Collaborative Research and Mentorship in the Humanities

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Abstract: The function of collaborative research in the humanities has been overlooked and unsupported. Dr. Charles E. Bressler and Z. A. Rhone briefly explore the roots and presence of collaborative research in both the sciences and the humanities. Following, they explain how to establish and facilitate collaborative research at an institution, likewise noting the dynamics and benefits of the collaborative research form.

Keywords: Collaborative Research, Collaboration, Mentorship

Introduction

During World War II, the act of collaboration usually meant that one was cooperating with the leaders of the German occupation of many European countries. Fortunately, the cultural milieu surrounding the word collaboration has changed. As presently defined by the OED, collaboration is “united labour, co-operation; esp. in literary, artistic, or scientific work.” Not surprisingly, throughout the academy collaboration between faculty and between faculty and students is becoming the hallmark of both research one and liberal arts institutions. And at such colleges and universities, the sciences, more than any other discipline, have displayed the most obvious utilization of collaboration in their research with their many surveys, case studies, and experiments conducted by groups of two or more researchers. Kenneth A. Bruffee observes that the birth of such collaborative research originated with M. L. J. Abercrombie at University College, University of London. Asking a group of medical students to examine together the same patient, Abercrombie discovered that students learned diagnosis better by collaboration than individually (636-37). In contrast to this kind of collaborative research in the sciences, most research in the humanities is a lonesome, individualistic task.

In A Guide to Composition Pedagogies, Rebecca Moore Howard notes, however, that the humanities classroom does indeed possess a collaborative side, one that includes group discussions, presentations, and projects (58-61).[^1][^2] Perhaps the least acknowledged but most widely used form of collaboration in the humanities is intertextuality, “a term denoting that any given text’s meaning or interpretation is related or interrelated to the meaning of all other texts. Hence, no text can be interpreted in isolation, and all texts are intertextual” (Bressler 346). When scholars write essays, they reference texts, with such works being cited by textual collaboration.

Because the dynamics of collaboration vary, collaboration itself may best be categorized according to the collaborators, not the kind of research being done. The most central
collaborative research approach within the university is faculty-student, but the overall dynamics of university collaborative research also include faculty-faculty, faculty-external source, and student-student collaboration. While the faculty-external source collaboration may take the form of other collaborative approaches, such an approach often requires different kinds of application and yields different effects at the social and the political level than faculty-faculty, faculty-student, and student-student collaboration.

In all types of collaboration, collaborative research usually operates in one of two forms: dialogic or hierarchical. In dialogic collaboration, the collaborators work together on all aspects of the project whereas hierarchical collaboration delegates specific tasks to each collaborator, and the parts, then, are brought back together to form a united whole (Howard 63).

According to Howard, the philosophical roots of collaboration are found in the social constructivist philosophy of Richard Rorty in which knowledge is a belief agreed upon and acquired by a community—not a collection of abstract concepts attainable only by the gifted scholar (56), a concept somewhat akin to that of interpretive communities devised by the literary theorist Stanley Fish in which a group of readers/researchers share the same interpretive strategies (Bressler 88).

The beginnings of one such interpretive community were birthed when Z. A. Rhone first entered Dr. Charles E. Bressler’s Advanced Composition class in the fall semester of 2005 at Houghton College, a small liberal arts undergraduate institution in Upstate New York. Similar to the beginnings of most classes, Bressler wondered what type of community would be established in this particular class with these particular students. Having taught undergraduate classes for thirty years, Bressler approached his new class/community with much excitement and anticipation, believing that the first few sessions of a class demonstrate the tone, the work ethic, and the level of joy that, then, determine the type of learning community that will be established for the rest of the semester. As usual, Bressler was filled with some fear and anxiety, knowing that he was responsible, at least in part, for the classroom climate. Bressler further wondered what his students would teach him about writing and which students, if any, would become his teachers and fellow collaborators in the writing process of instructor-assigned and classroom-generated topics as well as further research that interested him and his yet-to-be-identified co-researchers/co-authors.

