.1 (1994): 71-74. Shares unsatisfying results with collaborative writing in the classroom. Consequently, the author explores the roles of the instructor and the student in collaborative activities by providing a list of do’s and don’ts.

revision, writing apprehension, writer's repertoire, pedagogical approaches, methods of assessment, and other aspects of writing.

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Horgan, Dianne D. and Loretta Barnett. Peer Review: It Works. Reports-Research 143 ED 334302, TM 016599, 1991: 11. Studies college students to determine whether peer review improved overall writing quality. Finds that peer review comments are helpful in improving students' writing quality and that papers received higher grades when feedback was appropriate.


cooperative learning, focusing on the terms competitive and individualistic. Also
discusses the advantages and disadvantages of cooperative learning along with a
critical analysis of the research.

Johnson, David W., Roger T. Johnson, and E. Holubec. *Circles of Learning:*


Presents five components necessary for implementing collaborative learning in
the classroom: positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual
accountability and personal responsibility, use of interpersonal and small-group
skills, and regular group self-evaluation.

Editing on the Writing Proficiency of Low-Achieving Tenth Grade Students. *The
validate the reliability of a rating system for judging the quality of essays and to
determine the effects of peer versus teacher editing on writing achievement during
an intensive composition program. Finds that the use of peer editing can reduce
some of the burden of grading essays for teachers.

Kates, Jack. *Report on the Kates Survey of College Freshman Composition Writing*

*Skills: Sixteen First-Semester Freshman English Composition Classes From
Eleven Community Colleges and Universities.* Reports-Research 143 ED 077498,
JC 7730136, (1973): 68. Kates administers a pre-posttest survey to 16 classes of
freshmen between eight community colleges and three universities at the
beginning and end of the freshman composition course to develop a profile of
actual writing skills for entering freshman composition students.


Lifschutz, Ellen St. Sure. (1982). *Special Sections of Freshman English-A Pragmatic Approach to Teaching University Students with Poor Writing Skills.* Reports-Descriptive 141 ED 247 574, CS 208412, 1982: 22. Describes the special sections of freshman English for underprepared students at the University of California at Berkeley. Finds that minority students completed the required freshman reading and composition courses in greater numbers and more quickly than control group students.

Lloyd-Jones, Richard. “Is There a Crisis in Writing Skills?” *Today’s Education* 65.4 (1976): 69-70. Reviews factors that are attributed to the decline in students’ writing skills. Author suggests lack of preparation in the teaching of writing, oversized classes leave little room for writing and students do not have models to follow.

Madden, Deirdre, and Laurence, Deanna. *An Examination of College Writing Skills: Have They Deteriorated?* Reports-Research 143 ED 364909, CS 214149, (1994):16. Provides an overview discussing the deterioration of students’ writing skills. Explores the errors in college students’ spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation and style from old papers on file from a public university, a private university, and a private college from 1956, 1965 and 1978 and compares to
1993. Results revealed that there is a continuing decline in writing skills of college students.

Markman, Marsha Carow. *Teacher-Student Dialogue Writing in a College Composition Course: Effects Upon Writing Performance and Attitudes.* Diss. U of Maryland College Park, 1983. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983. AAI8419524. Examines the impact a dialogue journal has on the writing attitudes and writing quality of college composition students and to identify methods in which dialogue writing is used to meet individual needs as well as course requirements.


Summarizes in detail the findings of the initial writing, reading, and literature assessments and interprets the data from a number of perspectives.


Morganthau, Tom. "Demographics: The Face of the Future." *Newsweek* (1997): 58-60. Estimates that by the year 2050, the population of the United States could increase by more than 500 million, more than double the 1990 census. Collaborative learning interventions will be more prevalent because of the diverse student population.


Ney, James W. *Teacher-Student Cooperative Learning in the Freshman Writing Course.* Reports-Research 143 ED 312659, CS 212152, (1989): 32. Conducts a study on a freshman composition class using a cooperative learning model to make a more accurate assessment of how students value the class. Finds that the students’ attitudes were more positive and students were more disciplined toward the subject matter.

Ornstein, Allan C. “The National Reform of Education: Overview and Outlook.” *NAASP: A Special Bulletin* (1992): 89-101. Reports nine trends that contribute to the decline in American education: elective courses replaced standard academic courses, graduation requirements decreased, grade inflation increased, SAT scores declined, international students ranked higher than American students on academic tests, adults (39%) and 17-year-olds (13%) were functionally illiterate, business industry spent more on remedial education, and student-teacher ratio was seventh lowest in the world.

Phillips, Dennis C. “The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Many Faces of Constructivism.” *Educational Researcher* 24.7 (1995): 5-12. Provides an extensive discussion on constructivism, ranging from constructivist authors such as von Glasersfeld, Kant, Alcoff, Kuhn, Piaget, and Dewey to the various forms
of constructivism based upon levels of complexity, including the “individual psychology versus public discipline,” “humans the creators versus nature the instructor,” and “an active process.”

