

ABSTRACT

COMING TO AGENCY: COMMUNITY AND CRITICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN PEER WORKSHOPS

This three-year ethnographic study of peer response groups in first-year writing classes endorses providing students with workshop opportunities in the classroom to enhance student knowledge and help students see writing as entering a conversation. Drawing on effective response techniques used in writing center labs, such as teaching students the inherent value of learning to ask questions, this study shows how students learn to meaningfully respond to one another's writing, becoming stronger and more critical readers and writers. By endorsing collaborative learning theories and rhetorical reading and writing practices, this research engages feminist and critical pedagogy to explain the importance of peer response in the writing classroom. Through peer workshop, students learn to make conscious decisions during the writing process. In addition, self-reflective writing practices help students become critically conscious and able to listen to and value the voice within their own and other's writing. This study reveals how peer workshops provide students with the opportunity to participate in ongoing conversations relevant to their lives; they learn to become members of an academic community through language practices used in workshops.

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