After a few class sessions, Bressler began having individual writing conferences with his students, reviewing with them their first interpretive essay based on Flannery O’Connor’s short story “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.” During one of these conferences, Bressler noted the keen sense of attention to detail, the creativity to think outside the box, and a willingness to participate in the sometimes tedious process of writing—rewriting, exploration, and then rewriting again—in one particular student: Z. A. Rhone. Through a serendipitous conversation with Rhone following a classroom analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story “Young Goodman Brown,” Bressler observed Rhone’s excitement and sense of discovery when Rhone talked about one of Bressler’s favorite authors, Hawthorne. It is then that Bressler asked Rhone if he would be interested in Bressler’s directing him in an independent study on some aspect of the Hawthorne
canon during the next academic semester. Thus began what is, to date, a five-year collaboration between Bressler and Rhone that has taken them on many academic adventures to conferences throughout the United States and Europe: a collaboration based on mutual respect, mutual excitement in exploring the mystery of ideas and truth, and the desire to present their findings both at scholarly conferences and in print.

Getting Collaborative Research Started

Bressler’s request to Rhone was not Bressler’s first inquiry for collaborative research. Throughout his time at Houghton, Bressler encouraged students to re-write their classroom papers for possible presentation at various academic conferences. Working individually with students who expressed a desire to expand, explore, develop, research, and author texts as extensions of their course assignments, Bressler successfully coached students to submit their papers to regional, national, and even international venues. That he and his students were successful is evident in the multiple places where his students have had the opportunity to speak: Susquehanna University in Pennsylvania, various undergraduate conferences throughout New York, and international C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien conferences at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, to name a few. None of these collaborative projects have been as successful and prolific as his faculty/student collaboration with Rhone, one that has matured from a hierarchical to a dialogic form of collaboration. It is indeed his work with Rhone that has taken Bressler’s faculty/student collaboration to a new level of faculty, student, and institutional cooperation and financial support.

Sparked by their mutual interest in Hawthornian studies, Bressler’s initial invitation to Rhone to participate in an independent study on Hawthorne unearthed in Rhone a newly-discovered passion for the scholarly studying and investigation of Hawthorne’s canon. Over lunch, many cups of coffee, and passing comments on campus, Bressler and Rhone realized that one Hawthornian motif captured their mutual interest: laughter. Perhaps it was Bressler’s previous work on the presence of laughter in the canonical writings of J. R. R. Tolkien or maybe it was Rhone’s discovery of Hawthorne’s abundant use of the various functions of laughter in Hawthorne’s short stories and romances that led to Rhone’s authoring a Senior Honors English thesis under Bressler’s mentorship on the function of laughter in the Hawthornian canon—neither of them really knows! But the faculty/student weekly meetings over coffee and sometimes lunch allowed them time to explore not only their chosen research topic but also other literary topics and authors with whom they held a common interest.

While Rhone was completing his Honors Thesis centered on laughter and ambiguity in Hawthorne’s writings, Bressler and Rhone worked together on two presentations that Rhone later gave at the New Voices of Humanity Conference at Georgia State University in September 2006 and at the Undergraduate Literature and Writing Conference at Susquehanna University in February 2007. Both of these presentations and the necessary collaboration with Bressler enabled Rhone to hone his topics and research to an academic level acceptable for presentation at scholarly conferences. Following the completion of Rhone’s Honors Thesis, both Bressler and Rhone jointly spoke on Hawthorne’s writings at the International Conference on Romanticism.
held at Towson and Loyola Universities in October 2007. During the same month, Rhone also presented at the Penn-York Conference for Undergraduate Research on the topic of faculty/student collaboration as a shared experience and exploration, actually taking Bressler’s place as a presenter since Bressler was out of the country at that time. The following year in June 2008, once again, both Bressler and Rhone presented a paper titled “A New Look at Hawthorne’s Ambiguity: Using Laughter to Unlock Hawthorne’s Literary Techniques for Creating Ambiguity” at the annual meeting of the Nathaniel Hawthorne Society at Bowdoin College. After the various Hawthorne studies endeavors, their collaboration continued with discoveries in the writings of J. R. R. Tolkien.

Upon Rhone’s completing his undergraduate degree and his enrolling in a master’s program in English at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Rhone has maintained his collaboration with Bressler. The form of this collaboration, however, has now evolved into that of scholar/scholar as opposed to faculty/student, bringing great delight to the former professor who, at times, is now the student. Applying their interest, research skills, and exploration of philosophy and ideas to their beloved author J. R. R. Tolkien, Rhone and Bressler have had the opportunity to present their research not once but twice at the annual meeting of the British Tolkien Society (Oxonmoot) at Christ College (2008) and Lady Margaret Hall (2009), University of Oxford, England. Both have also been asked to speak at the 2010 Oxonmoot meeting of the National British Tolkien society to be held once again at Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford University, in September. And, as evidenced by their presentation on collaborative research at the Austria conference sponsored by the International Journal of Arts and Sciences (May-June 2010), Bressler and Rhone hope to continue being mutual teachers, encouragers, and critics of each other, of their ideas and philosophies, and of their writing.