Reagan, Sally Barr, Thomas Fox, and David Bleich, eds. *Writing With: New Directions in Collaborative Teaching, Learning, and Research*. Albany N.Y.: State U of New York P., 1994. Provides a comprehensive look at collaboration from the perspectives of the teachers, students and researchers. Authors discuss issues ranging from diversity and the political, social, and individual psychologies of students, teachers and researchers to a myriad of collaborative models.

Reither, James A., and Douglas Vipond. “Writing as Collaboration.” *College English* 51 (1989): 855-67. Discusses a course designed to help students function as a research team in order to co-author a writing assignment. Offers suggestions for implementing such a collaborative project, including strategies for implementation and evaluation procedures.

Rothstein-Vandergriff, Joan and Gilson, Joan Tedrow. *Collaboration with Basic Writers in the Composition Classroom*. Reports-Research 143, ED 294220, CS211205, 1988: 16. Investigates the process of collaborative learning by observing and analyzing freshman basic and experienced composition students’ dialogue and interactions. Finds that both basic writers and some experienced writers were deficient in critical reading skills; therefore, they were unable to read their peers’ essays critically. However, because of the experienced writers reflective dialogue, they were able to provide more advanced logical writing than the basic writers.

Sailor, Susan Harde. *The Effect of Peer Response Groups on Writing Apprehension, Writing, Achievement, and Revision Decisions of Adult Community College*
Composition Students. Diss.?????? Explores the impact that peer response groups has on freshmen composition students’ writing apprehension, writing achievement and revision decisions. Findings reveal that writing apprehension and writing achievement are closely correlated and that freshmen students revise primarily at the surface level.


Scott, A. M. Collaborative Projects Technical Communication classes: A Survey of Student Attitudes and Perceptions. Journal of Technical Writing and Communication 25.2 1995: 181-200. Administers a survey to students enrolled in seven universities in five states to assess their attitudes toward peer assisted writing and peer tutoring. Finds that the means of the five items on peer assisted writing were generally higher than those of the group writing section.

Shepherd-Wynn, Evelyn G. *The Effects of Collaborative Learning on English Composition Students' Writing Anxiety, Apprehension, Attitude and Writing Quality*. Diss. Grambling State U, 1999. Investigates the effects of three paired collaborative approaches (peer tutoring, peer editing, and co-authoring) on college students’ writing anxiety, apprehension, attitude and writing quality. Findings suggest students preferred peer tutoring, co-authoring and peer editing, respectively. Combined collaborative writing approaches were as effective as individual collaborative writing approaches in reducing English composition students’ writing anxiety and writing apprehension, with both marginal effect on writing attitude.


“Research on Cooperative Learning and Achievement: What We Know, What We Need to Know.” Contemporary Educational Psychology 21 (1996): 43-79.

Provides a synthesis of the research on the theoretical underpinning for cooperative learning.


Reports that in 1972 Harvard University reorganized its freshman expository writing program to establish a University Writing Center to assist students who wanted to improve their “freshman education in writing” (40).


Provides an indepth discussion on the nature, value, and dynamics of group learning in the classroom along with administrative, supervisory helpful hints. Contains a generous amount of practical to theoretical content.

AAI8702377. Directs an investigation to identify whether writing attitudes, writing performance, and retention improved using the combined techniques of peer review and self-evaluation in teaching freshman composition students. Maintains that the combined techniques of peer review with self-evaluation had a modest effect in improving writing performance while experimental techniques had a significant effect on students’ writing performance.


Thompson, Richard F. “Peer Grading: Some Promising Advantages for Composition Research and the Classroom.” *Research in the Teaching of English* 15.2 (1981): 172-74. Employs a study to examine the peer evaluation of nine different groups of freshman composition students. Finds that students trained in peer editing wrote significantly better essays than those students who did not participate in the training sessions.

Tompkins, Jane. “Pedagogy of the Distressed.” *College English* 52.6 (1990): 653-60. Emphasizes the transition that teachers must make from the performance model to the collaborative model in order to be effective in the classroom.


learning in order to explore "consensus." Argues that consensus should be modified because it is way for students to identify systems of authority.


Vygotsky, Lev S. (1986). *Thought and Language*. Trans. and Ed. Alex Kozulin. Cambridge, MA: MIT P. Theorizes that the educational setting should be a "dialogical character of learning." Argues that the progress in concept formation by a child achieved in cooperation with an adult would be a much more sensitive gauge of the child’s intellectual abilities.


Weaver, Margaret E. "Using Peer Response in the Classroom: Students’ Perspectives." Research in the Teaching of Developmental English 12.1 (1995): 31-37. Explains assumptions regarding peer response and suggests that students should have an opportunity to decide if they want to participate in peer response activities. Finds that students who participated in peer response had a higher degree of success than students who did not receive peer response.

Wiener, Harvey S. "Collaborative Learning in the Classroom: A Guide to Evaluation." *College English* 48.1 (1986): 52-61. Recognizes that a criteria must be established to evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative learning activities in the college classroom. Suggests that the teacher’s role as task-setter, classroom manager and synthesizer are key to the evaluation process.


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