

Collaborative Writing Group Meeting Strategies

Three types of collaborative tasks:

1. High-order thinking -- define, discuss, and debate to solve complex problems
2. Division of labor -- very large jobs that cannot be completed by an individual within a limited time frame
3. Specialist or expertise-based -- each collaborator has a different area of expertise to contribute (Lunsford, 1991, p.6)

Writing Roles to play during meetings (everyone should alternate, so that each person reads the whole text):

1. Brainstormer – Everyone plays this at all times.
2. Drafter – This person sits at the computer or with the paper and pen and does the primary writing.
3. Reviewer – This person will read what the other person has written to identify and examine paragraph focus, idea arrangement, development. This is best done when the reviewer reads **out loud** to the group!
4. Editor – This person will do grammar check, review source integration, check formatting.

For all group meetings, do the following:

- Have an agenda – some writing goal(s) to accomplish by the end of the meeting.
- Assign specific writing **roles** – for each group member to play – in meetings and/or beyond. **Do not assign parts to write – assign roles to play!**
- Be sure people understand their writing tasks to be completed by the next meeting. Good, realistic planning and timely execution often lead to success.
- Be aware of time constraints – make sure everyone understands the deadlines

Use your technologies.

- Chats and instant messaging allows you to share when you are separated and can be used to preserve the discussion transcript for later reflection or integration.
- E-mail drafts to each other, and use the comments feature in MS Word to insert your own responses to the ideas, arguments, and support provided in the text.
- If you can't attend, call in, or e-mail your comments ahead of time.

Group Invention (Brainstorming) Strategies

- Every time you meet, discuss the topic in depth with your group. For each meeting, have two or more note-takers who keep track of what is said and who can compare notes after the fact. These notes will be used to draft, revise, and edit the paper.
- Write your thesis together and develop an organization or outline for the whole paper together.

Group Drafting Strategy

- Select your best typist or two to be the primary drafters. Everyone else sits around the drafter and “feeds” the person sentences – write the document together, so that it doesn't adopt one person's voice, or multiple voices.

Group Revision and Editing Strategies

- Read the paper out loud together and discuss whether or not each idea, sentence, and paragraph connects to the ones around it.
- If the paper has been cooperatively written, group members should trade sections and read them as if the topic is entirely new. Ask open-ended questions, especially “how?” “why?” and “what is the connection?” This will help you see how to tie sections together.

References

Lunsford, A. (1991). Collaboration, control, and the idea of a writing center. *The Writing Center Journal* 12(1), 3-10.