Although this mentor-mentee approach is not the only way to facilitate undergraduate collaborative research, the overarching principles utilized by Bressler and Rhone for successful faculty/student collaboration at the undergraduate level are threefold and are applicable for all such collaborative approaches: 1) Develop and encourage departmental interest and involvement; 2) Develop and encourage administrative institutional interest, involvement, and support; and 3) Establish tangible goals for disseminating the research results, both internally within the university and externally at local, state, regional, national, and international conferences.

**Interest at the Departmental Level**

Like Bressler and many of his colleagues at research one and liberal arts institutions, undergraduate collaborative research more frequently than not begins at the faculty level. In this initial phase, both the research and its accompanying time commitments are necessarily at the individual faculty member’s expense, usually excluding financial remuneration and/or teaching course load reduction. Although such research can be initiated by a comment a student or another faculty member makes, it is the individual faculty member who willingly sequesters him/herself to contemplate, research, write, rewrite, and finally, present or publish the research.
Unfortunately, according to Prince, Brent, and Felder, many undergraduate professors often fail to discuss their research with their students, thereby denying the students a window into the world of a scholar. Hence, for collaborative research to begin, the scholar/researcher must bring his or her research into class lectures or discussions and into the normal flow of conversation on campus. Even a casual conversation between a student and a faculty member may spark interest in an undergraduate to pursue further conversations with a professor and ignite a full-blown faculty/student collaborative project which can take the form of independent studies or departmentally-sanctioned research groups.

In addition, faculty members can build interest in scholarly research and collaboration through faculty-faculty collaboration. Faculty-faculty collaboration requires not only knowledge of a higher breadth and depth than faculty-student research but also adds another member to one’s team of advocates for overall university collaborative research support. In this phase, such collaboration requires sophisticated interpersonal skills and communication at the faculty level in order to affect the department as a whole. While innately valuable, team and relationship building also help to foster interest in collaborative research. Simply sitting down to lunch or having a cup of coffee with a peer can lead not only to friendship but also to discussions about academic interests, thus providing an excellent opportunity to express one’s verve for collaborative research. For those instructors who may be a bit introverted, faculty luncheons, retreats, and other university-sponsored events offer an opportunity for them to advocate for collaborative research at pre-existing venues. Any means of faculty-faculty collaboration will aid in raising interest, expectation, and perhaps future research opportunities.

Interest at the Campus and Administrative Level

As collaborative research blossoms at the departmental level, collaborating faculty members must share and publish their work both internally (within the university) and externally. If the university has previously not acknowledged or disseminated faculty-faculty or faculty-student collaborative research results in public academic venues such as university newsletters, the university website, or other publications, collaborators themselves must seek ways of advertising their research. Such collaborators must first seek departmental support such as including their collaborative research results in a departmental e-mail to all majors, in the university’s student newspaper, or through e-mail contact with faculty, students, and alumni. It is the task of the researchers themselves to make known their collaborative research to their home institutional colleagues, staff, administrators, and student body. By so doing, such researchers enhance the institutional reputation of their universities and may therefore attract external funding.

At times, like Bressler and his colleagues, the humanities may join with the sciences in requesting and securing funding for hierarchical collaborative research. In the spring of 2007, for example, Rhone, Bressler, and an additional humanities research group approached Houghton College’s Presidential Advisory Board to request a secure financial fund for faculty-student collaborative research. After Bressler introduced his aims with each of the collaborative research programs to the Board, the student researchers themselves spoke for 5-10 minutes about the importance of collaborative studies in their academic pursuits and the processes and products of...
their research. Following the Bressler research groups’ hour-long presentation of their ongoing English research programs, a physicist, Dr. Mark Yuly, entered the conference room with his research students from the physics department. Like Bressler and his students, Yuly and his student-researchers presented their research project and proposals to the Advisory Board. After the conclusion of their presentation, the Board authorized a designated collaborative research fund to aid both the English and the physics research projects! The lesson to be learned from this scenario: it is the responsibility of the faculty/student researchers to make public their work and to seek funding in order to continue their research and to be able to finance their attending regional, state, national, and international conferences to present their findings. By so presenting their research at conferences and in professional adjudicated journals (including those published solely on the World Wide Web), faculty/student researchers can enhance their own reputations (and perhaps future funding), enjoy the pleasures of travel, and involve themselves in establishing a network of scholars throughout the academic world while simultaneously gaining prestige for their institutions.

Another example from Houghton College concretizes such results: on the Houghton College Physics and Engineering website, Professor Yuly writes, “Our program allows professors and students to develop close working relationships with each other as we strive together toward the goal of academic excellence and spiritual growth.” The collaborative research in the science department at Houghton is so integral to the program that Yuly further explains its value: “We designed our curriculum to include hands-on research. As early as your sophomore year you [the student] may choose an advisor and a research project. By the time you graduate, you will have completed a significant multi-year project and will be an expert in a particular area – then you can present your work as part of the physics seminar course.” As a result of Houghton College’s collaborative research programs, Houghton physics and engineering students travel annually to Los Alamos, New Mexico, for work on nuclear physics experiments at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and nanotechnology research at Cornell University.

**Dynamics of Collaborative Research**

To this point, we have discussed the importance, institutional process, and products of collaborative research; now we intend to describe the dynamics of a collaborative research meeting for faculty-student collaboration: both mentor-mentee and research group formats.

In both cases, listening is a significant factor of the collaborative environment. In her research and writing about peer-response writing groups in the composition classroom, Karen I. Spear writes, “Listening has long been recognized as a neglected language art….listening is reciprocal not just receptive; active not passive; responsive not silent” (116). Too often in the academy, faculty choose to ignore—either consciously or unconsciously—the voice of the student, opting instead to hear their own voice. Collaborative research presents an opportunity for the faculty member and the student to be in dialogue. In such dialogue, Spear asserts, the key for all participants is active listening.
For example, instructors frequently know that their lectures are not being digested when students roll their eyes, shake their heads, become fascinated by something on their computer screens, send text messages, or make sarcastic remarks in the classroom. Similarly, in the collaborative meeting, the instructor’s body language and words either encourage or discourage a student’s open and honest expression. The composition specialist and esteemed writing professor Donald Murray observes, “I am too fond of answers, of lists, of neatness, of precision…. I have to wait for each student draft with a learning, listening eye” (18). Murray’s words are particularly apt in the collaborative environment. In this teaching-learning moment known as collaborative research, the instructor needs to learn to take the initiative in willingly choosing to be an active listener; that is, attending to, responding, and aiding the student’s exploration from a facilitative rather than wholly authoritative position.

This shared exploration may be attained in a number of ways (e.g., response essays, journals, blogs, among others), but the form most familiar to Bressler and Rhone is the literacy technique known as the “think aloud.” In a think aloud, collaborators converse with open, verbalized thoughts that are receptive and responsive to the listener’s comments. The active listening of the think aloud allows for collaborators to metaphorically finish the sentences not yet concluded in their own heads. By thinking out loud, collaborators discuss questions, observations, and assertions without definitive answers: all information is in flux, yet more information is contributed. In the process, for example, the student literally observes how his/her instructor “thinks” about a problem or concern in a particular discipline and how the instructor arrives at a conclusion. During this process, the professor “thinks aloud” his/her often silent thought processes of discovery, a process that usually takes place when the professor dialogues with him/herself, debating issues, rejecting and accepting hypotheses, formulating theses, and finding textual support for a proposed argument. Thus, by and through example, the professor demonstrates how one “thinks” in his/her discipline, thereby training students to become species-specific disciplinary scholars. And, likewise, the instructor learns how a student arrives at his/her observations. Ultimately, the think aloud leads collaborators to a better understanding of not only another’s perspective but also one’s own perspective simply by applying new information or another series of questions.

While the literacy think aloud offers the opportunity for all collaborators to share their thoughts, lessons gleaned from psychology can also strengthen collaborative research. For example, the psychologist Carl Rogers advocates for a slightly different form of collaboration (Spear 116). According to psychologist Gerald Corey, person-centered therapists like Carl Rogers “avoid asking leading and probing questions, they do not make interpretations of the client’s behavior, [and] they do not evaluate the client’s ideas or plans” (169); rather, Rogerian therapists repeat information already stated by the client and phrase open questions that prod for more information.

In contrast to the think aloud where the instructor shares his/her information with the student, the Rogerian collaborative environment forces the instructor to act more like a mirror. As the student gives information and states observations, the instructor bounces back the information and observations—often in the form of questions—so that the student has to think through
his/her own ideas in order to come to one’s own epiphanies instead of the instructor’s pontifications.

While both the think aloud and Rogerian collaborative approaches help facilitate one-on-one and group collaborative efforts, research groups consisting of a faculty member and two or more students draw out new considerations: How should the instructor facilitate two or more conflicting perspectives within the group? How should work be delegated to the group? How does the instructor handle a student who does not pull his/her weight or match up academically or socially to other students in the research group? Although such questions should usually be handled on an individual basis, these ideas must be addressed in the initial stages of the group’s formation and in the developmental stage in which the community of scholars is being created. It is the students themselves who should be asked these kinds of questions, with their answers (along with a little coaching from the faculty member) formulating the rubric by which the students and the faculty member will be evaluated. And, of course, different rubrics will need to be established for the various stages of the research, including the time spent reading and researching the primary materials, executing research on all secondary sources, analyses of the data, creating hypotheses and thesis statements, writing the first draft, the procedures involved in authoring a multi-author paper, and so forth. The clearer and more well defined the rubrics, the better both the faculty member and the student will understand what is required of each of them throughout the collaborative process.

Benefits of Collaborative Research

Although many of the benefits of collaborative research have already been implied, we would now like to briefly recapitulate some of the basic benefits, expanding from institutional to external benefits. When approaching any potential funding board at an institution, these fundamental benefits may assist in supporting one’s argument for the support of collaborative research.

The first benefit is networking. By nature, collaborative research involves more than a single party. Whether working with only one other collaborator or a large research group, networking occurs on a small scale. The network expands, however, when scholars attend conferences and publish. By speaking at conferences, corresponding with editors, and publishing research, scholars heighten not only their own prestige but also their accessibility to others with similar interests in their field; others may actually then contact them to network.

Conferencing and publication, indeed, comprise the second benefit. These opportunities offer a series of benefits themselves, including participant scholars enlarging their curriculum vitae—which, of course, makes one more desirable on the job market. Second, conferences and publications provide the opportunity to travel in order to present, meet with editors, or further the research under discussion. And, third, as was already mentioned, collaborators build a network of scholars around them.
Likewise, collaboration innately fosters team-building skills and unity at the departmental and possibly interdepartmental levels. Involved faculty members learn better how to work in teams to complete important research, and those members often spend time just having coffee or a meal or spending time with one another’s family.

Perhaps the most prized benefit for a student undertaking collaborative research is the knowledge of how to complete a large, successful, and often difficult scholarly project worthy of presentation and/or publication. When such collaborative research has been concluded, the students will then understand how to write and research at the graduate and, sometimes, professional level.

The nature of collaborative research should also generate positive memories along with exceptional research. Those involved in the collaboration (and especially students) are more likely to provide future financial support to the institution. Because these students have experienced a worthwhile project during their undergraduate career, such individuals hope to see others benefit from similar experiences at the same institutions and may personally finance future departmental research.

And thus the reputation of the institution improves manifold. Collaborators enhance the program’s reputation by networking and conferencing and publishing. Also, the collaborators and those who observe the research undertaken are likely to recommend such a beneficial program to friends, family, and acquaintances. The network then increases as student collaborators find employment and encourage a second generation to attend their alma mater.

Last of all, collaborative research provides a heightened sense of pride at the personal, the departmental, and the institutional level. Successful projects encourage audiences and observers to commend the department or institution for supporting high-quality research. If the research is successful and its results are publicized through conferences or publications, then chances are still greater that the departments involved will receive praise from their home institution.

According to some scholars and administrators, however, collaborative research constricts the breadth of knowledge a student could be learning in a classroom environment over the successive semesters spent doing collaborative research. For this reason, many institutions sadly limit the credit a student can receive toward a degree via collaborative research. Often, students may acquire a maximum of nine credits for any given degree through independent studies/seminars and research groups.

**Why Faculty/Student Collaboration?**

In light of our academic and personal research, we can now ask the following question: Why should professors and students become personally involved in faculty/student collaboration? In other words, in addition to what we have already stated, what are the personal rewards for participating in this kind of research? Because of the “two-sided” nature of faculty/student
research with both mentor and mentee, we will present our summation from two perspectives—first the faculty viewpoint and then the student perspective.

**Faculty Response**

From my perspective as a faculty member and researcher, I, Charles E. Bressler, see four personal rewards as a direct result of my collaboration with students. First, I have the chance to share knowledge in a different venue than the normal humanities classroom that usually consists of 20 to 80 students per class. On the other hand, during my faculty/student collaboration time, I spend one-on-one time with a student or in groups of no more than four students. And during our exchanges, I find great joy in working with students who are passionate about academic topics and interests that also ignite my academic passions and scholarly pursuits.

Second, during my time with one student or a small group, I have the opportunity to shape the future not only of a particular budding scholar but also of my profession and particular discipline. Hence, the joy of knowing that I am molding and mentoring the future leaders in and of my discipline brings great satisfaction.

Third, more frequently than not, the life of a scholar is a private one and can, at times, be lonely and isolated. But during my interaction with my students with whom I am a fellow researcher, I have a chance to “get out of myself,” moving from an individual or an “I” point of view to that of another person or group. Conversations during such research times become personal and help establish a positive, intimate sharing of ideas. Such research, indeed, helps create a movement from “me” to “us” to “others,” forming a community or what the British author J. R. R. Tolkien calls a fellowship. By so doing, faculty/student collaboration leads to an understanding that we are not isolated scholars who are alone in the world. In essence, establishing such a community leads to a wonderful paradox: self-satisfaction arises through the giving of one’s self to another, not through a conscious self-seeking of importance or personal advancement.

And last of all, the joy and caring for others within an established interpretive community or fellowship help create the atmosphere of passion concerning the discovery of truth in all its complex and diverse forms—truth about life, about ourselves, and others. What more can a person ask for than such an experience!

**Student Response**

As a student and mentee attempting to coalesce or reduce the breadth of collaborative research benefits into one word I, Z. A. Rhone, am most comfortable with the word *opportunity*. Because of the faculty/student collaboration, I have experienced a vast number of opportunities as a result of seizing the collaborative research opportunity.

I have, for example, learned how to perform research on a professional level. For an undergraduate student foreign to anything other than a senior high school English paper, the prospect of a 100-page honors thesis at the collegiate level brought ignominious feelings of
incompetence. By collaborating in research, I learned various research methods including, but not limited to, ways of finding sources, organizing information, and composing a complete draft. Now, as a Ph.D. student, I approach the dissertation undauntedly with little angst or apprehension, its being simply another research and writing exercise.

Second, I experienced the benefits of conferencing and travel. Through my Hawthorne and Tolkien research, I have visited cities and regions throughout the United States where I had never been before and journeyed across the pond to the United Kingdom and, most recently, Germany and Austria. At each conference, I add new knowledge and experience, while enjoying the company of fellow scholars.

Accordingly, the scholarly community serves as the third benefit of collaborative research. The “ivory tower” of scholarship appeared much more approachable once I experienced the scholarly community at my local institution as well as various conferences and societies. Shortly after my first experiences, I acquired a confidence in my ability to be a part of the scholarly community in the future: an important grasp for the climb in my career aims.

Often, as Bressler and I show at present with this article, publishing is a fourth benefit of collaborative research. As a student, I read article upon article and book upon book, failing to believe that, one day, I could write for another scholar to read; however, through collaborative research, I have come to understand publication as another benefit of collaborative research, both in the process of collaboration and long thereafter.

Finally, the fifth and final benefit I will highlight here as a student and mentee—although there are, of course, many more benefits—is the acquisition of friendship. Over the course of much time, sharing of knowledge, and the company of our families, collaborative research, when approached correctly, yields friendship. If there is one general observation I may make about those authors and scholars I have researched intensely, it is that each of them has a companion. Hawthorne, Melville, Thoreau, Emerson, and Alcott operated in community with one another, and Tolkien, of course, was part of the Inklings: C. S. Lewis, Charles Williams, Dorothy Sayers, and several others. As these authors demonstrate, every scholar needs a community of friends, critics, and supporters.

Overall, collaborative research has always been present in the academy and within the humanities; the academy, however, often fails to recognize it. As a mentor/mentee, a faculty/student, a scholar/scholar, and now friend/friend, we are calling the academy to recognize and establish collaborative research as an important part of scholarship because collaboration operates and benefits in a tripartite fashion: among scholarship, the individual, and the community. Such research offers abundant opportunities for faculty and student alike to further their education, careers, networks, and friendships.
Works Cited


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1 In particular, Howard discusses the value of response groups for peer-editing of solo-authored texts in the composition classroom. She highlights Ann Ruggles Gere, Peter Elbow, and Karen Burke LeFevre’s philosophies of these writing and response groups.


3 See these references for a more in-depth discussion of the think aloud:

