FROM CYBERSPACE TO PRINT: RE-EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE ONLINE INVENTION ON FIRST-YEAR ACADEMIC WRITING

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This descriptive study re-examines two online practices, the use of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board, as collaborative invention forums for composing a research-based essay. Basically, I looked at the transfer of invention ideas from each forum to student rough drafts in order to help substantiate the claim that the use of computer-mediated communication is an enabling practice for knowledge construction. Two first-year writing classes taught in a computer laboratory by the same instructor participated in the study; one class used Chat and the other used the Discussion Board for invention prior to drafting the essays. I analyzed the online transcripts, student rough drafts, and the teacher and student interview data to describe the effects of both synchronous and asynchronous platforms as collaborative invention strategies on academic writing. Throughout the investigation, two research questions were addressed: (RQ #1) How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays? and (RQ #2) What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? The descriptive findings generally indicate that the transfer of invention ideas and language patterns from both online forums to the essays (RQ #1) is directly supported by the teacher and student interview patterns (RQ #2). Significant data patterns reveal the following effects of Chat and Discussion Board invention forums on student drafts: both show “successful” transfer of ideas in terms of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; “average” transfer
of main ideas and supporting details; and “minimal” transfer of source ideas. However, the transfer of counterargument ideas from each forum differs: the use of Chat indicates “null” transfer of ideas while “very minimal” transfer is attributed to the use of the Discussion Board. Interview data patterns reveal agreement between the teacher and students as regards the capacity of each online forum to promote collaboration and knowledge construction. However, to support the contrasting transfer rates of counterargument ideas from Chat and Discussion Board forums, participants similarly expressed that meaningful and reflective interactions in Chat seem deficient due to its fluid and immediate setting as opposed to the capacity of the Discussion Board to sustain focused interactions and critical reflection. To conclude this pilot study, implications for theory and practice based on descriptive analysis were discussed along with further suggestions for pedagogy and research on computers and writing.
To Mars and Georgia, my wonderful parents. Thank you for your patience, love, and support all these years. Love, Beth
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revisiting the Process of Invention</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Collaboratively</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embracing Computer-Mediated Communication</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating Current Research on Online Communication Modalities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Towards a New Direction</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of Chapters</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER II. THE STUDY</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-examining Synchronous Chat as Collaborative Invention: An Overview</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER III. RE-EXAMINING SYNCHRONOUS CHAT AS COLLABORATIVE INVENTION

Effect of Synchronous Chat on Essay Drafts................................................................. 51

Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement ......................................................... 52

Main Ideas and Supporting Details........................................................................... 61

Textual Support ......................................................................................................... 76

Opposing Views and Refutations............................................................................. 87

Attitude and Perception toward Synchronous Chat as Collaborative Invention...... 91

Teacher..................................................................................................................... 92

General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference......................... 92

Assessment of the Process in terms of Student Participation ......................... 93

Suggestions for Modification.................................................................................... 95

Students.................................................................................................................. 95

General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference ...................... 96

Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Chat to Essay Draft............................. 97

Description of Other Invention Strategies......................................................... 97

Other Comments on Language Use ............................................................... 97

Chapter Summary.............................................................................................. 98
Re-examining Asynchronous Discussion Board

as Collaborative Invention: An Overview ........................................................... 105

CHAPTER IV. RE-EXAMINING ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION BOARD AS

COLLABORATIVE INVENTION ........................................................................... 107

Effect of Asynchronous Discussion Board on Essay Drafts................................. 107

Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement ...................................................... 108

Highlights of Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement ............................... 120

Main Ideas and Supporting Details....................................................................... 121

Highlights of Main Ideas and Supporting Details............................................... 137

Textual Support ..................................................................................................... 139

Highlights of Textual Support .............................................................................. 149

Opposing Views and Refutations ......................................................................... 150

Highlights of Opposing Views and Refutations.................................................... 159

Attitude and Perception toward Asynchronous Discussion Board

as Collaborative Invention ...................................................................................... 160

Teacher ................................................................................................................... 160

General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference ......................... 161

Assessment of the Process in terms of Student Participation ......................... 162

Suggestions for Modification ................................................................................. 165

Students .................................................................................................................. 165

General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference ......................... 166

Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Discussion Board

to Essay Draft ......................................................................................................... 167
CHAPTER V. A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF SYNCHRONOUS CHAT AND ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION BOARD AS COLLABORATIVE INVENTION STRATEGIES

Research Questions

Research Question 1

Transference of Ideas from Online to Print

Non-Transference of Ideas from Online to Print

(Non-)Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print

Research Question 2

Teacher Interviews

Student Interviews

Descriptive Summary

Implications and Recommendations: An Overview

CHAPTER VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for Theory

Implications for Practice

Recommendations for Further Research
WORKS CITED ........................................................................................................ 225

APPENDIX A. INVITATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER
TO USE SYNCHRONOUS CHAT FOR COLLABORATIVE INVENTION ....... 237

APPENDIX B. INVITATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHER
TO USE ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION BOARD FOR
COLLABORATIVE INVENTION ........................................................................... 240

APPENDIX C. INVITATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR
STUDENTS OF BOTH CLASSES ............................................................................ 243

APPENDIX D. ASSIGNMENT SHEET FOR RESEARCH-BASED OR
MULTIPLE SOURCE ESSAY .................................................................................... 247

APPENDIX E. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR TEACHER
OF BOTH CLASSES ................................................................................................ 249

APPENDIX F. INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT FOR STUDENTS
OF BOTH CLASSES ................................................................................................ 250
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Descriptive Summary of Chat Transcript and Student Rough Drafts</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Descriptive Summary of Teacher and Student Interviews</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Descriptive Summary of Discussion Board Transcripts and Student Rough Drafts</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Descriptive Summary of Teacher and Student Interviews</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Transference of Ideas from Online to Print</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Non-Transference of Ideas from Online to Print</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(Non-)Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Student Interviews</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Descriptive Summary</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Problem Statement

College students enrolled in composition courses are expected to develop their academic writing skills in order to survive in the university. As part of student initiation to the academic discourse community, composition teachers must try to provide opportunities for students to read, write, reason, and absorb the rhetorical moves of academic writing (Bartholomae 278). One of the first steps to realize this goal is by applying innovative pedagogical practices in the process of discovery and invention. In this regard, the promise of computer-mediated communication (CMC) to facilitate student exchange during invention has been considered an enabling practice (Blythe 122-125). The process of invention is a social act no longer reminiscent of the Platonic/solitary view (LeFevre 23, 125), so it is necessary to examine the usability of CMC as a social tool for invention in the composing process.

The field of computers and writing acknowledges the special features of online communication to provide a way to link learners collaboratively, thereby helping them develop their academic communication skills. In this case, online invention creates a space where ideas are formed, meanings are negotiated, questions are asked, and language forms are produced uninhibitedly, far removed from any traditional, teacher-centered approach to instruction. Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of interaction where each person is shaped through constant interaction that leads to higher learning indirectly affirms the benefits of CMC (Warschauer 471). In fact, a growing number of studies have already identified the positive effects of synchronous communication (e.g. Beth Hewett in 2006; Dawn Maree Mercer in 2002; and Yi Yuan in 2003) and asynchronous communication (e.g. Matthew Barton in 2005; Retta Guy in 2004; and Keiko Kitade in 2005) on student learning. However, more studies are still needed to address
specifically the transfer of varied online invention strategies to student academic writing. And this is exactly what this research study wants to examine.

Since the advent of CMC, the scholarly works of Barton, Guy, Hewett, Kitade, Mercer, and Yuan have focused on its impact on student learning in various discipline-specific areas rather than on strengthening the correlation between CMC as an invention strategy and the quality of the written product. As new online platforms continually emerge, educators still do not know enough about how the use of these different modalities really affects the quality of student essays. As a result, using CMC in the classroom may have become meaningless, without any regard for its vital role in the growth of the student writer. More factual research describing the transfer of specific synchronous and asynchronous CMC strategies to the written product could help composition teachers further understand the value of each type of CMC platform as a composing tool. Also, it could help equip teachers with more innovative ideas in the composition classroom, especially with the pedagogical strategy that would work best for their students.

Toward this goal, two collaborative online invention strategies commonly used in first-year composition classes – Chat and Discussion Board – were closely examined in terms of their effect on student essays. Two English 112 or Varieties of Writing classes at Bowling Green State University taught by the same instructor in a computer laboratory were selected in the spring of 2007. One class used Chat as synchronous CMC and the other used Discussion Board as asynchronous CMC in the process of invention for a research-based essay. A description and analysis of the transfer of both online invention strategies to academic writing will further strengthen the pedagogical implications of these particular technologies in composition studies.

In order to understand the rationale of this study, the following Literature Review begins by tracing the role of invention in the process of composing from a solitary to a more social
practice. Since this research involves examination of invention within the parameters of an electronic environment, revisiting the activity’s significant role in the composing process is necessary. Next, it shows how invention transitioned into collaborative learning and finally assumed a collaborative role in the composition classroom with the ubiquity of CMC in the twenty-first century. In closing, a discussion of current research studies using synchronous and asynchronous CMC forums in several learning environments clarifies the research gap or the need for more studies that specifically describe the transfer of invention ideas from online to student academic essays.

**Literature Review**

One could argue that students are not exactly deficient nor linguistically challenged upon entering the university but simply lack experience when it comes to academic discourse. David Bartholomae and Patricia Bizzell believe that writing in college is difficult for inexperienced writers because they lack the privileged language of the academic community (Faigley 535-36). In extension of Bartholomae’s claim, Bizzell articulates the source of difficulty among college students when it comes to academic writing: “unfamiliarity with [the] academic discourse community, combined, perhaps, with such limited experience outside their native discourse community with conventions to be mastered” (379). Lester Faigley puts it this way: “When students write in an academic discipline, they write in reference to texts that define the scholarly activities of interpreting and reporting in that discipline” (536). Because they are confronted with challenging tasks requiring the use of, in a sense, “new” language, their lack of facility of expression and inexperience with the subject matter itself may inhibit their ability to communicate successfully to an academic audience. Regarding this difficulty, Loren S. Barritt and Barry M. Kroll allude to Lev Vygotsky’s “inner speech” of the developing thought of the
child as translated to “external speech” in written discourse (52). As speakers try to put their message across, greater cognitive stress follows because the activity requires considerable mental effort. Linda Flower, in reference to Vygotsky’s “inner speech,” directly links this “egocentric activity” to the working of the writer’s mind during composing, known as “Writer-Based prose” (27).

In line with this, composition pedagogues must constantly think of innovative ways to help student writers transform this “inner speech” or “egocentric writer-based activity” to the next level. Addressing this need with innovative teaching strategies is important, where composition students are more exposed to produce this “new” language in a healthy, non-threatening environment. Lucille Parkinson McCarthy forges a vital call: “Teachers in the disciplines must provide student newcomers with assignments and instructional support which are appropriate for first steps in using the language of their community” (262). For this, I posit that to practice academic writing within the parameters of a social environment during invention or prewriting is an important activity. Choosing online settings to promote a social support system enables the cognitive task of negotiating meaning with an interlocutor and, in the process, helps writers develop their ability for expression and audience awareness, however cognitively underdeveloped verbal speech (cf. Vygotsky, Flower) may initially seem to be.

Raymond Rodrigues and Dawn Wilson Rodrigues refer to the use of computers as “non-threatening … [and] promotes verbal experimentation” (84). Brian Hand and Vaughan Prain, on the other hand, suggest that “any effective writing-to-learn task requires a rich learning environment where students are provided with sufficient motivation, procedural guidance, and expert and on-going peer feedback” (753). As noted earlier, engaging students in computer-mediated collaborative invention supports such an environment since the virtual activity itself
exhibits motivation, guidance, and feedback. This eventually translates to interaction in online communities as enabling for the learning of students (Anderson 122) given the social nature of online interaction in the process of invention. Subsequently, computer-mediated collaborative invention further solidifies two important foundations on cognition: (1) Vygotsky’s social constructivist theory regarding knowledge as always contextualized and socially constructed before becoming individual (Segall, Dasen, Berry, and Poortinga 173); and (2) Jean Piaget’s theory about humans actively constructing knowledge through interaction with the world (Barritt and Kroll 50).

Revisiting the Process of Invention

In order to provide opportunities for student writers to develop academic language proficiency, one should re-consider the role of invention in the writing process. The process of invention ideally allows students to come up with clear essay topics and supporting details, wrestle and make connections between academic texts, think and communicate within the parameters of academic jargon, and so forth. It is at this initial stage where student writers find themselves moving freely between the personal and the academic praxis before the drafting process. The idea that the writer undergoes preliminary stages could be traced back to cognitive psychology. As mentioned earlier, Vygotsky’s “inner speech” was considered to be of little social or communicative function (Flower 20). Such egocentrism is known to characterize the child talking to himself/herself without any regard for an interlocutor/listener, much like a monologue. Often compared to Writer-Based prose or an “undertransformed mode of verbal expression,” which primarily functions as a “medium for thinking,” the writer structures the information either as a narrative of his/her own discovery or as a survey of the data (Flower 19, 27). A child’s egocentric speech and an adult’s Writer-Based prose both lack development and
causal relations due to the cognitively demanding task of transforming ideas suitable for an intended listener or reader.

Nevertheless, Flower asserts that such a monologue could still be used to teach composing (36). Once initial thoughts are written down, they cease to be the sole propriety of the writer and immediately become social because of the idea of an intended reader who is either the self or the public. In short, what has been thought of as a solitary activity is always already rooted in a social construct. Kenneth Bruffee extends Michael Oakeshott’s discussion of human conversation taking place within us as “reflective thought” and compares it to Vygotsky’s “inner speech” (“Conversation” 639). For him, “Reflective thought is public or social conversation internalized” (Bruffee, “Conversation” 639). In other words, we first learn conversation through direct social exchange with other people, and then we learn to play the conversation in our own imagination “to displace that partnership by playing silently ourselves” (“Conversation” 639). This idea is not really separate from theories of language development where people initially learn how to converse with others, imitate conversational patterns with the self during invention or reflective thinking, and eventually express this reflective thought through writing to an audience. Since “reflective thought” is technically related to social conversation, such relation by default transforms “inner speech” or “reflective thought” into a valuable collaborative invention process. Thus, cultivating invention skills in a social environment could result in an increased sense of audience awareness – as we replay the internalized conversation over and over again, we become conscious of our conversation partner’s presence while we explore ideas together.

Janice Lauer claims that in the eighties, interest in invention and its role in the composing process had “escalated to the point where many textbooks offered substantial sections entitled ‘invention,’ ‘prewriting,’ or ‘planning’” (127). Richard E. Young enumerates four substantial
theories of invention in response to the field’s shift in attention from the composed product to the composing process: classical invention, Burke’s dramatistic method, Rohman’s prewriting method, and Pike’s tagmemic invention (35-39). For instance, D. Gordon Rohman’s prewriting method maintains that it is the “stage of discovery in the writing process when a person assimilates his ‘subject’ to himself” (7). A strong emphasis on prewriting is due to the fact that it is considered to be crucial to the success of any writing task. Rohman’s primary assumption is the division between thinking and writing. For him, thinking precedes writing, and good thinking is capable of producing good writing (7). His focus on thinking and the cognitive task of putting experiences into words in the writer’s mind draws a clear connection with cognitive-developmental psychology – Vygotsky’s conception of the “inner speech” and Flower’s Writer-Based prose as both cases in point. Once a writer can successfully reveal his/her experience by expressing it first to himself/herself [prewriting], which is initially learned through exposure to conversation with others, and then to others [communicating], then the task is complete. But the inability to communicate one’s experience to the discourse community seems to be the root cause of difficulty among student writers. This act of communicating has been specifically problematized by scholars such as Bizzell who urged composition studies to directly “focus upon practice within interpretive communities – exactly how conventions work in the world and how they are transmitted” (387, emphasis added). After all, a first-year composition course is supposed to be “part of a student’s acclimation to the discourse of the academy in its most general features” (Thaiss 311). Student writers should be aware that the language they use when expressing their experiences during prewriting or invention could be entirely different from the language of the discourse community with which they would like to communicate their experiences.
But despite the shift to the composing process in the eighties, a lack of pedagogical emphasis and even a dearth of research on rhetorical invention still remain unresolved. Young asserts that failure to provide effective instruction in the prewriting stage is reminiscent of the current-traditional paradigm, which regards rhetoric as the art of presenting ideas and the conscious control of formal procedures (32-33). Another reason is due to the Platonic view that invention was primarily considered a solitary act (LeFevre 23). As Karen Burke LeFevre’s interpretation of Plato states, “the individual [is] alone in the search for truth. Invention is seen as a private, asocial act of recollection aimed at uncovering the ultimate truth; invention, in this case, does not require others” (11).

Interestingly, Richard Gebhardt argues for collaboration during invention in his 1980 *College English* article “Teamwork and Feedback: Broadening the Base of Collaborative Writing.” He says, “Collaboration is as appropriate during the early stages of writing as it is after the completion of a draft. Students can receive feedback from sympathetic allies while they are generating ideas, jotting down notes about possible theses, running up against dead ends in research, trying to make sense out of their texts’ instructions about discovering a topic, developing a rhetorical stance, supporting generalizations, and so on” (Gebhardt 74). This argument, originally based on James Moffett’s emphasis on feedback (188) in “Learning to Write by Writing,” signifies a shift from individual to collaborative invention. Such a shift is articulated in Bruffee’s 1984 *College English* article “Collaborative Learning and the ‘Conversation of Mankind’” where his extension of Oakeshott’s “reflective thought” as social conversation taking place in the mind of the speaker is also found (639). And most importantly, LeFevre’s 1986 book entitled *Invention as a Social Act* completely seals the social aspect of invention and dismisses the atomistic inventor (23). She says, “Rhetorical invention is better
understood as a social act, in which an individual who is at the same time a social being interacts in a distinctive way with society and culture to create something” (1).

Thus, the re-emergence of invention tells us that “learning is not so much an individual production of acquired knowledge as it is a social construction of new knowledge … [which] occurs best in an interactive environment where people are encouraged to learn together” (Golub and Reid 43). This interactive classroom stresses the importance of the development of students’ language use in the context of real communication situations (Golub and Reid 43). George Dillon agrees, “The teaching of composition should concentrate on writing as a mode of interaction” (164), which endorses Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of dialogism where constant interaction among meanings come from inhabitants of a given discourse community who participate in this social activity (36).

Based on Bakhtin and LeFevre, the idea that it is only interaction, dialogue, and negotiation of meanings that lead to the creation of knowledge or higher learning is tacit in this respect. However, it is also important to note that this social activity is just one among many other practices that broaden the experience of the writer. It is not at all impossible to draw something positive from solitary prewriting; in fact, LeFevre contends that a Platonic/atomistic view of rhetorical invention has been valuable in that “it helped bring recognition to the role of invention as an integral part of the composing process … [influencing] writers positively by encouraging reflection and reassuring them that they do have important resources within” (32). Such a view is directly proportional to Flower’s extrapolation on the advantages of Writer-Based prose as a teaching tool for composing. However, once solitary invention becomes the only activity for generating ideas, then the prewriting experience also becomes limited. The idea is to expand prewriting techniques that would involve communication with others, if only to make
sure that the problem of inadequate communicative skills within an academic discourse community is mediated.

Among composition scholars who considered the value of talk in the preparatory stages of the writing process are James Britton and his research team in 1975. In their project The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), they claim: “It is likely that in both cases there would be a good deal of discussion or talk of some kind before anyone wrote anything down … The relationship of talk to writing is central to the writing process … good talk helps to encourage good writing” (22, 29). While they acknowledge that prewriting practices may differ from context to context, they also divide the whole process into three sections – conception, incubation, and production – the first two closely resembling the prewriting task. The first stage, conception, happens when “the writer knows that he is going to write and has formed some idea of what is expected of him” (25). Next, incubation, sees the writer “define and redefine the task, plan ahead, and sort out ideas while writing” (26) and the last stage, production, refers to “the act of writing itself” (32). Their discussion of the writing process justifies the fact that each writer imposes his/her own individual, but social, self: “[The writer] draws on the whole store of experiences and [his/her] whole social being” (47). Such a notion leads us back to the social aspect of the act of writing.

Obviously, recent scholarship strongly legitimates the application of invention within a more social and interactive setting. Choosing social forums for invention practices enables the negotiation of meanings between the writer and an interlocutor to create ideas and new knowledge. In the process, this social activity could help transform what came to be known as Vygotsky’s “inner speech,” Flower’s “writer-based writing,” and Oakeshott’s “reflective thought” into a more developed verbal expression because of a heightened sense of audience
awareness. Thus, the social nature of this research study is anchored within the pedagogical invention tools chosen for examination.

**Learning Collaboratively**

Consequently, since invention formally enters a social paradigmatic approach, it becomes more privileged in the writing classroom (Phillips), and the calls to study its practices gradually abound (Kimball; Nugent; Young 39-40, 46-47). With the ubiquity of an interactive classroom comes the success of the collaborative method, proving that learning can go on without the teacher’s immediate presence (Hillebrand 71). Kenneth Bruffee has proposed collaborative learning as an effective teaching practice where students “learn to depend on one another … [and] construct knowledge as it is constructed in the academic disciplines and professions – the knowledge communities that students aspire to join when they attend colleges and universities” (*Higher Education* 1). The main goal of collaborative learning is “to provide a context in which students can practice and master the normal discourse exercised in established knowledge communities in the academic world” (Bruffee, “Conversation” 644). In fact, academic writing which involves synthesizing sources, narrowing down topics, focusing main ideas and supporting details, and so forth is fully enhanced by this approach as students try to “construct knowledge in the language of their communities” (Bruffee, *Higher Education* 53). So it is clear that peer-to-peer interaction is highly valued in collaboration, the reward of which presumably accrues from the learning that occurs, notwithstanding the product that is produced (Koschmann 219). Interestingly, Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch recently suggested a virtual kind of peer review, where students are provided supportive environments online to practice academic discourse (7).

Remediating peer reviews, as Breuch espouses, is moving face-to-face interaction online. This form of virtual transition has paved the way eventually for more collaborative practices in
computer-mediated composition classrooms. The integration of writing with other forms of learning and studying such as reading and group discussions (Tynjala 37) is a case in point. Forming group discussions after reading an academic text, from face-to-face to online venues, creates valuable opportunities to hone skills in written and virtual expression. Geoffrey Sirc also loves the idea of electronic conferencing in the composition classroom (or ENFI, based on Trent Batson’s acronym for Electronic Networks for Interaction) and experiments with this strategy by forming group discussions of essay topics and course readings (266). He describes the two worlds of ENFI and willingly embraces them: “ENFI-Prime, where ENFI exists as a useful activity leading to the betterment of students’ academic prose … or ENFI-Null, the post-useful realms of writing instruction” (265). He explains,

My students liked that [ENFI] much better. And very often it’s productive. They use ideas from discussions in their writing or they cite the discussions later in their formal papers. So, sometimes I do live on ENFI-Prime, in the way the network is useful for teaching the logic of exposition and citation. But often students’ other agendas take precedence, and these discussions become useless [ENFI-Null] … Electronic conferencing, then, gives us less but more of what we wanted. (Sirc 266-67)

Despite some reservations, Breuch strongly argues that when discussions are conducted virtually, written communication is emphasized over oral communication and “shapes responses in ways that reflect differences of time, space, and interaction in Internet environments” (8). Breuch and Sam Racine, in reference to online writing centers, note that the very nature of online communication actually forces tutors to “articulate clearly the content of their suggestions, as well as pay attention to the style and delivery of such information” (249). After all, both the tutor
and tutee are not physically present to ignite verbal cues when necessary but solely rely on words seen on screen. The message conveyed in writing here is key to the success or failure in communication and learning. Another form of online interaction – creating a chat environment through online office hours – also provides writing students with a virtual space “to exchange ideas, ask questions, resolve disagreements, negotiate work, just stay in touch, or get to know one another interpersonally” (Sapp and Simon 483). Much can be gained from this activity as both parties get to write and read in real-time, engaging in a more complex task of writing down thoughts rather than speaking them out.

Bruffee says: “Writing is at once two steps away from conversation and a return to conversation. We converse; we internalize conversation as thought; and then by writing, we re-immerses conversation in its external, social medium” (“Conversation” 641). Such a process is relegated to the social, the self, and back to the social praxis through writing. Moreover, he strongly believes in the collaborative potential of the act of writing. For him, before one can write an essay about an issue, s/he must be able to clarify the issue to himself/herself. And this ability to produce an “internalized thought” [or “inner speech”] largely depends on one’s ability to “converse directly with other people in an immediate social situation” (Bruffee, “Conversation” 641). In other words, social talk leads the way to self-talk. But it does not end there. Once the issue has been fully understood, the challenge is to move further and learn to put this thought into writing. Bruffee claims that writing out an internalized thought “has its roots deep in the acquired ability to carry on the social symbolic exchange we call conversation” (“Conversation” 642). If one is to write down one’s reflective thought in a social environment (e.g., group discussion or chat), collaborative learning, then, is inevitable.
Since different types of interaction in cyberspace – peer review, writing tutorial, or collaborative invention – place more emphasis on the act of writing itself, more attention should be given to explore its usefulness in the writing process and collaborative learning as a whole. Writing teachers, according to Bruffee, must try “engaging students in conversation among themselves at as many points in both writing and reading as possible, and … [they] should contrive to ensure that students’ conversation about what they read and write is similar in as many ways as possible to the way we would like them eventually to read and write” (“Conversation” 642). The optimistic claims on remediation strengthen collaborative invention practices conducted in synchronous and asynchronous platforms as approximations of face-to-face interaction. Meeting this criteria conditions collaborative online interaction to be a composite of both outer- and inner-directed knowledge-building activities where students communicate virtually with a known audience in the language of the academy.

Finally, the interactive quality of CMC allows students to practice academic writing and participate in collaborative learning. Bruffee’s collaborative learning opens up a free exchange of ideas without restrictions and creates new knowledge with the presence of interlocutors. Since interaction happens in an online forum, the act of writing is also enhanced, leaving more room for development. This is the very reason why using more collaborative online invention forums is a beneficial tool in the composition classroom.

**Embracing Computer-Mediated Communication**

Computer-mediated communication or CMC is “the name given to a large set of functions in which computers are used to support human communication” (Santoro 11). Electronic mail, group conferencing systems, and interactive chat systems are some of the most common forms of CMC. Chances are, today’s college classrooms equipped with computer
technology have utilized CMC in one way or another. Many of these classes, for instance, have used electronic mail as a medium to connect both the teacher and students. Known as asynchronous communication (i.e., communication occurring at irregular intervals), this mode eventually extends into group conferencing systems (Santoro 18). These come in a variety of types: the exploder system such as the Listserv, the bulletin board system or BBS, and conference management systems such as thread management (Santoro 18-19). In addition to asynchronous forms of computer conferencing, the synchronous mode, such as interactive messaging, has also gained a group of users in various academic settings. In contrast, synchronous or real-time communication requires “all participants to be online at the same time” (Santoro 21).

Since synchronous and asynchronous communication platforms have found their way into many classrooms, a growing number of teachers are incorporating CMC features into the writing curricula, “allowing them to transcend, even for just a moment, the limits of scheduled, real-time, face-to-face meetings at on-campus sites” (Shimabukuro 50). Specifically, multiple text-based CMC modes such as email, chat, discussion forums, and blogs are commonly provided by most course management systems or Web Course Tools (Web CT) and Blackboard (Paulus 1325). With the birth of distance education, a globally networked classroom is permanently etched in the face of academia.

The use of CMC is an “ancillary or facilitative process to instruction, useful primarily for beta learning [or learning that is considered a reinforcement or adjunct to alpha learning, which in turn is the major exposition of concepts, ideas, facts, and processes] … [and for] both alpha learning and beta learning” (Ellsworth 30). Moreover, CMC has some unique characteristics that can enhance the dynamics of teaching and learning. For one, “it is quick and can provide group
interaction without requiring all persons to be in one location in order to meet” (Ellsworth 35). Three categories of CMC, though not mutually exclusive, are commonly practiced in technology-based classrooms:

The first category, [computer-based conferencing], involves direct human-to-human interaction, with the computer acting simply as a transaction router, or providing simple storage and retrieval functions… The second category, [informatics], is one in which the computer has a more active role as the repository or maintainer of organized information, which originates with human contributors and is utilized by human retrievers… The third category, [computer-assisted instruction or CAI], includes the computer structuring and managing of both the presentation of information and the possible choices available to the human user. (Santoro 14-15)

Because of the “changing ideas about the nature of invention” (D’Angelo 67), many of the collaborative strategies currently used with the advent of CMC rely on online prewriting, e-discussions, and other adaptations of the Socratic dialogue (Eldred and Toner 37). These online practices facilitate, augment, and redefine group interaction as well as promote the positive effects of collaborative learning in academic discourse communities. Translating the function of a solitary egocentric activity, such as prewriting or invention, to a more social online discussion would provide even more unique opportunities for students to dabble in new academic material as they interact with each other before drafting their ideas in a written product. The fact that more audience awareness may result from such a cognitively demanding task is extremely beneficial. Student writers are forced to verbalize their thoughts and interact with one another during online invention, allowing them to practice using the language of the academic discourse
community. Of course, a non-threatening space via online communication platforms could help catapult the benefits of this activity.

Because student writers in the process of invention are freed from the grips of seclusion, the act of writing down initial thoughts and negotiating meaning online with actual peers opens up more possibilities. Approximating face-to-face discussion but obviously with more cognitive effort, writing in this manner serves as a more powerful tool for learning (e.g., finding connections, making meaning) as well as for reflection and analysis (Tynjala 39). In “Writing: An Act of Cognition,” Toby Fulwiler underscores the importance of providing more classroom opportunities for students to know and understand all subjects through writing – making writing more personal so as to promote self-awareness within the context of a specific discipline (22). The promise of online communication platforms, of course, meets this need.

In addition, using computers throughout the writing process could also have a direct impact to the writer’s cognitive processes. Christina Haas maintains that the material tools of writing consistently alter the mental processes of text production (73). By finding out whether word processors do help increase/decrease the length and/or quality of planning the text in a specific writing situation, the role of materiality in writing practices is magnified (77). David Gailbraith, on the effect of computers on the spelling out of thought, concurs: “Does the combination of keyboard and screen make the process of spelling out different to when it is performed using pen and paper?” (68). Meanwhile, the following set of queries is addressed to language educators and researchers regarding the role of online communication:

How do learners pay attention to both content and form in online communication? What linguistic features do they tend to notice and incorporate into their own language? … How does participation in computer-mediated communication work
affect learners’ motivation and sense of identity? How can computer-mediated projects be organized to assist students in seeing themselves as part of the community of speakers of the target language? (Warschauer 478)

Obviously, these questions lead to far reaching goals for further studies. It is no longer uncommon to see composition classrooms use technology to create computer-based environments and enhance the writing process.

One should remember, though, that the transition from pen and paper to computer-based processes is never seamless. Tensions within the field concerning the benefits and constraints brought about by this change are always present. As mentioned earlier, one example is the remediation of face-to-face peer review to virtual peer review (Breuch 8). Reluctance against this practice apart from questions about its effectiveness may also stem from computer literacy issues such as “the lack of training among writing instructors to integrate computers into the classroom” to logistical problems such as “the lack of access to computer technologies for writing instruction” (Breuch 1). In fact, for using CMC to be effective, Cynthia Selfe argues, “It necessitates the involvement of innovative and creative faculty who are willing to undertake a careful program of planning and design, see that the daily operations of a lab/classroom are well grounded in the best of current writing theory and research, and use the lab resources to encourage and support writers’ communities within a particular academic setting” (5).

But for institutions blessed with abundant logistics and professional development programs, the idea is to integrate these technological tools effectively into the composing process. How educators view technology’s impact in the teaching of writing should perhaps be an immediate priority for reassessment. Pamela Takayoshi insists that the use of computers continually brings about a heightened sense of the process pedagogy since what had always been
an unconscious mental processing now becomes more visible with computers. She says, “Rather than arguing that computers re-create writing completely anew, this position holds that computers can make writing processes seem new by making visible the ways writers and readers have always dealt with the text” (247). As a result, both teachers and students now view the writing process, an activity that has always been constantly recursive, much more clearly. This change could be likened to the manner in which traditional composition classrooms have transitioned successfully into computer-assisted classrooms. With the ubiquity of computers in the teaching of writing, Selfe’s previous claim on manpower training, creativity, and motivation therefore holds solid ground.

That the advent of computers in the writing classroom is armed with possibilities and constraints is, therefore, an understatement. Nevertheless, the pedagogical effect all depends on how the writing instructor utilizes the power of technology during class sessions without taking away from existing curricular goals due to one’s momentary fascination for the tool. In support of this, Sibylle Gruber condemns the use of computer-mediated communication independent of the goals of the institution, instructors, and students because it does not by itself change classroom practices (61). Robert Yagelski and Jeffrey Grabill also reveal that “simply putting students online does not necessarily increase their rates of participation in course-related discussions … or provide a more egalitarian and less leader-centered space for student voices” (35). So, intense planning on the part of the instructor in terms of course goals and learning outcomes is needed before implementing online practices in composition classrooms. For instance, before engaging students in chat rooms, it is important to “reinforce features of rhetorical context such as writing forum, writer’s identity and persona, discourse community conventions, and physical proximity among interlocutors” (Berzsenyi 230). These features will
help determine the success of productive online interactions among student writers consistent with the goals of the curricula. And finally, Janet Eldred posits: “Networking can work in a writing classroom because it can be used to stress composing as a social, collaborative act, as an act of synthesizing and negotiating knowledge. But networking will work for us only if we plan carefully how we will use it in our classrooms, how we will take advantage of its strengths and downplay its weaknesses” (239).

The advantages of fully embracing CMC in the composition classroom are numerous once the teacher knows how to plan and use it accordingly. Such advantages are also possible if the teacher knows the effects of using different CMC platforms on student writing. Thus, it is necessary to re-examine if there is a correlation between specific collaborative online invention strategies and the quality of student writing to detect the best tool that fits the needs of students.

_Evaluating Current Research on Online Communication Modalities_

Research studies on various prewriting and invention practices have been done to highlight their important roles in the composing process. Clearly, the enhancement of prewriting strategies is crucial for “developing the writing skills of poor writers” (Palumbo and Prater 63). Several online communication modalities, both synchronous (e.g., chat/instant messaging, whiteboard, multi-user object oriented domains or MOOs) and asynchronous (discussion board, blogs, wikis), are actually designed to generate ideas, set goals, and prefigure organization that offer multiple possibilities in computer-supported writing classes. The question among pedagogues and researchers alike, though, rests on how best to facilitate this crucial stage with computer technologies in order to help struggling academic writers (Palumbo and Prater 63).

To familiarize ourselves with CMC’s pedagogical capabilities, the following is a sampling of current research done in response to its growing popularity. These research studies
investigate two online platform applications, the synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication, as applied in distinct learning environments:

**Synchronous Computer-Mediated Communication**

One of the most vital features of synchronous CMC is its “social support for learning” (Mercer iii). Dawn Maree Mercer (2002) conducted a qualitative study examining the logs of synchronous CMC interactions of five small groups in two different online courses that primarily employed asynchronous CMC for communication and collaborative knowledge building. Two individual semi-structured interviews from each of the 21 participants were explored in addition to the CMC logs. All participants felt that the addition of synchronous communication tools was superior to asynchronous CMC used alone to support group collaboration because of the immediacy of synchronous CMC in a learning environment. The evidence suggests that the addition of synchronous CMC, which is more like “face-to-face,” allows collaboration to be more complete and authentic than using asynchronous CMC alone. Mercer states, “The higher level of social presence and negotiation supported by synchronous CMC may enable participants to get immediate feedback and responses that will result in true interdependence and promote effective online learning communities for co-construction of knowledge” (ii-iii).

Another positive feature of synchronous CMC is that of enhancing second language development. Yi Yuan (2003) explored the combination of online chat rooms with regular classroom interactions in a personalized English program. Two non-native English speaking university professionals participated in a one-hour on-line chatting session each week with her for 10 weeks in addition to weekly classroom meetings. She analyzed printouts of the chat sessions, which were used in subsequent classroom discussions. Qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data show that the participants sometimes noticed the errors they made in their
on-line chatting and initiated repairs on them, a practice necessary for language acquisition to occur. Yuan says, “The results suggest that the face-to-face interactions may have highlighted the participants’ language problems and enhanced their awareness of such problems whereas the on-line chatting provided the participants a unique opportunity to put their grammatical knowledge to practice through meaningful communication” (194).

Still, another feature of synchronous CMC is its capacity to be used for conference-based instructions to promote a more collaborative process. Beth L. Hewett (2006) did a small-scale empirical study of synchronous conference-based online writing instruction (OWI) using an electronic whiteboard in a professional tutorial setting. She did a linguistic analysis of participant talk which indicates that the interactions were both idea-development focused and task-oriented. Her textual analysis of the drafted student writing subsequent to the instructional interactions indicates that nearly two thirds of the interactions could be connected through iterability or presupposition with the writing and revisions. As with Mercer’s study, a similar social support for collaborative learning is traceable in this one. Hewett explains, “Nearly half of the talk was oriented toward achieving interpersonal connections, facilitating the interaction, and communicating about the whiteboard’s workspace … Most of the traceable writing and revision changes were meaning-preserving in nature … Such writing and revision changes were generated by students or online instructions or through shared interaction, demonstrating a highly collaborative process” (4).

**Asynchronous Computer-Mediated Communication**

Asynchronous CMC promotes language learning differently from traditional modes of communication. Alternative negotiation and scaffolding structures, text-based interactive discourse, the lack of non-verbal cues, and a different turn-taking system are all evident in
asynchronous online platforms, making them suitable for second language acquisition. Because the discourse and interpersonal structure framed in such interaction is different from synchronous interactions, Keiko Kitade (2005) examined how such features may facilitate second language learning. In this study, he analyzed 24 dyads of NS-NNS (native speaker-non-native speaker) task-based e-mail interactions to investigate the relationship between the interactional features of asynchronous CMC and second language acquisition. Two interactionalist approaches were used: cognitive-oriented (“What are the types of fostering conditions for the learners’ cognitive development or negotiation of meaning and how are they available in e-mail interactions?”) and socioculturally-based (“How do learners construct their social and linguistic knowledge with the scaffolding assistance of a more capable peer/native speaker through e-mail interactions?”). Kitade reveals, “The asynchronous CMC is unaffected by the time difference and is more accessible than the synchronous one; however it possesses distinguishable features from synchronous CMC linguistically (e.g., greater accuracy, complex, formal, and longer) and interactionally (e.g., multi-moves in a single message, lack of adjacency, and a lower response rate) … [Thus] one of the most significant advantages of this in language learning is the high accessibility of meaningful interactions and interactions with the more competent members of the target language community” (iii-iv).

As well, the high volume of interaction through asynchronous CMC in a content course web-based environment has significant implications for the field of computers and writing. Retta Guy (2004) performed a quasi-experimental study with two treatment groups, instructor-centered and learner-centered, to provide a comparative analysis of student learning and volume of interactions. The study included 58 participants in an undergraduate business program from a historically Black land-grant university located on the eastern shores of Maryland. The Web-CT
(Course Tools) course management system was used to create online learning delivery contexts for two sections of the face-to-face *Business Communications* course. The study examined a unit from the face-to-face course in the adjunct mode. Both treatment groups studied the same content and were provided the opportunity for appropriate and equal interactions with content, the instructor, and other students on a voluntary basis. Also, both treatment groups were provided the opportunity to contribute to the unit of study through the use of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools. Guy reveals that there was “(1) no significant difference across treatment groups for student learning; (2) the volume of interactions within treatment groups was statistically significant with strong evidence to suggest that there is more activity with asynchronous mode compared to synchronous mode in both groups; and (3) the volume of interactions between treatment groups was not statistically significant” (Abstract).

Several asynchronous platforms such as wikis, blogs, and online bulletin boards are also considered valuable tools for the creation and maintenance of a critically-informed audience. Matthew Barton (2005) explored the roles of blogs, wikis, and discussion boards in fostering public discussion and the ways they can be incorporated into college composition courses. He used the work of Jurgen Habermas to foreground his usage of the term “public sphere”: “Habermas described how the public sphere evolved into and devolved from a legitimate sphere of rational-critical debate and action among private persons to a sphere of nonpublic opinion generated mostly by the mass media” (Barton 179). Barton paid attention to three online technologies (blogs, wikis, discussion boards) that, if strategically embraced by teachers of writing, “have the potential to reinforce the principles inherent in a true democracy and thwart the corporate interest” (178). Since workers are being gradually separated from the means of
intellectual production, teachers of writing and citizens of democracy must ensure that online writing tools are used for rational-critical debate. Barton clarifies:

Blogs are most handily described as online journals or diaries, though many bloggers use their blogs as a place to map research projects ... Discussion boards or online bulletin boards are much like Listservs or the old bulletin-board systems (BBS) that were prevalent before the rise of the Internet. These boards allow members to post and respond to threads ... Wikis differ from blogs and discussion boards in that they offer a radical approach to authorship. Simply put, wikis are web sites that anyone can edit; communities rather than individual authors author them. Of these three online writing environments, wikis seem to offer the most to writers interested in collaboration and consensus-building. (178)

*Moving Towards a New Direction*

These research studies truly enrich our understanding of the pedagogical possibilities and impact of synchronous and asynchronous CMC platforms to student learning and/or writing practices. Most of them shed light on how each platform distinctly affects social support, second language acquisition, textual revision, interaction volume, and critical identities. However, more studies are needed to address the usage of these online communication tools specifically as invention strategies and to investigate the transfer of ideas from online to student academic writing. My research study focuses on addressing exactly these needs.

Targeting collaborative practices in computer-mediated environments and examining the initial reproduction of ideas or observing the workings of the language during invention could be the first step in finding out how effective these strategies really are in helping college students acquire the necessary skills for academic writing. Hence, this investigation should describe both
synchronous and asynchronous modalities as invention strategies in composing texts. It should also be clear, though, that the advent of technologies in composition classrooms has not changed the basic social tenet of the composing process and academic writing but rather enhanced it. Donna Reiss, Dickie Selfe, and Art Young confirm that newsgroups and chat rooms are tools for collaborative conversation and composition, that writing e-mails, for instance, is a “writing to learn” activity, and so forth (xviii). Furthermore, electronic discussions in the form of listservs, bulletin boards, and chats are patterned after the question-and-answer adaptations of the Socratic dialogue (Eldred and Toner 37). In light of these claims, composition teachers must adapt a more balanced attitude when integrating technology in composition classrooms in order to make each activity relevant to the composing process and curricular goals: “Be enthusiastic but skeptical, excited but critical, explore new technologies but safeguard valued pedagogical approaches” (DeVoss and Selfe 435).

In retrospect, selecting appropriate technologies that work best for our students’ composing process should be prioritized by composition research. What better way to gain deeper understanding of the process than to re-examine the effects of collaborative online invention on first-year academic writing?

Overview of the Chapters

Within these pages, I will be discussing the details and results of the investigation. In Chapter Two, I will discuss the statement of purpose and present the research questions and methodology of this study. Starting with a description of the subjects, I will include the variables, data collection, analysis, and limitation sections. Chapter Three will present a description of my findings and analysis of using the synchronous Chat platform as a collaborative invention strategy and its transfer to student academic writing. I will analyze the online transcripts of
students as they discuss plans for potential essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; main ideas and supporting details; textual support; and opposing views and refutations or counterarguments. This will be followed by an analysis of the rough draft of their research-based essay, where I examine the transfer of online discussions to the essay based on the clarity of thesis statement, formation of logical argument, citation and synthesis of academic sources, and integration of counterargument. To ensure a more holistic analysis, I will include an analysis of teacher and student interviews regarding their attitudes and perceptions toward the use of Chat as a collaborative online invention forum. In Chapter Four, I will follow the same structure in presenting a description of my findings and analysis for the use of asynchronous Discussion Board platform and its transfer to academic writing. Chapter Five will describe the similarities and differences between collaborative Chat and Discussion Board invention practices based on the data patterns of online discussions, research-based essay rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews from previous chapters. To conclude this study, Chapter Six will provide implications for theory and practice when employing technology-based practices in first-year academic writing courses as well as recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER II.  THE STUDY

In response to the need for further investigation on collaborative online practices, this descriptive study hopes to address the transfer of ideas from varied collaborative online invention forums to student academic writing. The term “collaborative online invention” is viewed in this study as a prewriting activity students engage in where they are linked with each other online to generate and discuss topics before drafting essays. Two first-year composition classes, English 112 or Varieties of Writing, taught at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) in the spring of 2007 were included in the observation. Before writing the rough draft of a research-based essay requirement, one class was asked to use the Chat room as synchronous mode of invention and the other the Discussion Board as asynchronous mode. The primary objective of this study is to explore the correlation between each type of dialogic online activity to negotiate meaning and the quality of transfer of ideas to the academic essay. Specifically, it aims to provide a description of both synchronous and asynchronous modes of invention based on the transferability of online dialogues to student rough drafts and the attitudes and perceptions of the teacher and students toward each collaborative online invention process.

This chapter introduces in detail the research questions and methodology of the study, including the subjects, variables, data collection, analysis, and limitations involved. Significant reference to appendices is mentioned hereafter.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed in order to describe the transfer of ideas from synchronous and asynchronous modes of invention to student academic writing. Face-to-face interviews on student and teacher attitudes/perceptions toward each collaborative
online invention practice were addressed in the second research question to supplement the textual findings of the first:

1. How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?
   a. How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?
   b. How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?
   c. In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?

2. What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?
   a. (for teacher and students) What did the teacher and students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?
   b. (for teacher) How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?
   c. (for teacher) If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification?
   d. (for students) How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?
   e. (for students) How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?
   f. (for students) Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?
Methodology

This study followed a descriptive research design to examine the relationships between two types of collaborative online invention strategies (synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board) and student academic writing. Descriptive studies entail “observation of phenomena and analysis of data with as little restructuring of the situation or environment under scrutiny as possible” (Lauer and Asher 15). Unlike experimental studies, no control groups were created and no treatments were given (Lauer and Asher 82) in this study. Richard Beach claims that a descriptive research design must be used if the research questions account for close examination and analysis of variables: “If the questions involve examining characteristics of or relationships between variables, then a research would opt for a more descriptive design” (223). As any descriptive research, this study examined in detail the transfer of ideas from synchronous and asynchronous modes of invention to student rough drafts “without attempting to manipulate the effects of variables” (Beach 221). Description of synchronous and asynchronous modalities as invention strategies were provided based on online transcripts, student rough drafts, and teacher and student interviews.

Subjects

First-year students of Bowling Green State University (BGSU) enrolled in two selected English 112 classes in spring 2007 and their instructor comprised the subjects for this study. English 112 or Varieties of Writing is a three credit-hour academic course required of all students at BGSU and is “designed to prepare students for the types of writing they will be expected to do in college [with an] emphasis on the development of critical and analytical skills that are used in both writing and reading” (General Studies Writing Program, Instructors’ Handbook 33). Both groups of writers belonging to these classes are comparable in terms of proficiency level as these
students either passed the portfolio evaluation for English 110 or English 111 in previous semester/s or were directly placed into English 112 upon college entrance. Because of this, randomly assigning one specific mode of online invention to each class did not affect the study. The classes were selected according to scheduling availability, computer lab access, and consent of the course instructor.

I expected 22 students from each class, which is the maximum number of students typically enrolled in English 112, to agree to be observed. After inviting student participants during my classroom visit at the beginning of spring semester, 21 students from one class and, out of 16 students who originally agreed to participate, 11 students from the other class subjected their online discussion transcripts and researched-based essay rough drafts for analysis. Five students from each class initially agreed to be interviewed, but only four students from one class and only three students from the other class actually did the interview. In order to achieve an equal and meaningful representation of data, 10 students’ online discussion transcripts and research-based essay rough drafts as well as three student interviews from each class were randomly selected and analyzed. Originally, the same numbers of male and female student participants were represented from each class, but after the random selection process where gender distribution was not considered, this representation was no longer true.

Both computer-mediated English 112 classes were taught by the same instructor in the same computer lab classroom (Olscamp Hall, Room 207). The class assigned to do the synchronous Chat invention activity met every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 9:30 a.m., while the asynchronous Discussion Board invention class met at 10:30 a.m. on the same days. The instructor was very comfortable with technology and had been infusing technology in her writing classes for several years before this study began. In fact, both classes had been exposed
to Chat and, most especially, to Discussion Board as part of their classroom activity prior to this investigation. The instructor’s valuable insights on both collaborative online invention strategies were recorded and accounted for during the post-process interview. Since the same person was responsible for providing instructions in both classes and did not have a vested interest in either invention approach, the possibility of a teacher effect was thus minimized.

Subsequently, in compliance with the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) regulation, the teacher- and student-participants’ identities were never revealed in this study. Identification letters for students were used instead in order to eliminate the effects of readers’ sexual and racial biases. The instructor was referred to simply as “teacher.”

Variables

It is also important to consider the following external variables that may have affected the choices and outcome of the observation:

• Digital tools involved

One variable is the digital tool used in the composing process. This study used BGSU’s Blackboard application to facilitate the web-based instruction for invention and serve as the online tool linking both the teacher and students in the classroom. As written in the Instructors’ Guide to Visual Rhetoric and Technology compiled by the General Studies Writing (GSW) Program, each faculty member of BGSU is assigned a Blackboard course shell for each class which can be accessed by logging onto MyBGSU and clicking the “Courses” tab (30). This course shell offers an online Synchronous Chat Area and an Asynchronous Discussion Board Forum. The Chat Area is a space where students could work in groups and participate in real-time chat sessions (General Studies Writing Program, Instructors’ Guide 32), while the Discussion Board Forum is where they read and respond to online posts at any time (General
Studies Writing Program, *Instructors’ Guide* 31). All students from both classes in this study were exposed to in-class Chat and Discussion Board activities prior to the investigation, but both classes engaged only in the collaborative online invention activity assigned to them during the period of study.

Since this study’s focus is to closely examine the online transcripts of collaborative invention practices and describe the transfer of ideas to student rough drafts, the digital tool used to accommodate the online invention is a major factor in the overall composing process of the students. Other online tools, both synchronous and asynchronous platforms, could have also been used as invention strategies to get students more involved in the conversation but were not chosen in this study. For instance, electronic whiteboards that connect students online with graphical capabilities and erasable features replicating a traditional chalkboard is also an effective collaborative invention space where two or more participants can engage in a synchronous give-and-take interaction. Because of the tool’s immediacy and built-in graphics, motivation and retention among student participants may be affected. Each student can also engage in online freewriting or reflection by posting their ideas on Blogs, an asynchronous tool similar to online journals or diaries, and have classmates respond to a fellow student’s blog post in order to foster collaboration among them. The blogging nature of the activity alone may also affect the depth and productivity of online posts and responses, which may possibly transfer to the writer’s rough draft. Still, other digital tools promoting online dialogues are available for writing teachers to employ in their classrooms during invention so students can develop their ideas collaboratively. So it is important to note that these tools have distinct features that may readily affect the quality of exchange among student participants, and possibly, their written essays.
• Writing and technological skills and student preference

Another variable is the writing skill of each student. Those with more advanced composing skills, despite the collaborative online invention activity, would still be able to come up with better rough drafts in terms of maintaining consistent focus, main ideas, textual support, and so on. In the same way, an already inherent literacy skill could be further enhanced by the intervention of online activities. The act of sharing ideas online, where each student is forced to spell out an idea to an audience (i.e. their peers) through writing, helps build verbal representations of their knowledge and/or experience and forms connections among ideas that may not have been there before. Thus, students who are more comfortable with their writing skills may make the most out of the collaborative online invention activity than those who prefer discussing their ideas face-to-face.

Along with their writing skills, the technological skill of each student is another salient factor. Students who are more comfortable with computers and/or have used Chat and Discussion Board prior to a computer-mediated course may benefit more from the collaborative invention activity. Because of this, incorporating ideas from cyberspace and transferring these to print may be positively affected. Some students who have taken computer-mediated courses in high school or in the university naturally would have advanced computer skills than those who did not. Others who are exposed to cyberspace outside the classroom, either as members of online social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Friendster, among others or are regularly chatting with friends and family on Yahoo Messenger, MSN Messenger, and so on may have become more technologically-advanced and effective users of new media. With consistent exposure to online activities, participating more easily within the collaborative online setting used in this study is possible.
Still another factor is student preference for either synchronous or asynchronous modes of communication in terms of relaying ideas. Some students who prefer the immediacy of synchronous Chat would extremely benefit from the online dialogue than others who are easily distracted from real-time Chat. Other students who prefer the more organized layout of asynchronous Discussion Board would probably find the invention activity more productive than others who may feel constricted with its structured threads. At the same time, other students who prefer face-to-face discussion with its accompanying verbal and non-verbal cues and physical presence as a forum for brainstorming ideas may feel uncomfortable with the collaborative online activity altogether.

• Teacher preparation and execution

Finally, the instructor’s preparation and execution of the online activity in the classroom is an important variable. Though most composition teachers “have limited knowledge of computers and their possible application” (Rodrigues and Rodrigues 86), the teacher-participant in this study has been using Blackboard for several years in her English 112 classes. Her students usually exchange ideas about their essays and/or course readings primarily through Discussion Board, and on certain occasions, through Chat. As part of her natural classroom practice, students are divided into groups and asked to talk about their ideas (or lack thereof) for their research-based essay in Blackboard. Then, they are allowed to take over the electronic space, as the teacher poses questions to start a dialogue or provides guidance only when needed. There were two collaborative online invention activities in this study – the first was primarily for students to explore general ideas with each other (possible essay topics, theses, main points and supporting details, etc.), and the second was to start focusing ideas and discuss assigned readings as possible textual support. As one class used Chat and the other used Discussion Board, the
teacher generally maintained an active role in monitoring the direction of online dialogues, most especially when students got off-track or stopped posting in discussion forums and chat rooms altogether. But some teachers are prepared not to intervene and let students take absolute control of the online space throughout the entire period. At opposite ends, some may prepare a well-structured Chat or Discussion Board session where students are given strict directions to comply, so they can religiously monitor the quality and quantity of student posts, responses, and so on.

Nevertheless, teacher preparation for this online activity could very well be a significant variable because different teachers have different familiarity, style, and use for digital tools in the classroom. These differences have vital pedagogical implications capable of determining the success or failure of the planned online activity.

Data Collection

Before proceeding with subject recruitment and data collection, I went through the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB) application process in November 2006. Toward the end of the fall semester, my application had met the conditions for approval. Data were collected over a five-week period between February 5th and March 11th in spring 2007. In order to select participants, a roster of English 112 classes was retrieved from the secretary of the General Studies Writing Program office at the beginning of the semester. All computer-mediated English 112 classes were highlighted and those with no time conflict to my class schedule were selected. Scheduled appointments with each instructor were set in order to explain informally the nature and goals of the study. After talking to several instructors, one instructor who was teaching computer-mediated English 112 classes agreed. Two back-to-back classes were chosen by the instructor herself to be included in the observation. These classes met at 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.
for 50 minutes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at the same computer lab classroom (Olscamp Hall, Room 207).

To comply with HSRB regulations, the instructor was immediately sent two HSRB-approved formal invitation letters on January 8th, one for each class, complete with information about the study, its benefits, and her rights as participant (See Appendices A and B). Each letter had a consent form attached expressing agreement for each class to participate by (1) subjecting collaborative online invention transcripts and research-based essay rough drafts for analysis, and (2) granting interviews regarding the instructor’s perceptions and attitudes toward each type of collaborative online invention activity. The entire study examined the composing process, specifically the process of invention, of only one research-based essay course requirement. The 9:30 a.m. class was asked to use synchronous Chat as collaborative online invention, while the 10:30 a.m. class was asked to use asynchronous Discussion Board.

Upon receipt of the instructor’s consent forms for each class, each registered student in both classes also received an HSRB-approved formal invitation letter during my initial classroom visit on January 22nd. The letter indicated a brief description of the study, information about their benefits and rights, and a request to agree to be observed and interviewed (See Appendix C). The students were also informed that observation, analysis, and interviews would not in any way affect their individual and overall class performance as their instructor would not have access to the data analysis. Consent letters signed by the students on that day expressing agreement to participate were immediately stored, while those who needed time to think about whether or not to participate were given two weeks to submit their consent letters through the instructor. By the end of the second week, those who did not respond to the invitation were not considered part of
the project, and their online transcripts and rough drafts were neither used nor analyzed in this study.

The data collection period took place between the time when students started generating topics online for their research-based essay and the time when their final grades for the essay were made available. I was granted by the instructor personal access to the Chat and Discussion Board archives of the course Blackboard shell for recording purposes. Although students from both classes were exposed to in-class Chat and Discussion Board activities prior to the investigation, both classes engaged only in the collaborative online invention activity assigned to them (Chat or Discussion Board) during the period of study. Each class had two collaborative online invention sessions. The first Chat and Discussion Board invention session was held on Monday, February 5th where students primarily explored general ideas for their essay (possible essay topics, theses, main points and supporting details, counterarguments, and so on) in groups of four with around five to six students per group. After one week, the second Chat and Discussion Board invention session was held on Monday, February 12th where students continued discussing their essay plans as well as possible textual support within the same groups.

Both classes were required to read and use the “Obedience to Authority” chapter articles of *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* (9th edition) by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen. In their first research-based essay, also known as the Multiple Source Essay (MSE), students were expected to synthesize multiple sources from the assigned chapter in an argumentative fashion. Stipulations about the assignment are found in the assignment sheet, which guided the composing process of the students (See Appendix D). This assignment emphasizes the objective of English 112: *Varieties of Writing* to develop critical and analytical skills used in both writing and reading (General Studies Writing Program, *Instructors’ Handbook*).
In this regard, the essay that provides the data for this study was not produced for the purpose of the study, but was already part of the course’s achievement requirement.

After each collaborative online invention session, the instructor was interviewed face-to-face in her office for approximately 30 to 45 minutes – on Friday, February 9th after the first invention session and on Friday, February 16th after the second invention session. She was asked about her prior experiences with using technology in the writing classroom at the first interview to establish a sense of context. Next, she was asked to give her comments and observation on how each type of collaborative online invention activity went for the class that used synchronous Chat and the other that used asynchronous Discussion Board (See Appendix E). Both teacher interviews were audio-recorded.

On Wednesday, February 14, the due date of the research-based essay rough draft, the instructor asked the students who previously signed the consent form to send their rough drafts electronically to my BGSU email address. After receiving electronic copies of their rough drafts, I printed them off, copied and stored each file on a compact disc and on my BGSU MyFiles account as back up. Next, I sent an email to those who agreed to be interviewed, asking them to send me their available times within the next two weeks so we could set up an appointment. There was a need to conduct student interviews immediately after the submission of student rough drafts and not prolong them so as to ensure that the collaborative online invention and drafting processes were still fresh in each student participant’s memory. To establish a sense of context, students were asked about their prior experience with using technology in the classroom. Then, they were asked to comment on the collaborative online invention and composing processes (See Appendix F). Face-to-face interviews were conducted in my office for approximately 30 to 45 minutes each and were also audio-recorded.
I closed my data collection as soon as the final drafts of the research-based essay were graded. A very informal and unstructured post-process interview with the instructor was conducted via email on March 11th where she was asked if she noted any afterthoughts, reflections, or observations about both online invention activities that were not expressed during the teacher interview. Some of the questions asked were “Did you think the structured online invention activities were well-planned?” and “How would you rate or assess in general the quality of essays that used Chat and Discussion Board as invention strategies?,” but she was free to divert from these and/or simply provide a more holistic view of the process. Since part of the original plan also required the instructor to inform me of the student participants’ final grades for their research-based essays, I received their essay grades and her holistic comment about the collaborative online invention process on the same day, which ended my data collection. However, I realized soon afterwards that the students’ essay grades were not relevant to this study since these account for peer feedback, revision strategies, and so on which are outside the scope and purpose of this investigation. Thus, these essay grades were no longer treated as part of my data.

Analysis

Drawing from an extensive literature on descriptive research, Janice M. Lauer and J. William Asher contend that the environment from which the data are gathered in descriptive studies are not deliberately structured or controlled (15). This study entails “observation of phenomena” (i.e. synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board collaborative online invention) and “analysis of data” (i.e. Chat and Discussion Board transcripts, research-based essay rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews) with “as little restructuring of the situation or environment under scrutiny as possible” (Lauer and Asher 15). As mentioned earlier, the
research-based essay requirement and collaborative online invention activity in each class were not done just for the purpose of this study but were originally part of the course syllabus. Note that both online activities had already been tried in each class before this study began. Except for assigning one class to use synchronous Chat and the other asynchronous Discussion Board as invention strategy before writing the required essay, no groups were controlled and all subjects were kept intact. With a naturalized phenomena and data at hand, the next important step was to apply the concept of “epistemic justification” by “find[ing] the best available means of knowing at a given time in a given place” (Johanek 102). Since the purpose of this study is to investigate the collaborative invention process of student writers engaged in synchronous and asynchronous platforms and its transference to academic texts, a descriptive research design was chosen to further develop a theoretical construct through the examination of important variables. The ultimate goal is to provide a description of synchronous and asynchronous modalities as invention strategies in composing academic essays.

In order to reach this goal, the study used grounded theory method which systematically looked at data to generate theory. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin in “Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria” argue that the “procedures of grounded theory are designed to develop a well-integrated set of concepts that provide a thorough theoretical explanation of social phenomena under study” (5). Thus, if the goal were to explain and describe the synchronous and asynchronous modalities used as collaborative invention, the most appropriate approach was to anchor analysis on grounded theory. Contrary to traditional experimental research methods, a hypothesis was not tested but was developed in the end after the collection and analysis of data. The research itself is referred to as “hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis-testing” because hypotheses were grounded based on what the data from
research participants reveal through a data analytical procedure called “theoretical coding” (Auerbach and Silverstein 7). The theory incorporated to the findings of the study was derived from “a description of patterns found in the data” (Auerbach and Silverstein 31). In this case, a description of synchronous and asynchronous modes of invention based on patterns extracted from online transcripts, rough drafts, and interviews was deemed necessary to contribute to theoretical constructions about the effects of these invention practices.

The collected data in this study were two-fold: (1) student performance as reflected by discourse and language use in online discussion transcripts and written essays, and (2) perceptions and attitudes of participants toward online Chat and Discussion Board as invention strategies. Patterns from the research data were identified and retained through classification and coding in order for theoretical constructs to emerge (Richards 86). According to Lyn Richards in *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*,

> The goal [when coding] is to learn from the data, to keep revisiting it until you understand the patterns and explanations. So you need to retain the data records, or the relevant parts of them, until they are fully understood. Coding is not merely to label all the parts of documents about a topic, but rather to bring them together so they can be reviewed, and your thinking about the topic developed. (86)

In fact, the act of “thinking about the topic until it developed” strongly supports Carl F. Auerbach and Louise B. Silverstein’s grounded theory method by “constructing theory” or “generating hypothesis” based on the pattern revealed by the data. The coding procedure in this study was drawn from qualitative research and content analysis, which allow constant reviews and revisions for understanding data patterns and explanations. Such coding “gets past the data record, to a category, and work with all the data segments about the category. [It] aggregates
them, so [the researcher] can then work with them together, gaining a new cut on the data” (Richards 86). Through the coding process, data reduction to store information (Richards 85) is the means to substantiate analysis and allow “data to become theory” (Strauss and Corbin, Basics 144). Thus, selecting the appropriate coding procedure and technique for analysis in this study was extremely important to make sense of the data collected.

Revisiting the research questions set at the start of the project was also necessary. With regard to the use of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board for collaborative online invention, two primary research questions were formulated for this study: (1) How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays? and (2) What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? Data collection for the first research question involved online Chat and Discussion Board transcripts and rough drafts, and for the second research question, post-process face-to-face interviews with the teacher after each collaborative synchronous and asynchronous invention activity and with the students after submission of rough drafts. In addition, there was a follow-up email interview with the teacher after the final essay grades were calculated to account for any holistic observation or reflections not expressed during the face-to-face interview.

To analyze these data, the technique used resembles Strauss and Corbin’s notion of “microanalysis” involving “very careful, often minute examination and interpretation of data” (Basics 58). The analysis technique applied to code the data for the first research question regarding online discussion and the quality of transfer to academic writing was patterned after the linguistic and textual analyses of Beth Hewett in her 2006 empirical study of synchronous electronic whiteboard conference-based online writing instruction (OWI). Modifying her analysis technique, four categories were grouped in this study to (1) trace and quantify the
transfer of ideas from online transcripts to rough drafts, and (2) describe and compare two collaborative online invention strategies – synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board – based on the transfer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis of Online Discussion (Chat Room and Discussion Board)</th>
<th>Analysis of Written Essay (Rough Draft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Potential essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement</td>
<td>• Clarity of thesis statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Main ideas and supporting details</td>
<td>• Formation of logical argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Textual Support</td>
<td>• Citation and synthesis of academic sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opposing views and refutations</td>
<td>• Integration of counterargument</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the four categories above as guide, the following is a holistic description of the procedure used for coding and analysis of each collected data in line with the research questions:

1. How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?
   a. How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?
      
      **Coding and Analysis:** Meaningful exchange of ideas/information in the chat room and discussion board were coded and compared with the content of the essay based on thesis, main ideas and supporting details, source support, and counterarguments.

   b. How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?
      
      **Coding and Analysis:** Each essay’s thesis/argument, main ideas and supporting details, source support, and counterarguments were closely examined and compared with online exchanges/posts to take note of significant points that were not part of the online discussion.

   c. In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?
Coding and Analysis: Significant academic/technical terms and syntactic structures used in the online forum and the written essay were coded and compared in terms of thesis, main ideas and supporting details, source support, and counterargument constructions.

2. What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?

a. (for teacher and students) What did the teacher and students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?

b. (for teacher) How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?

c. (for teacher) If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification?

d. (for students) How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?

e. (for students) How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?

f. (for students) Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?

Coding and Analysis: Lyn Richards’ “analytical coding” was used to code the interview data. According to Richards, rather than just storing information or naming the topic of the text, meanings in context are considered, “creating categories that express new ideas about the data, coding to gather and reflect on all the data related to them” (94). Interview data regarding teacher and student attitude and perception toward collaborative online
invention strategies (or data related to the second research question) were coded and compared with the data from online transcripts and rough drafts (or data related to the first research question). Four steps were taken to carry out the procedure of analytical coding, which allowed constant examination and revisions in the data until a clear pattern emerged:

1. As you read, if a passage is interesting, select it (‘That’s interesting’)...
2. Now, you have a passage selected: where do you code? Step up to the abstraction ‘Why am I interested in that?’ This is a very different question. The answer is a category, and a place you will want to code data. Make the category, and carefully name it. (Naming is an analytical process in itself. You may also want to describe the category you have created.)…
3. Code the selected text at the category…
4. Now later in that document, or in another, when you again hear [important messages related to your research question], you know you are interested in that. Select the text, find the category you created, and code. (Richards 94-95)

To explore fully the richness of the data that was available to me, I transformed the holistic procedure mentioned above into specific steps that approximate a grounded theory analysis of online dialogues, essay drafts, and interview transcripts:

1) Read and mark subject-participants’ dialogues found in online transcripts.
2) Read and mark essay parts in their drafts based on four categories – (a) topic, purpose, thesis statement; (b) main ideas and supporting details; (c) source citation and synthesis; (d) counterarguments. Note any rhetorically significant language use as well.
3) Reread and analyze online transcripts and mark relevant dialogues pertaining to four essay
categories. Also note subject-participants’ contribution to group discussions.

4) Code and analyze both texts (online and rough drafts). Reread and immediately repeat coding
and/or analysis if a significant pattern emerged.

5) Reread essay drafts to note any (or lack of) transfer of four essay categories: What was found
in both texts (online and essay drafts) and what was found only in one text? Also, compare
both texts to identify rhetorically significant language use.

6) Code and analyze teacher and student interviews. Repeat coding and/or analysis if any
significant pattern emerged. Finally, compare and contrast both teacher and student interview
data.

7) Compare and contrast analyses of online transcript and essay draft data with interview data.
Use interview data to supplement or enrich textual data.

8) Arrange textual data and interview data analyses coherently. Point out significant
observations and patterns, including the quantity of transfer of each category and language
use as well as supplementary patterns based on the interview.

Limitations

Certain factors in terms of the choice of online tools, the failure to control other variables,
and the characteristics of the subjects considered for analysis may have limited the potentials of
this study for generating holistic results. The synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion
Board features of Blackboard are just a few of the many online learning tools available for
collaborative invention that may have limited the options for students given the prevalence of
Web 2.0 tools and other open source applications in their lives. Some pertinent variables that
may have been affected by the choice of other online tools are the skill level of students and the
planning of the teacher. In addition, many existing variables were not explicitly controlled, so the results of the study are not sufficient to establish cause-and-effect relationships. For instance, since student participants were fully aware of the study upon recruitment, their online postings for the collaborative online invention activities in this study may have been affected as well. Finally, this study has a limited description of the characteristics of the subjects – except for information about the size of the groups, grade level, and the nature of the course, the socioeconomic status and number of males and females were deliberately excluded in the final analysis of the data. More information about these characteristics could have provided more room for interpretation of the results or replication of the study.

Another limitation is that the study does not include a large population, so the result may not be definitive. In fact, the sample size can not be held constant since people change over time, rendering the findings non-applicable in different situational contexts. By employing a nonparametric approach, the groups of writers were examined as they are “without attempting to generalize to larger populations” (Beach 219). Thus, it is important to note that these students may not be representative of all first-year composition students. But despite the fact that this approach does not lend itself to generalizations, the research design itself is useful in describing the relationship between synchronous and asynchronous modes of collaborative online invention and academic writing based on the transfer of ideas in this context. Such a description could be beneficial for composition teachers to consider when choosing the most appropriate online tool for their own composition classes. It could also help design future empirical studies in different settings or replicate the same study to make the result more powerful.

Finally, the coding system used to analyze data may not align with traditional concepts of validity and reliability in more objectivist, experimental research paradigms. For instance,
analysis may have failed to “capture the meaning of language as constituted by the motives or intentions inherent in any social context” (Beach 237). In other words, conducting interviews to all student participants, not only a few, could have provided more contextual support for the data to be reliable. Another is the lack of directly demonstrating the coding system to the readers through numerous examples with attached appendices for increased validity and reliability (Grant-Davie 285). But because of the bulk of data collected, examples were limited to the data coded within the research itself. Unlike other empirical studies rooted on quantitative methodology, the statistical concepts of “objectivity” (via reliability and validity) and “universality” (via generalizability) were not used therefore as basis for evaluation in this study (Auerbach and Silverstein 77). Instead, Auerbach and Silverstein’s qualitative concept of “justifiability of interpretations” serves as alternative to reliability and validity and “transferability of theoretical constructs” to generalizability (78). According to them, transparency of steps for interpretation, communicable themes and constructs, and coherent theoretical constructs make for a justifiable interpretation (82-85). Moreover, theoretical constructs developed in grounded theory are transferable “in that you can expect the more abstract patterns that they describe to be found in different subcultures” (Auerbach and Silverstein 87). So an inferential statistical design, although it would make the study more generalizable to a bigger population because of stricter statistical procedures, was not the best approach for this small-scale descriptive study.

Re-examining Synchronous Chat as Collaborative Invention: An Overview

Chapter Three will present a description of my findings and analysis for the first mode of collaborative online invention used in this study – synchronous Chat – based on the transfer of ideas to student academic writing and teacher-student interviews. Appropriate coding and
microanalysis procedure for these data anchored in grounded theory method will be evident as I work through Chat transcripts, rough drafts, and interview data. With careful attention to patterns derived from data until clear theoretical constructs emerge, I will describe the main highlights of the findings in a chapter summary at the end. Overall, the research questions that include four categories discussed earlier (essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; main ideas and supporting details; textual support or source synthesis; and opposing views and refutations or counterargument) and supplementary interviews will be used as guides to arrive at a more detailed description of synchronous Chat as a collaborative online invention strategy.
CHAPTER III. RE-EXAMINING SYNCHRONOUS CHAT AS COLLABORATIVE INVENTION

Coding the Chat transcripts and rough drafts of student-participants as well as the teacher and student interviews made me realize the richness of the data that describe the effects of synchronous Chat invention on student academic writing. This chapter’s first two main sections, (1) Effect of Synchronous Chat on Essay Drafts and (2) Attitude and Perception toward Synchronous Chat as Collaborative Invention, were structured after the study’s two main research questions, (1) How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays? and (2) What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? The chapter summary at the end presents a description of the effects of the Chat activity on essay writing in response to the research questions based on the results of the data. Comparisons between the textual analysis and interview data reveal relevant points about the nature of synchronous Chat as a collaborative invention exercise in composing essays. In closing, a forecast of the next chapter details the effect of asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention practice.

Effect of Synchronous Chat on Essay Drafts

This section provides a textual analysis of Chat transcripts and student rough drafts describing the transfer of ideas from cyberspace to print. Ten students, labeled A through J, were included in the discussion. Based on the first research question, “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?,” four categories were examined in ten student rough drafts to detect the effectiveness of synchronous Chat as a collaborative online invention strategy. These categories include the following: (a) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; (b) main ideas and supporting details; (c) textual support or synthesis of sources; and (d) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments. Since the
nature of the research-based essay assignment in this course requires students to write a thesis-driven argumentative essay with synthesized sources, the categories selected and examined reflect this requirement. Online Chat transcripts and rough drafts presented here were original and set inside tables with distinct fonts for ease of recognition. Relevant parts of the text were printed in bold and italic for emphasis. To shorten the dialogues and drafts not critical to the analysis, an ellipsis [...] was used; not all posts in the Chat room were included as well in order to streamline the presentation of data.

Overall, results show that Chat discussions in the first category – possible essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement – have the most frequent transfer of ideas to essay drafts while the least transfer is the last category, opposing views and refutations or counterarguments.

**Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement**

As far as discussion on essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement is concerned, almost all of the participants’ Chat transcripts, except for one, indicate successful transference to the essay. The first and second collaborative Chat invention activities manifest varying degrees of consistency in terms of topic generation, but most of the ideas expressed online show positive transfer to student rough drafts. Interestingly, this transfer also includes Chat transcripts that express a lack of ideas for thesis statements as directly reflected in some rough drafts.

Students C, D, and E seem to have set topics from the very beginning as consistently evident in the first and second Chat activities, as well as in their essay drafts. On the other hand, Students F, G, I, and J starts without any topic and uses the first Chat activity as a forum for exploring possible ideas, which gradually become more specific in the second Chat as well as in their essays. Students A and B are active only in the second Chat forum but their ideas show direct transfer to their essays. In terms of thesis statements, only Students A and J do not have
clear theses in both Chat activities and the written draft. Student H does not have a clear thesis statement in the Chat room either but this is not transferred to the essay.

The following excerpts from Students C, D, and E’s first and second Chat invention transcripts and corresponding rough drafts seem to show consistent development in terms of topic, purpose, and thesis statement:

STUDENTS C and D (group mates) – consistent discussion of topic and/or thesis statement in both Chat activities which indicate transfer to the rough drafts

First Chat Invention

**Student C:** I’m thinking about speculating about why people commit horrible acts
Feb 5, 2007 9:35:23 AM EST

[...]

**Student D:** I’m thinking about writing about the pressures of having premarital sex, and the pressure from the media and peers
Feb 5, 2007 9:36:48 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

**Student C:** My thesis is why do people do inhumane things to other human beings
Feb 12, 2007 9:37:28 AM EST

[...]

**Student D:** My thesis is that there are many different factors that influence premarital sex in teens. These factors are pressures from many different sources.
Feb 12, 2007 9:44:08 AM EST

Student C Rough Draft – Introduction

[...] But are the “horrible people” who commit these horrible acts really “horrible people” or are they just victims of the situations they were forced into? We can’t categorize the people who do “horrible and inhumane things” as evil people and throw them in jail and expect the problem to be solved. First we will see that anyone is subject to do these inhumane acts that we have seen unravel throughout time and, in doing so, refute the counterargument that “evil people” commit these types of crimes. From there we will be able to get to the purpose of this essay; to show why people commit horrible and inhumane acts to other human beings? Once this question is answered, we as a people will be better able to stop evil acts like genocide from happening again [...]

Student D’s thesis statement shown in the second invention above suggests a more informal tone, opening with a possessive pronoun + nominal subject + linking verb (“My thesis is...”) structure and expressed in two sentences. This is in contrast to the essay’s more formal embedded structure below:
When people think about the consequences of premarital sex what do they think about. Many of them feel that this type of behavior is morally wrong because it goes against the teachings in the bible. Still others think of the consequences such as becoming pregnant or contacting a sexually transmitted disease. If people know the consequences of their actions why does this problem continue to exist today. *Many times these actions [premarital sex] are brought about by certain pressures that cause people to perform actions that they normally would not do, or knew was wrong.* In the following paragraphs, this paper will take a closer look at the different plausible causes of why people perform these types of actions. Many people will be surprised to find out that some of these pressures are found all around our surroundings, including our own house […]

Unlike Students C and D who were group mates, Student E’s Chat transcripts and rough draft are singled out here due to separate group membership. Nevertheless, the same progression of topic and thesis statement seems to be evident as seen below:

**STUDENT E (group mate of Student F) – consistent ideas in both Chat transcripts despite lack of certainty, but essay is clearly thesis-driven**

**First Chat Invention**

*Teacher:* What ideas are ya'all thinkin' about? Feb 5, 2007 9:36:05 AM EST
*Peer 1:* anyone have any ideas? Feb 5, 2007 9:36:16 AM EST
[…]
*Student E:* Maybe why some students do not attend classes even though they pay so much to be here Feb 5, 2007 9:36:47 AM EST
[…]
*Student E:* why people don’t go to class even though they pay so much to be here Feb 5, 2007 9:50:29 AM EST

**Second Chat Invention**

[…]
*Student E:* my thesis might be that people attend college when they really do not want to because of authoritative pressure and group pressure …..im not sure what other ideas I have yet though Feb 12, 2007 9:43:46 AM EST

Based on the second Chat activity, Student E’s thesis statement indicates uncertainty with the presence of the modal “might”, the phrase “not sure”, and two possible causes (“authoritative pressure and group pressure”). The corresponding essay, however, contains four specific causes for the phenomenon with a more forceful argumentative thesis:
Student E Rough Draft – Introduction

College is becoming a necessary part of a successful career oriented life. It has become the inevitable for graduating high school seniors because of all factors that pressure the decision. Teachers push for students to attend college so that they can succeed beyond high school. Parents push for their children to attend college so that they can get a good job and make enough money to provide for themselves. The media pushes students to attend college because it is supposed to be those years that you will always remember as the “good ‘ole days,” without parents to tell you what to do. It seems as though you will be left out of the group if you decide to not go to college. People that do not attend college are looked down upon in today’s society. Many students feel that they are forced to attend college just because of all these pressures [teachers, parents, media, group] and they really do not have a desire to go to college.

Contrary to Student E’s remarkable topic and thesis development, some students deliberately join the first Chat forum without any idea what to write about but eventually arrive at concrete ideas during the second Chat activity. In this case, the first Chat activity ideally serves as exploration of possible topics, resulting to a more focused exchange in the second forum and well into the rough drafts. Students F, G, I, and J’s Chat transcripts and rough drafts account for this refinement:

STUDENT F (group mate of Student E) – ideas become more specific in the second Chat activity and show transfer to essay draft

First Chat Invention

Teacher: What ideas are ya’ll thinking about? Feb 5, 2007 9:36:05 AM EST
Peer 1: anyone have any ideas? Feb 5, 2007 9:36:16 AM EST
[…]
Student F: I have NO idea what we’ll be writing about Feb 5, 2007 9:37:04 AM EST
[…]
Peer 1: anyone else have any other ideas that they are writing about? Feb 5, 2007 9:49:52 AM EST
Peer 2: not sure what mine is going to be yet :\ Feb 5, 2007 9:50:20 AM EST
Student E: why people don’t go to class even though they pay so much to be here Feb 5, 2007 9:50:29 AM EST
Peer 3: why people drinking Feb 5, 2007 9:50:42 AM EST
Student F: why people smoke anything Feb 5, 2007 9:50:42 AM EST
Student F: *or drinking Feb 5, 2007 9:50:47 AM EST
Peer 3: *drink Feb 5, 2007 9:50:53 AM EST
Student F: * lets just all use asterisks Feb 5, 2007 9:51:10 AM EST
Student E: haha Feb 5, 2007 9:51:16 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

Student F: I’m making this up as I go...people start smoking because of social pressure from friends – other ideas would be parents, celebrities, media, etc – I don’t have a counter yet im not that smart Feb 12, 2007 9:41:42 AM EST
Peer 2: good idea Feb 12, 2007 9:42:12 AM EST
STUDENT G, I, and J (group mates) – first invention activity shows exploration of ideas which morph into selected topics in the second forum and written drafts

Student F Rough Draft – Introduction

For as long as most people have been alive, people have been smoking tobacco. Even back when the Indians had vast numbers around the United States, they were smoking tobacco or other different types of plants and herbs. [...] There are many different reasons that people smoke, but there are only a few that are easily identifiable. Influence on whether or not people smoke can come from friends, family, or the society around them. The next few paragraphs are going to deal with why people smoke and what causes them to want to do so.

First Chat Invention

Teacher: What ideas are ya’ll thinkin about? Feb 5, 2007 9:35:48 AM EST
Peer 1: not quite sure yet Feb 5, 2007 9:36:22 AM EST
Student I: I have no clue Feb 5, 2007 9:36:23 AM EST
[...]
Teacher: OK, so maybe we could focus in on a specific situation—what’s something people do that seems to go against human nature or logic? Feb 5, 2007 9:37:04 AM EST
[...]
Teacher: Anybody have a tattoo? Feb 5, 2007 9:38:49 AM EST
Student G: I guess something that goes against human logic is making us walk to class when it is freezing cold out Feb 5, 2007 9:38:53 AM EST
Peer 1: no Feb 5, 2007 9:39:05 AM EST
Student J: heck yeah, its cold as heck Feb 5, 2007 9:39:08 AM EST
[...]
Student J: and no I don’t have a tattoo Feb 5, 2007 9:39:18 AM EST
Student G: I don’t have one either Feb 5, 2007 9:39:24 AM EST
Teacher: HA—but it’s a reasonable authority that made you come out on such a cold day—right? Feb 5, 2007 9:39:43 AM EST
Student J: yeah Feb 5, 2007 9:39:58 AM EST
[...]
Student I: what about even though there are risks of tanning people still do it Feb 5, 2007 9:42:19 AM EST
Student I: or smoking Feb 5, 2007 9:42:24 AM EST
Student J: and drinking Feb 5, 2007 9:42:30 AM EST
Student I: or becoming anorexic Feb 5, 2007 9:42:34 AM EST
Student I: all of these crazy things that our culture does…but for what reason? Feb 5, 2007 9:42:48 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

Student G: My topic is why high school athletes use steroids Feb 12, 2007 9:38:48 AM
[...]
Peer 1: so what’s your topic [Student J]? Feb 12, 2007 9:50:11 AM EST
Student J: genocides; the rawandan genocide in particular Feb 12, 2007 9:50:34
Based on the second invention above, Student G’s declarative thesis statement with two possible causes (“Today high school athletes are using steroids because of pressure from fellow teammates and coaches”) is apparently transferred to the draft below. Most notable is the addition of two more possible causes in the written essay, adding up to four possible causes all together.

**Student G Rough Draft – Introduction**

Do you remember that dream of becoming a professional athlete and making the big bucks while in high school but realizing that it was not possible because of a lack of speed and strength? Well today high school athletes are trying to break through the barriers of strength and speed, though not by the normal means of hard work and dedication. Today’s athletes are turning towards steroids, the new way to fix the, here-and-now, strength and speed problems young athletes face […] So why is it that young athletes continue to take steroids even though they know steroids can be detrimental to their health? *Ideas of why high school athletes take steroids include, pressure to become a professional athlete, an inability to think for themselves, and pressure from fellow teammates and coaches.*

One other distinct syntactic transformation is Student I’s topical statement found in the second invention and essay introduction. A declarative statement used in the second online forum above (“My topic is …”) turns into an interrogative form below for emphasis, leading to the purpose of the essay:
Student I Rough Draft – Introduction

The fashion industry has played a huge part in our society. Fashion and looking good is very important and taken very seriously in our world today. The modeling industry helps portray a beautiful image in fashion [...] However, the concern about how skinny models are today has introduced a question of how thin is too thin? Americans have been so concentrated on how they look and many people feel that looking like a model in today's society is thought of as beautiful. But the image that models are portraying is not only unattractive but unhealthy. **What is making models and the women in our society think that being dangerously thin and sickly skinny is attractive?** With all of the studies proven about the damages on the body from starving yourself and becoming anorexic **why are women and the fashion industry taking this risk?**

Although Student J starts without a topic in mind, a more certain topic emerges in the second Chat forum, which is eventually developed into an essay. A clear thesis statement, however, is not directly found in the rough draft, a fact Student J expresses in the second forum (“Thesis: Not fully developed yet”). The introductory paragraph below simply states the phenomenon to be speculated about in an interrogative manner:

Student J Rough Draft – Introduction

[...] **With knowledge of what was going on, why did no one ever do anything about what was happening to the Tutsis in Rwanda?** Many say that if they were of a higher power that they would have done something, or at least tried to do something about the Rwandan genocide. Why is it that ‘normal people’ do not attempt to help others in need just because they are not in a higher position of power? When is the proper time for someone of no authority to take action on something that is unjust or morally wrong?

In retrospect, Students D, E, F, and G’s rough drafts previously shown have clear thesis statements characterizing the remarkable transference of both collaborative online invention activities, regardless of whether students know what to write about (Students D and E) or not (Students F and G). Two student participants from the same group (Students A and B) who were only active in the second Chat forum have contrasting results – one draft contains a clear thesis statement (Student B) and the other does not (Student A). Below is a record of Students A and B’s transcripts and rough drafts, respectively.
STUDENTS A and B (group mates) – contrasting effects in terms of clarity of thesis statement, where Student B’s draft contains clearer argumentative thesis than Student A despite limited Chat participation

Second Chat Invention

**Student B:** I’m thinking about doing smoking. Thesis is: If more people know about how smoking gets started, it would be more preventative. Feb 12, 2007 9:38:27 AM EST

[...]

**Student A:** I’m thinking about doing teens sex and my thesis is still a work in progress Feb 12, 2007 9:39:28 AM EST

[...]

**Student A:** my topic is teens and sex Feb 12, 2007 10:03:27 AM EST

---

Student A Rough Draft – Introduction

[...] One of the largest issues that every teen deals with while growing up is sex. At one point or another in high school or college, a person must deal with how they view sexual activity, and if they will choose to partake in it. Some decide to have sex, while others choose to abstain. **There are many reasons and influences that lead teens to having sex.** Sometimes these reasons even push them when they are not ready.

Of equal interest is Student B’s online thesis statement (“If more people know about how smoking gets started, it would be more preventative”) which follows the same argumentative conditional structure as seen in the draft below:

Student B Rough Draft – Introduction

Smoking is one of the largest killers every year, causing cancer, second hand smoke, and pollution. Why do people smoke if they know it is so bad for their own health and the health of others? In the article “Opinions and Social Pressures” by Solomon E. Asch, he explains the affects of group pressures on individuals. **If individuals knew more about smoking and how people get started, it could be much more preventative.** The main reasons people start smoking is because they are pushed by group and authority pressures.

And finally, only one student-participant (Student H), who did not meaningfully engage in both Chat activities, unexpectedly supplies a clear draft focus. The thesis statement found in the essay is not part of the online activity that follows:

STUDENT H (group mate of Students G, I, and J) – absence of meaningful online conversation does not seem to affect the rough draft’s clarity of thesis statement

Second Chat Invention

**Student I:** im going to use the idea about the models Feb 12, 2007 9:53:19 AM EST

**Student I:** I like it Feb 12, 2007 9:53:22 AM EST

**Student I:** what are you writing about again? Feb 12, 2007 9:53:43 AM EST

**Student I:** what's your thesis Feb 12, 2007 9:53:48 AM EST
In a dilapidated, disgusting prison in a country across the globe, guards are forcing naked men to form human pyramids, placing detainees in stress positions with electrodes attached to their genitalia. These men weren’t proven guilty by a jury of their peers, in fact they weren’t given any trial, simply arrested for suspicion of wrong doing. [...] The prison is Abu Ghraib. [...] The highest ranks have the luxury of distancing themselves from the dirty work. But what would cause an individual to commit these terrible acts and to take interrogation to such sadistic extremes? [...] The actions committed by the guards at Abu Ghraib are a product of obedience of their superiors and of the situation that they were placed in as well as the pressures that they placed upon themselves. It is the obedience to these aspects that caused normal human beings to be capable of committing these atrocities.

Highlights of Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement

To recap, nine out of ten student transcripts indicate successful transfer to written drafts in terms of topic, purpose, and thesis statement. Among these, three students (C, D, and E) discuss consistent topics in both Chat forums, and four students (F, G, I, and J) arrive at specific topics only in the second forum. Nevertheless, these online dialogues are all reflected in the essays. Two students (A and B), who were active only in the second invention activity, have contrasting results regarding the clarity of essay focus – one rough draft (Student B) has a stronger thesis statement than the other (Student A). Since both previously shared their thesis plan (or lack thereof) online, the positive transference between Chat forums and essay drafts is still supported. Such a pattern only proves that the social environment provided by Chat during invention is necessary because “brainstorming ideas, or writing as ‘spontaneous utterance’, is often a useful starting point for student engagement with a topic” (Hand and Prain 740). In fact, any effective writing-to-learn task should be done in a “rich learning environment where students are provided with sufficient motivation, procedural guidance, and expert and on-going peer
feedback” (Hand and Prain 753). Thus, the productive dialogue of the synchronous activity explains the high rate of transfer to student writing in general. Only one Chat transcript (Student H) fails to establish transfer to the written draft – that is, a thesis statement is included in the essay despite the student’s limited online discussion.

In addition, synchronous CMC has the potential for “immediacy, improved facility for brainstorming and decision making” (Mercer 26), which explains why a large portion of student drafts can be traced back to the Chat activity. The following results show varied effects of the collaborative Chat invention on the clarity of thesis statements:

- five rough drafts (Students B, D, E, F, and G) have clear thesis statements traceable to earlier Chat forums; only one rough draft with clear thesis statement is not a result of the transfer (Student H)
- two rough drafts (Students C and I) have clear essay topics / purpose but do not have clear thesis statements as expressed online and in print
- two rough drafts (Students A and J) have thesis problems as previously admitted online and show transfer to the written drafts

As far as language use is concerned, the following points are observed from relevant Chat transcripts and rough drafts, proving that word form, spelling, and sentence structure are more informal or error-laden in Chat rooms (Yuan 201):

- more formal thesis structure and word choice used in written drafts vs. online (cf. Students B, D, and I)
- more specific details found in the essay’s thesis statement vs. online (cf. Students E and G)

**Main Ideas and Supporting Details**

Upon close examination of main ideas and supporting details, I noticed that the majority of the participants’ online discussion in this category are transferred to their essays. Four students (Students D, F, G, and J) indicate complete transfer of main ideas where all points used for argumentation are found in the Chat transcripts and written draft. On the other hand, five
students (Students A, B, C, E, and I) have additional main ideas in the essay compared to the ideas found online. There is one case of zero transfer (Student H) where the student’s essay ideas do not match any of those found online. It is also interesting to note that some participants discuss a few supporting details online, all of which indicate transfer to their rough drafts.

Comprising the group of students with the highest rate of transference, Students D, F, G, and J demonstrate complete transfer of main ideas from their online discussion to their written drafts. Student D, for instance, uses the first Chat activity as a forum to explore possible main ideas and eventually finalizes these in the second activity. Student F is active only in the second online collaboration, but each main idea used in the essay already appears in the Chat room. Like Student D, Student G also explores main ideas initially, even alluding to two ideas that become more specific and complete in the second forum. The same goes for Student J, whose main ideas are all found in the second transcript with possibilities explored in the first. Except for Student F, all of them therefore show gradual development of main ideas and completion by the second invention. However, no online discussions of supporting details are detected. The following is a detailed description of the transfer of items in this category:

STUDENT D (group mate of Student C) – starts out with mechanical questions for peers; main ideas used in the essay are completely stated in the second forum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Chat Invention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student D:</strong> WHAT STEPS ARE YOU TAKING IN PUTTING TOGETHER THIS PAPER? Feb 5, 2007 9:41:37 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1: I honestly just want to read all the articles before I even think about a topic first so that I can be better prepared. All the articles introduce something new, so I want to have all of that information first before choosing a topic Feb 5, 2007 9:42:46 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student D:</strong> WHAT IS EVERYONE ELSE GOING TO WRITE ABOUT? Feb 5, 2007 9:45:47 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 2: I don’t know what im gonna write about yet…..but I really enjoy Milgrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peer 3:</strong> Probably Milgram and the whole Society/morality thing, it sounded like it was the most “shocking” Feb 5, 2007 9:46:27 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student D:</strong> HOW ARE YOU GOING TO INCORPORATE THAT GENERALIZED STATEMENT INTO A CONCISE TOPIC? Feb 5, 2007 9:47:11 AM EST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Student D initially asks about what others are working on, how to put ideas together in a paper, and so on, the second transcript lends itself to a more finalized inclusion of five main ideas that are transferred to the essay. Also note the exact transfer in terms of word choice and sequential order:

**Second Chat Invention**

**Student D: My main ideas are the media, and how they influence teens: Another is the pleasure that teens perceive with sex: Pressure from their partner:** Feb 12, 2007 9:45:27 AM EST

**Student D: Another main idea is group pressure, and situational pressures** Feb 12, 2007 9:46:07 AM EST

[...]

**Student D Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support**

(topic: why teens have sex)

One possible reason why teens have sex is **the media** that they are surrounded by. This media not only includes ideas from television, but also songs and the internet [...]

Another possible reason why teens have sex is **the pleasure** that they receive from this interaction. Sex is a very pleasing sensation to people, and many times people do not think about the consequences of their actions to meet the strong urges for pleasure [...]

Another possible reason why teens have sex is the **pressure from their partner**. This is a very common problem in relationships. One or the other of the partners does not feel comfortable with having sexual relations, but the other partner does causing immense pressure [...]

Another possible reason why teens have sex is **group pressure**. Teenagers have certain groups that they hang around with, and many times they pick up the values and actions that these groups perform. It is usually very important for them to feel that they fit in with the group [...]

**The last, and most possible reason** for teens to have premarital sex is because of **situational pressures**. Many times the situations that we are in dictate exactly what type of actions that we will perform [...]

STUDENT F (group mate of Student E) – actively shares main ideas only in the second forum, all of which are transferred to the essay draft

Second Chat Invention

| Student F: I’m making this up as I go...people start smoking because of social pressure from friends – other ideas would be parents, celebrities, media, etc  
[...] | Feb 12, 2007 9:41:42 AM EST |
| Peer 1: good idea  
Feb 12, 2007 9:42:12 AM EST |
| Peer 2: sounds good  
Feb 12, 2007 9:42:17 AM EST |
| Student F: ok im set  
Feb 12, 2007 9:42:28 AM EST |
| Student F: peace  
Feb 12, 2007 9:42:30 AM EST |
| Student F: still smokin because of friends, others are social, media, parental, etc.  
Feb 12, 2007 10:02:19 AM EST |

Student F’s main ideas in the second forum undergo lexical changes by the time it reached the last part and its written draft. While the word “media” remains the same, the following lexical transformations are found in the essay: “parental” support “situational pressure” instead, “friends” is lumped under “group pressure,” and “social” is changed to “society.” Nevertheless, all four of these main ideas seem to indicate complete transfer from Chat to rough draft:

Student F Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support  
(topic: why people smoke)

The least plausible cause for why people smoke would be the media. People see others smoking all of the time in movies or shows on television and even in commercials [...]  
The next cause of people smoking is the society that they live in. In any gas station or store you can see advertisements for cigarettes and you can purchase them no matter what state you are in [...]  
One of the more plausible causes of people smoking is situational pressure from parents or guardians that smoke. If someone has been raised by someone who smokes, there is more of a deep-seated or internal thought that smoking is ok [...]  
The most plausible reason that people smoke is group pressure. When people hang out with or work with people that smoke and they are not trying to be rejected by the group, they pick up the habit of smoking [...]  

STUDENTS G and J (group mates) – initially explores some ideas with peers, which lead to finalized main ideas in the second forum and the essay

First Chat Invention

| Teacher: OK, so maybe we could focus in on a specific situation—what's something people do that seems to go against human nature or logic?  
Feb 5, 2007 9:37:04 AM EST |
| [...] |
| Student J: many people get their daughters ears perierced when they are born  
Feb
Second Chat Invention

Peer 1: I will be using group pressure and the situation they are in to incorporate my sources Feb 12, 2007 9:39:11 AM EST

[...]

Student G: same here I am going to talk about pressure from coaches, teammates and wanting to make it to the next level Feb 12, 2007 9:40:28 AM EST

[...]

Student G: my main arguments are: pressure from teammates, pressure from coaches, pressure to get to the next level, and being so young that high school athletes have an inability to think for themselves Feb 12, 2007 10:03:39 AM EST

Peer 1: I will put my sources in my paragraphs about group pressure and the situation they are in. Feb 12, 2007 10:03:54 AM EST

Student G: I am using situational pressure, group pressure and pressure from an authority Feb 12, 2007 10:04:19 AM EST

[...]

Student J: Main reasons: Group Pressure, fear of what may happen to themselves or family, pressure from authority Feb 12, 2007 10:06:13 AM EST
Based on the transcripts above, Student J seems to fully cooperate with online prompts by answering questions and sharing ideas, leading to a main idea in the final argumentation (“group pressure”) and support for another (“authority”) in the second forum. Likewise, Student G seems to start a meaningful online interaction with peers about “following authorities” and “fitting in,” allusions of two of the four main points raised in the last forum.

The corresponding rough drafts, though, show a few significant changes as far as specificity and tone are concerned. While all three of Student J’s main ideas in the second Chat transcript are directly reflected in the rough draft, the transformation of Student G’s last two main ideas is quite evident. The following main points raised online are worded differently in the essay below:

abstract vs. concrete –
“pressure to get to the next level” → “dream of playing professional sports”

informal vs. formal –
“being so young that high school athletes have an inability to think for themselves” → “not mature enough to make an educated decision about their health”

Student G Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why young athletes take steroids)

| A majority of high school athletes’ **dream of playing professional sports**, and this pressure often pushes them to take steroids. No one dreams of working a nine-to-five job in a cubical just big enough so that the worker does not feel Closter phobic […]
| [...] This provides another incident as to why high school athletes take steroids; they are **not mature enough to make an educated decision about their health** and the need to take steroids […]
| Throughout high school athletics the final word on a certain situation comes from the coaches. Since the coach determines who plays, high school athletes generally follow a **coach’s wish** […]
| Not only does the coach play a significant role in pressuring a high school athlete into taking steroids, the **teammates** do as well. Athletes are surrounded by their teammates at practice everyday and may also be friends with off of the field. Therefore, teammates play an important role in the decisions an athlete makes […] |


Student J Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people of no authority do not take action on something that is unjust or morally wrong such as genocide)

Group pressure plays a major role in determining the choices you make and the actions you take. For some reason, we as humans tend to categorize ourselves and act a particular way just because we were placed into that category [...] Why is it that we humans have learned to accept and adapt to the roles “given” to us by either patriarchs, authorities in the workplace, or by society? [...] Another reason why people do not step outside of their boundaries to stand up for themselves or someone else is that people automatically obey the commands of authority. As humans it is taught and imbedded in our heads to obey the orders someone of a higher power gives us [...] This is a question many need to ask themselves; what will it take for them not to listen to authority and will they try to change the choice they make when they realize what the consequences will be for not obeying what my authorities commanded them to do. [essay's closing sentence]

Many of the Hutu citizens acted out of fear for their lives and out of fear for the lives of their [Hutus'] families; it was either them or the “dirty Tutsis Rebels”, naturally they chose the rebels [...] 

Some students (Students A, B, C, E, and I) add main ideas to the essay. In this case, only a few main ideas and supporting details originally mentioned online are transferred to the draft.

The highest transfer rate is detected in Student C’s Chat transcripts and rough draft, where two of the essay’s three main ideas are found online. Following closely are Students A and E with three out of five main ideas and supporting detail; Student B with two out of four main ideas and supporting details; and the lowest transfer rate, Student I, with one out of three main ideas and supporting detail. Records seem to show that the supporting details Students A, B, and I discussed online indicate direct transfer to their essays. Interestingly, Students B, C, and I’s main ideas show gradual development from the first to the second Chat forums, while Students A and E, who were active only in the second activity, still reflect a few transferable ideas.

STUDENTS A and B (group mates) – except for one of Student B’s supporting details from the first online dialogue, both seem to extract more ideas from the second collaborative invention activity

First Chat Invention

Peer 1: Well the reason why an individual started smoking is still going to be related to some sort of pressure Feb 5, 2007 9:52:51 AM EST
Peer 2: which most of the time is peers or they see their parents doing it and think its okay Feb 5, 2007 9:53:22 AM EST
Peer 1: comercial/magazine Feb 5, 2007 9:53:41 AM EST
Student B: or actors Feb 5, 2007 9:53:44 AM EST
Teacher: Can actors be authories? Feb 5, 2007 9:54:00 AM EST
Peer 2: yes....we are influenced by them all the time...what car we drive, clothes...etc Feb 5, 2007 9:54:20 AM EST
Student B: yes, I think so because I know someone who started smoking because of the movie "Grease" Feb 5, 2007 9:54:51 AM EST
Peer 2: lol...thats kind of funny Feb 5, 2007 9:55:01 AM EST
Teacher: Think about how fashion trends start... Feb 5, 2007 9:55:30 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

Peer 1: when I was younger I would always take a sip of my dad's beer when he wasn't looking...but I didn't know what it was. I was just copying him Feb 12, 2007 9:41:51 AM EST
Student B: ok some main ideas I have is to tell the audience, focusing more on parents at this part, about the group pressure and who the person is hanging out with Feb 12, 2007 9:42:31 AM EST
Student B: yeah the authority could be parents in either of these too because if we see our parents do it then we're going to want to do/try it Feb 12, 2007 9:43:19 AM EST
Student B: especially if they're alcoholics or chain smokers Feb 12, 2007 9:43:48 AM EST
Student A: My two main ideas I was going to use are how the situation and group/media pressures Feb 12, 2007 9:44:24 AM EST
Peer 2: parents is a one, but I think what we see on tv portrays the use of alcohol.... Feb 12, 2007 9:45:01 AM EST
Student B: true Feb 12, 2007 9:45:22 AM EST
Peer 2: For the teen sex issue; I would deffinatly agree... just look at the birth control commercials... or watch MTV Feb 12, 2007 9:46:48 AM EST
Peer 1: true Feb 12, 2007 9:47:32 AM EST
Student A: yea and almost any tv series has something to do with sex in it Feb 12, 2007 9:48:55 AM EST
Peer 1: even on basic cable such as the soap operas...its been around for years. Feb 12, 2007 9:49:31 AM EST
[...]
Peer 2: as to the last issue about teen smoking; smoking is deffinatly related to peer pressure, and whether or not a parent smokes. I don't think that there are many commercials advertising smoking anymore, but it is portrayed through media, ads, and magazines Feb 12, 2007 9:57:38 AM EST
Student B: yeah I think it's mostly through media, specifically movies Feb 12, 2007 9:58:33 AM EST
Peer 1: I agree Feb 12, 2007 9:58:59 AM EST
Student B: and authority in this case could be celebrities Feb 12, 2007 9:59:31 AM EST
Student B: as well as parents Feb 12, 2007 9:59:38 AM EST
Peer 2: I know the stand website would have a lot of useful information about teen smoking as well as the effects Feb 12, 2007 10:00:47 AM EST
[...]
Student B: Main Idea: Smoking. Thesis: If more people know about how smoking gets started, it would be more preventative. Main Ideas: Authority and group pressures are a main cause of smoking such as parents and friends. Feb 12, 2007 10:03:32 AM EST

Both of Student B’s online main ideas, including four supporting details (“parents”, “media”, “celebrities”, “Grease”), are directly transferred to the essay draft. Student A’s main
ideas, however, have some draft changes – “group and media pressures,” originally taken as one, are developed into two separate paragraphs. In addition, the following rough drafts indicate the transfer of three of Student A’s five main ideas and two of Student B’s four main ideas:

**Student A Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support**

**topic: why teens have sex**

| One reason why teens have sex is **pleasure**. At the time, the physical contact is appealing, and feels good. There is also emotional pleasure as well as physical. Teens often build on the pleasure because they want to enjoy life at their age [...] |
| Next, teens have sex because **their partner pressures them**. In relationships one person may feel that they are ready to take the next step and bring up the topic to their partner. Therefore, they try and convince their partner that this will be a way of making their love for one another official or stronger [...] |
| Third, similar to pressure by their partner is **situational pressure**. Teens can get themselves into many situations that could lead to sex and they have to be able to realize this. Often times it is hard to say no when they are in these situations and are not prepared for them [...] |
| Subsequently, **group pressure** is another reason teens have sex. Peers can cause other people to have sex before they are ready by not accepting those who do not have sex. For teens being popular is one of the most important things in their lives [...] |
| **The most likely reason** that teens have sex is because of the **media**. The view of the media is that sex is not a big deal and having many partners is not a big deal. Sex is just an activity to enjoy ones self and there are no strings attached. In TV series, magazines, movies, and commercials sex is prevalent. Daily soap operas and series on television show sex as something everyone does even before they are married [...] |

**Student B Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support**

**topic: why people smoke**

| One possible reason why people start smoking is because of the **state of relaxation** it puts them in. Someone may smoke a cigarette because they are stressed out and want to feel relaxed [...] |
| Another possible reason why people start smoking is because of the **pleasure** they acquire from it. Some people are considered “chain smokers” [...] People like this smoke for the pleasure in it and because they like the feeling they get when they suck on their cancer sticks. They enjoy the feel of smoke filling their lungs, and take pleasure in blowing the smoke out [...] |
| One excellent possibility why people smoke is because of **authority pressures**. These authority pressures could be the **media, parents, elders, and celebrities**. When kids or teenagers see things on TV they tend to follow the actions of what they perceived. **For example, a girl started smoking because she watched the movie “Grease”**. In this movie, the actress starts smoking to try to become more attractive to a boy she likes [...] |
| **The greatest reason** why people start smoking is because of **group pressure** and who the individual mingles with. People are influenced everyday by how their peers think or how they act [...]. The pressure of the majority might push the individual to smoke to try and fit in with the rest of the group. The members of every group are always going to influence each other more than any media or celebrities could. |
STUDENT C (group mate of Student D) – two out of three main ideas mentioned online show direct transfer and one replacement

First Chat Invention

Student C: I’m thinking about speculating about why people commit horrible acts Feb 5, 2007 9:35:23 AM EST
[...]
Student C: For instance dehumanization Feb 5, 2007 9:35:57 AM EST
[...]
Student C: and hysteria Feb 5, 2007 9:36:09 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

Peer 1: What arguments do you have for your paper [Student C]? Feb 12, 2007 9:41:13 AM EST
Student C: I’m going to talk about hysteria and dehumanization. Feb 12, 2007 9:42:14 AM EST
[...]
Student C: I will discuss why people commit horrible acts of cruelty Feb 12, 2007 10:02:27 AM EST
Peer 2: Main Ideas- Group pressure from voices in head, Authority pressure from god or other significant being Feb 12, 2007 10:02:50 AM EST
Student C: Some of my ideas are dehumanization and hysteria and authorization Feb 12, 2007 10:02:55 AM EST

The main idea “hysteria” mentioned in the transcript above is replaced by “situation or job/duty” in the draft below. Also, note that Student C retains “dehumanization” but changes “authorization” to “authority figures”:

Student C Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people commit horrible and inhumane acts to other human beings)

The first reason people are able to commit horrible and inhumane things to other people is because of the fact that authority figures have been able to influence their subjects to surrender their judgment, corrupt the way people judge situations and influence their course of action [...]
Secondly, people are able to commit horrible acts of violent against other human beings because of dehumanization. Dehumanization is the process of depriving a person of human qualities. If a person is dehumanized, he or she is looked at as an object or an animal, less than human [...]
Another reason people are able to commit horrible and inhumane acts to other human beings is simple; it’s the situation or their job or duty. When it’s your job or your duty, it takes the burden of guilt of the individual and makes the moral crime more “easy” [...]

STUDENT E (group mate of Student F) – shares three out of five main ideas in the second Chat forum; essay draft indicates development and organization issues

Second Chat Invention

Student E: People attend college when they really do not want to because of authoritative pressure and group pressures. Feb 12, 2007 10:02:40 AM EST
Student E Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support

(topic: why people attend college when they really do not want to)

People attend college when they really do not want to because authority pressures them. Parents and teachers expect teens to attend college after their senior year in high school. This causes pressure to attend college even though the student may not want to [...] Another reason that people attend college when they really do not want to is because their parents are willing to pay for the college expenses. Students think that if their parents are willing to pay for college they might as well give college a try [...] Another cause as to why students attend college when they really do not want to is because of group pressure. Senior year of high school comes around and the only thing that seems to be on everyone’s mind is where they are going to college next year [...] Another reason why students attend college when they really do not want to is because of situational pressure. [underdeveloped and combined with the next cause] Another reason why students attend college when they really do not want to is because their parents want them to have a better life and more opportunities than they had in their own lives' [...]

STUDENT I (group mate of Students G, H, and J) – Chat transcripts demonstrate formation of ideas through peer/teacher interaction; one main idea and one supporting detail are transferred to the essay draft

First Chat Invention

Teacher: OK, so maybe we could focus in on a specific situation--what’s something people do that seems to go against human nature or logic? Feb 5, 2007 9:37:04 AM EST

[...]

Student I: all of these crazy things that our culture does...but for what reason? Feb 5, 2007 9:42:48 AM EST

[...]

Student I: where do they get the idea from though? [those who want to be thin] Feb 5, 2007 9:43:18 AM EST

Student J: media, i suppose Feb 5, 2007 9:43:43 AM EST

Student I: you arent born thinking you are fat Feb 5, 2007 9:43:44 AM EST

Student I: you have to have some kind of influence Feb 5, 2007 9:43:56 AM EST

Student I: from the media, friends, family Feb 5, 2007 9:44:03 AM EST

Student G: for some people though their mind makes them think that way, even if they have never been told it Feb 5, 2007 9:44:06 AM EST

Student I: waht about even dieting? Feb 5, 2007 9:44:11 AM EST

Student G: not necessarily Feb 5, 2007 9:44:17 AM EST

Peer 1: i think it comes from family or friends Feb 5, 2007 9:44:39 AM EST

Student I: is it to fit in with the media and stress of weight or is it really for our own god? Feb 5, 2007 9:44:40 AM EST

Student H: that could have to do with healt Feb 5, 2007 9:44:44 AM EST

Student J: weight is for your own good, if you get tooo big it can be dangerous Feb 5, 2007 9:45:00 AM EST

[...]

Student I: well what about people who are skinny and healthy but diet anyway Feb 5,
Based on the Chat transcript, one main idea (“group”) is directly transferred to the rough draft. Another main idea is attempted (“who is influencing this behavior”) but is stated more specifically in the essay (“authority”). Also, a supporting detail expressed in interrogative form (“why aren’t ppl involved noticing that this is a dangerous situation”) changes to a declarative complex sentence (“Even though starving yourself and developing an eating disorder is proven to be extremely dangerous models and people in our society still risk the dangers”) in support of another main idea. These notations are shown below:

Student I Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why women think that being dangerously thin is attractive)

One possible reason why models have continued this dangerous lifestyle is because of group pressure [...] In reality, this group pressure was not created by just one individual it is a contribution between multiple people. From photographers, to designers, to fellow models and critics the pressure to look good was created among people involved the industry [...] 

[...] The situation that many of the models in the industry find themselves is influenced by authority, such as their agents, photographers, or even designers. The tendency for models to have such a low self esteem can be influenced by the pressure created by the authority figures in their business [...] 

The society we live in is very much influenced by the media and focuses on looking good. People in our world want to look good, and according to the media looking good is characterized by being skinny. Even though starving yourself and developing an eating disorder is proven to be extremely dangerous models and people in our society still risk the dangers [...] 

Finally, only one student transcript and rough draft does not show any transfer of ideas at all. Student H was present in both Chat invention activities but seems to have contributed minimal ideas related to the essay. The first forum has two relevant interactions the participant
engaged in— one shows Student H suggesting an essay support and the other details a confusing argument between him and the other participants. Subsequently, the corresponding rough draft is not developed at all and the main ideas included are absolutely not extracted from both online forums.

Student H (group mate of Students G, I, and J) – displays zero transfer of ideas from online to essay draft with undeveloped main idea paragraphs written in a topic outline format

First Chat Invention

**Teacher:** OK, so maybe we could focus in on a specific situation—what’s something people do that seems to go against human nature or logic? Feb 5, 2007 9:37:04 AM EST

[...]

**Student I:** waht about even dieting? Feb 5, 2007 9:44:11 AM EST

[...]

**Student I:** is it to fit in with the media and stress of weight or is it really for our own good? Feb 5, 2007 9:44:40 AM EST

**Student H:** that could have to do with health Feb 5, 2007 9:44:44 AM EST

**Student J:** weight is for your own good, if you get tooo big it can be dangerous Feb 5, 2007 9:45:00 AM EST

[...]

**Student I:** well what about people who are skinny and healthy but diet anyway Feb 5, 2007 9:45:33 AM EST

**Student J:** could we find enough sources on that Feb 5, 2007 9:46:11 AM EST

**Student I:** yea i dont really want that topic i was just trying to start some ideas Feb 5, 2007 9:46:11 AM EST

**Student H:** if your gonna do that [skinny people dieting] theres alot of stories lately about skinny runway models in NY Feb 5, 2007 9:46:18 AM EST

[...]

**Student I:** yea i have seen covereage on the news too Feb 5, 2007 9:46:34 AM EST

**Student H:** people are trying to put standards in place and its causing alot of crap apperently Feb 5, 2007 9:46:50 AM EST

[...]

**Student I:** do you think religion is a trend? Feb 5, 2007 10:02:35 AM EST

[...]

**Student J:** no Feb 5, 2007 10:02:41 AM EST

**Student G:** for some people yes for others no Feb 5, 2007 10:02:53 AM EST

[...]

**Student G:** some people do not have reasons why they go [to church] they just go because their parents say so Feb 5, 2007 10:03:46 AM EST

**Student H:** technically religion is a trend it just takes place over a much larger scale Feb 5, 2007 10:04:01 AM EST

**Student J:** how is it a trend, its not like it comes and goes Feb 5, 2007 10:04:22 AM EST

**Student G:** ya how is it a trend Feb 5, 2007 10:04:40 AM EST

**Student H:** yeah it does just over a few thousand years Feb 5, 2007 10:04:43 AM EST

**Student G:** ?? Feb 5, 2007 10:04:43 AM EST

**Student I:** i think that one mornign any one could wake up and say i dont believe in that
Student H Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support  
(topic: why prisoner guards at Abu Ghraib tortured the prisoners)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Ideas and Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Situational Obedience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Stanford Prison Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Post 9/11 Mentality and Bush Doctrine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authoritative Obedience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Milgram Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- MI’s pressure upon MPs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chain of Commands pressure all the way to Administration to interrogate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highlights of Main Ideas and Supporting Details**

In retrospect, the effect of the collaborative Chat invention activity on the transfer of main ideas and supporting details to student rough drafts is quite average. Four students (Students D, F, G, and J) mentions each of their essay ideas online, while five students (Students A, B, C, E, and I) add main ideas to their essays. Only one student (Student H) uses main ideas that are not from the online forum at all. Among them, only three students (Students A, B, and I)
discuss a few supporting details online that are reflected in their essay drafts. It should be emphasized that all other supporting details in the essays are not transfers from the Chat forums.

Despite the fact that most student drafts reflect additional main ideas and supporting details, the students still made use of the Chat forum to generate possible points and support their chosen topics. Only one student did not share anything online, an isolated case in this respect that might have been due to several factors (i.e. preference for individual or face-to-face invention, or the use of other CMC platforms). Nevertheless, the positive effect of collaborative Chat invention in this activity supports recent changes in learning styles from individual to social contexts made possible by “electronic environments rich in meaning-making negotiation and collaborative text generation” (Bonk and King 7). And because a majority was able to add main ideas and supporting details in their essays, the dynamic and recursive nature of synchronous CMC is emphasized in this regard, with the Chat exercises serving as springboard for further invention ideas to materialize even after the online dialogue. Consequently, this invention activity’s real-time interactive exchange yields higher retention of ideas and reflects the success of collaborative learning (Cooney 263) as the data set in this study prove that synchronous Chat has “very real potential for collaboration and knowledge construction” (Mercer 7).

After examining each essay’s argument, results confirm that all main ideas and supporting details that are transferred from online are logical. Only one rough draft (Student E) with logical problems is detected, but this is not an effect of the transfer because these ideas are not previously discussed online:

- Last two main ideas of the essay are combined in a single paragraph with faulty transition affecting the flow of the discourse → “Another reason why students attend college when they really do not want to is because of situational pressure. Another reason why students attend college when they really do not want to is because their parents want them to have a better life …”
• Also, the last main idea mentioned above [“parents want them to have a better life”] seems to overlap with one of the main ideas from a previous paragraph “because parents are willing to pay for the college expenses.”

Perhaps the only zero transfer that is satisfactory is Student H’s essay argument with two logically sound, though undeveloped, main ideas: “situational obedience” and “authoritative obedience.”

In terms of language use, three remarkable distinctions are previously identified:

• one recorded case of exact word choice and sequencing of main ideas both online and in print is found (cf. Student D)

• some main ideas mentioned online are replaced, reworded, or recast for specificity or formality of the essay draft (cf. Students C, F, I, and G)

• logical re-organization of main ideas and supporting details are evident in some rough drafts (cf. Students A, F, and I)

**Textual Support**

Online interactions about textual support from the reading assignment reveal that a majority of the student drafts do not exhibit transfer. Though all students used textual support in their rough drafts, most of these sources are not previously discussed online as part of the collaborative invention. Only four student drafts (Students C, D, B, and G) show relevant transference of textual support, but additional sources are still evident. Conversely, six student drafts (Students E, A, H, I, J, and F) display no transference at all and have minimal online dialogues about the assigned readings.

Students whose rough drafts indicate transfer from the collaborative online invention activity add sources to their essays. Students C and D, for instance, use only 50% or one out of the two sources previously mentioned online. Student D was active only in the first Chat forum, but receives a lot of good suggestions from peers and the teacher about integrating sources. On the other hand, Student C, who was active in both forums, shows a source transfer from peer
suggestions in the first Chat forum and not in the second. The following online transcripts support this observation:

STUDENTS C and D (group mates) – show transfer of half of the sources suggested online to the written draft

First Chat Invention

| Student D: How might I tie in the readings to the subject of peer pressure on sexual immorality | Feb 5, 2007 9:40:07 AM EST |
| Peer 1: Do you think Milgrams experiment was controversial? | Feb 5, 2007 9:40:23 AM EST |
| Student C: No | Feb 5, 2007 9:40:37 AM EST |
| Student C: I'm not sure but sexual immorality sounds like a good topic | Feb 5, 2007 9:40:59 AM EST |
| Student D: Milgrams experiments were controversial because he was torturing people, even though he wasn't | Feb 5, 2007 9:41:00 AM EST |
| Peer 2: of course it was controversial | Feb 5, 2007 9:41:05 AM EST |
| Peer 1: You can start with the group pressure articles with sexual immorality and then I am sure there are other articles in chapter nine that will tie in even better | Feb 5, 2007 9:41:20 AM EST |
| […] | |
| Peer 1: Sexual immorality is a good topic because it is a big issue today. I think its GREAT go for it | Feb 5, 2007 9:41:49 AM EST |
| […] | |
| Student D: How many sources do you think would be necessary to convey your message with a strong argument | Feb 5, 2007 9:42:58 AM EST |
| Student C: I think you must first define sexual immorality. Because what once was considered immoral in one time, can be considered ok in another due to the changes in morals and values | Feb 5, 2007 9:43:14 AM EST |
| Peer 1: 3 or 4 sounds good and that is not difficult at all with all the articles that we will be reading in chapter nine | Feb 5, 2007 9:43:38 AM EST |
| Student D: That is a great idea of reading all the articles first, so far I have only read the first set and those were based almost exclusively on Milgrams experiment | Feb 5, 2007 9:43:48 AM EST |
| Teacher: The assignment says we need 4 sources--but what theories can you use to back up this argument? | Feb 5, 2007 9:43:52 AM EST |
| Student D: What do you mean by theories? | Feb 5, 2007 9:44:19 AM EST |
| Peer 1: Defining it is fine I dont think that, that will be a problem for him. In his introduction paragraph he can pin point what type of sexual immorality he is talking about | Feb 5, 2007 9:44:45 AM EST |
| Peer 1: You can use Aschs theory, Milgrams theory and I'm sure my theories will be introduced as we continue reading | Feb 5, 2007 9:45:24 AM EST |
| […] | |
| Peer 1: We can look at the chaos angle with authority and incorporate why people obey authority and refer to Milgrams experiment [suggested to Student C] | Feb 5, 2007 10:01:21 AM EST |
| […] | |
| Student C: The chaos of mass killing | Feb 5, 2007 10:02:38 AM EST |

Second Chat Invention

| Student C: I'm going to talk about hysteria and dehumanization. | Feb 12, 2007 9:42:14 AM EST |
| Student C: It's the same tactic European Americans used to enslave and suppress |
All in all, Student C’s rough draft indicates six additional sources with two sources in the introduction and three sources in each main idea paragraph, while Student D’s draft has three additional sources with two sources in each main paragraph. Despite the large number of sources used by Student C, Student D’s essay seems more effective with regard to synthesis because of the usage of the verb “agree” between sources in each paragraph. Student C’s essay, in contrast, has no synthesis verb or any form of transition at all. The written drafts below substantiate this pattern:

**Student C Rough Draft – Citation of Sources**

(topic: why people commit horrible and inhumane acts to other human beings)

> [...] Through intensive research, psychologists have come to the conclusion that any ordinary person can commit these acts. *Ilibagiza talks about “normal people” committing these cruel acts,* “It wasn’t the soldiers who were chanting, nor was it the trained militiamen who had been tormenting us for days. No, these were my neighbors, people I’d grown up and gone to school with—some even been to our house for dinner” (77) [...] Here are the words of *Stanley Milgram, famous Yale psychologist on the matter at hand:* “This is, perhaps, the most fundamental lesson of our study: ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible, destructive process [...]” (321). [...] The first reason people are able to commit horrible and inhumane things to other people is because of the fact that authority figures have been able to influence their subjects to surrender their judgment, corrupt the way people judge situations and influence their course of action [...] *Asch talks about* this point on several occasions. He believes that people will surrender their own judgment to others, even when those others, are clearly in the wrong: “Confronted with opinions contrary to their own, many subjects apparently shifted their judgments in the direction of the views of the majorities or the experts” (307). People throughout time have held the majority and the expert’s opinions higher than their own. One of the traits shown by the men at *Abu Ghraib* which is necessary for torture is that of authorization. “Authorization means that someone with power needs to say that extreme measures are acceptable” (304). [...] Rwanda survivor *Immaculee Ilibagiza said,* “There is a culture of obedience in Rwanda, and I knew that when many otherwise peaceful Hutus heard their leaders on the radio telling them to kill Tutsis, they’d dutifully pick up their machetes” (88). Once again, people blindly followed their leaders and threw away their judgment because of the influence of leaders or authority [...] Secondly, people are able to commit horrible acts of violent against other human beings because of dehumanization [...] *Szegedy-Maszak says* dehumanization makes it possible for someone to commit distasteful acts. [...] *Holocaust survivor*
Brockman also talks about the killing power of stereotypes. “What are the ways in which, instead of changing yourself and becoming the aggressor, it becomes easier to be hostile against other people by changing your psychological conception of them? You think of them as worthless animals. That’s the killing power of stereotypes” (Brockman 1). Ilibagiza says dehumanization makes the killing easy. “Young Hutus were taught from an early age that Tutsis were inferior and not to be trusted, and they didn’t belong in Rwanda. […]” (86)! We can now clearly see that dehumanization must take place for any person to do inhumane harm to another human.

Another reason people are able to commit horrible and inhumane acts to other human beings is simple; it’s the situation or their job or duty […]. Using the word “routinization”, Szegedy-Maszak goes into this in more detail. “Authorization leads to routinization, a kind of division of labor. In Nazi Germany, for example, one person had responsibility for writing the orders to deport the Jews, someone else for shaving their heads, and so on. The guards at Abu Ghraib were told they were merely “softening up” the prisoners for interrogation. […]” (304) […] After the Stanford prison Experiment, the guards and victims came together and came to the conclusion that what happened was simply situational […] The fact that certain acts are situational dulls the sensation of disapproval with whatever you’re doing. Here, the authority tells the people it’s their duty to kill. “[…] I urge all Hutus to do your duty and kill our Tutsi enemies” (Ilibagiza 88)

Student D Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why teens have sex)

[...] Another possible reason why teens have sex is group pressure […] According to Stanley Milgram in “The perils of Obedience,” subjects who found themselves in uncomfortable situations were likely to go along with what they were told (315). Crispin Sartwell in “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror,” agrees that “people are like herd animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances” (363) […] The last, and most possible reason for teens to have premarital sex is because of situational pressures […] According to Phillip Zimbardo in the “Stanford Prison Experiment,” he states that the “tendency to locate the source of behavior disorders inside a particular person underestimates the power of situational forces”(354). Ian Parker in “Obedience to Authority,” agrees that “people tend to do things because of where they are, not who they are” (340) […]

In addition to the list of student drafts with transfers, Students B and G also use all of the sources discussed online. Both of them talk briefly about sources only in the first Chat activity, but Student B has the most number of sources included from the online forum as follows:

STUDENT B (group mate of Student A) – has the most number of sources taken from the online dialogue as reflected in the essay draft

First Chat Invention

Student B: the world around us influences us, magazines, tv, celebreties, peers Feb 5, 2007 9:42:12 AM EST
Student B: which all put pressure on the individual Feb 5, 2007 9:42:34 AM EST
Student B: songs, music Feb 5, 2007 9:43:06 AM EST
Teacher: Good point--maybe we could use Asch or Milgram or Baumrind to back up this idea? Feb 5, 2007 9:43:06 AM EST
Student B: true Feb 5, 2007 9:43:16 AM EST
[...]
Teacher: With several sources—that's synthesis which we talk about a lot Wednesday—but for now, which sources can fit the ideas you've got going [for your topic]? How? Feb 5, 2007 9:46:16 AM EST

Student B: Asch with peer, group, or majority pressure Feb 5, 2007 9:49:33 AM EST

STUDENT G (group mate of Students H, I, and J) – shows transfer of the only source support mentioned online and add five more to the draft

First Chat Invention

Student G: ya why is it that we do not question the authority Feb 5, 2007 9:58:11 AM EST
Student G: who says they are right Feb 5, 2007 9:58:16 AM EST

Student G: so basically we have to do what is told of us or we get in trouble Feb 5, 2007 10:00:11 AM EST

Student J: yep Feb 5, 2007 10:00:41 AM EST
Peer 1: yes Feb 5, 2007 10:00:45 AM EST

In the essay draft that follows, Student B shows addition of only one more source aside from the three mentioned online, using one source support in the introduction and two sources in each main idea paragraph. Student G shows addition of five more sources to support the one mentioned online, using two sources in each main paragraph and another, somewhat logically disconnected, source in the conclusion. Both essays have smooth discursive flow overall, though Student G’s draft seems to exhibit stronger source synthesis because of the verb “agrees” consistently used in each paragraph:

Student B Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why people smoke)

Smoking is one of the largest killers every year, causing cancer, second hand smoke, and pollution. Why do people smoke if they know it is so bad for their own health and the health of others? In the article “Opinions and Social Pressures” by Solomon E. Asch, he explains the affects of group pressures on individuals. If individuals knew more about smoking and how people get started, it could be much more preventative. The main reasons people start smoking is because they are pushed by group and authority pressures.

[...] One excellent possibility why people smoke is because of authority pressures. These authority pressures could be the media, parents, elders, and celebrities. [...] Stanley Milgram even states in his article “The Perils of Obedience” that he was "witnessing hundreds of ordinary persons submit to the authority in our own experiments" (321). Crispin Sartwell is in agreement with Milgram and states in his article “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror” that Hitler and
Kind Leopold “used bureaucracy and a media machine and… mobilized a society” (363). In this case, the bureaucracy and the media were used as authority to persuade people to kill others in the thought that it would make the world better […] The greatest reason why people start smoking is because of group pressure and who the individual mingles with […] Solomon E. Asch concurs with this in his article saying, “That social influences shape every person’s practices, judgments, and beliefs is a truism to which anyone will readily assent” (306). There is authority within every group or cliques of people. Diana Baumrind describes in her article “Review of Stanley Milgram’s Experiments on Obedience” that “the relationship to the experimenter as an authority is used” (327). This same authority is in everyday groups or cliques of people. This authority in the groups of people is the reason people follow different types of practices […] For example, in Solomon Asch’s study, there is one subject and he is put in a classroom with a group of other males. They are then given a question in which the group of males purposely gets wrong. The idea is to see if the subject will follow the majority of the group. More often than one might think, the subject followed the pressure of the group and chose the incorrect answer […]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student G Rough Draft – Citation of Sources</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(topic: why young athletes take steroids)</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

 […] some high school athletes may be too immature to make this decision for themselves. This provides another incident as to why high school athletes take steroids […] In “The Stanford Prison Experiment,” Phillip Zimbardo states; the “tendency to locate the source of behavior disorders inside a particular person or group underestimates the power of situational forces (354). Simply put, a person’s behavior or actions can be swayed by situational forces. Ian Parker agrees with Zimbardo, in his article, “Obedience.” In this article Parker states that good or bad behavior comes from the influence of the situation and that we do not just do things on a whim, the situation that we are present in cause things to happen and basically one thing leads to another (340) […]

 […] Since the coach determines who plays, high school athletes generally follow a coach’s wish […] In “The Perils of Obedience,” Stanley Milgram states, “The essence of obedience is that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person’s wishes, and he therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions” (323) […] In “Just Do What the Pilot Tells You,” Theodore Dalrymple agrees with Milgram that people come to the realization that what the authority is having them do eliminates the person’s responsibility and places it on some one else. […]

 Not only does the coach play a significant role in pressuring a high school athlete into taking steroids, the teammates do as well […] In Solomon Asch’s article, “Opinions and Social Pressure,” Asch describes how group pressure can cause individuals opinions to be swayed towards the group’s ideas. […] Phillip Zimbrado agrees, in his study he found that, “the behavior of the good guards seemed more motivated by a desire to be liked by everyone in the system…” (351). This shows that people will conform to the group so as not to be mocked or disliked by the group […]

 […] There have been numerous experiments leading to the ideas that situational, group and authority pressure can lead to people participating in activities that are unsafe. Erich Fromm says it best, “At this point in history the capacity to doubt, to criticize, and to display may be all that stands between a future for mankind and the end of civilization” (361).

All rough drafts contain sources but six of these drafts do not exhibit any transfer from the online forum. Student E, for example, suggests a source at one point but does not use this
source in the essay. In the second Chat activity, Students E and F express their lack of source ideas; however, both of their rough drafts are supported with two source citations in each main idea paragraph. In terms of source synthesis, Student F’s draft seems stronger than Student E because of the verb “agrees” in each main paragraph. The transcripts and rough drafts below illustrate these points:

STUDENTS E and F (group mates) – no transfer is traced in the written draft despite Student E’s source suggestion in the first Chat dialogue and Students E and F’s admission of lack of source ideas in the second

First Chat Invention

Teacher: Good point--maybe we could use Asch or Milgram or Baumrind to back up this idea? Feb 5, 2007 9:43:03 AM EST
Peer 1: yeah Feb 5, 2007 9:43:29 AM EST
Student E: well, asch says that people conformed to social pressures Feb 5, 2007 9:43:34 AM EST
Peer 2: hmmm... Feb 5, 2007 9:43:34 AM EST

Second Chat Invention

Peer: does anyone know how they are going to use the articles to support there paper yet? Feb 12, 2007 9:48:03 AM EST
Student F: nope Feb 12, 2007 9:48:08 AM EST
Student E: no not yet Feb 12, 2007 9:48:17 AM EST

Student E Rough Draft – Citation of Sources

(topic: why people attend college when they really do not want to)

[...] People attend college when they really do not want to because authority pressures them. [...] *According to Stanley Milgram* when people are asked to carry out actions incompatible with their views few people have the available means needed to resist authority (321). [...] *Erich Fromm explains* the “authoritarian conscience” as the “internalized voice of authority whom we are eager to please and afraid of displeasing.” (359),[...]

[...] Another cause as to why students attend college when they really do not want to is because of group pressure. [...] *As stated by Ian Parker* “The crimes of the Holocaust had been committed by people obeying orders; those people, therefore, could now be thought ordinary” (334). [...] Many students want to feel “ordinary” they want to fit in with the majority even though they may not want to. Another example of group pressure *as stated by Crispin Sartwell* is “People are herd animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances” (363). This means that people hate to be excluded by the clique. [...]

Student F Rough Draft – Citation of Sources

(topic: why people smoke)

One of the more plausible causes of people smoking is situational pressure from parents or guardians that smoke [...] *Stanley Milgram states in “The Perils of Obedience”* that “subjects who found themselves in uncomfortable situations were likely to go along with what they were told (315).” *Edward E. Jones, editor of the*
Journal of Personality, from Ian Parker's article "Obedience" agrees that "we are led to no conclusions about obedience, really, but rather are exhorted to be impressed with the power of your situation as an influence context." These two sources are good examples of how people smoke because of situational pressure. When people are under certain circumstances they have no choice but to conform (333).

The most plausible reason that people smoke is group pressure [...] Solomon Asch, a social psychologist at Rutgers University, confirms that in his article "Opinions and Social Pressure." "When a subject was confronted with only a single individual who contradicted his answers, he was swayed little: he continued to answer independently and correctly in nearly all trials. When the opposition was increased to two, the pressure became substantial [...]" (310) Erich Fromm agrees in "Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem" by stating "Why is man so prone to obey and why is it so difficult for him to disobey? As long as I am obedient to the power of the State, the Church, or public opinion, I feel safe and protected (359)."

Both of these men's opinions correlate directly with why people smoke. [...] Students A, H, I, and J have no participation in the online activity about sources but show provision of textual support in their essay drafts – Student A has two sources in each main idea paragraph; Student H has two sources in the introduction and one source in each main idea outline; Student I has two sources in each main idea paragraph except for one; and Student J provides at least one source in each paragraph except for one. Incidentally, Students H, I, and J’s essay drafts reveal a few logical problems with some of the sources used, unlike Student A whose essay has strong logical connections:

STUDENT A (group mate of Student B) – zero online activity about textual support but synthesizes two sources each in two main idea paragraphs

Student A Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why teens have sex)

[...] Third, similar to pressure by their partner is situational pressure. Teens can get themselves into many situations that could lead to sex and they have to be able to realize this. [...] In situations people can lose who they really are and their actually beliefs. Guard A in Philip Zimbardo's article “The Stanford Prison Experiment” shows this by responding to an ending survey. He says “I am very angry at this prisoner for causing discomfort and trouble for the others. I decided to force-feed him, but he wouldn’t eat...I didn't believe it was me doing it. I hated myself for making him eat but I hated him more for not eating (353).” Crispin Sartwell agrees with Zambardo in “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror” saying “Hutu government claimed falsely that it was under attack from Tutsi...It rewarded those who were zealous killers with houses or cars, punished those who hesitated and killed those who sheltered the intended victims. Just two months later, 800,000 people were dead (363).” These two instances show that people who normally would never do these things, under these circumstances will change their behavior. [...] Subsequently, group pressure is another reason teens have sex. [...] In “Opinions and Social Pressure” by Solomon Asch it says “confronted with opinions to their own, many subjects apparently shifted their judgments in the directions of the
views of the majorities or the experts […] (307).” Philip Zimbardo’s article “The Stanford Prison Experiment” concur with the example of a prisoner not wanting to look bad. “Prisoner 819, who had gone into an uncontrolable crying fit, was about to be prematurely released from the prison when a guard lined up the prisoners and had them chant in unison, “819 is a bad prisoner. Because of what 819 did to prison property we all must suffer. 819 is a bad prisoner.” Over and over again. When we realized 819 might be overhearing this, we rushed into the room where 819 was supposed to be resting, only to find him in tears, prepared to go back into the prison because he could not leave as long as the others thought he was a “bad prisoner” (351).” Thus, people are influenced towards large majorities because of the fear of disapproval or being proven wrong, so they will put their view on the line to be criticized […]

STUDENTS H, I, and J (group mates of Student G) – zero online activity about textual support but show several source citations to support the essay; some sources do not seem to relate logically to the paragraph (cf. Student H’s second source in the introduction, Student I’s source support in the last main paragraph, and Student J’s second source in the last main paragraph)

Student H Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why prisoner guards at Abu Ghraib tortured the prisoners)

[…] Before discussing the role in which obedience played, we must discuss what occurred in order to determine obedience. Part of what facilitated the mistreatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib was the ‘division of labor’ among units and ranks. This is something which Milgram discusses in The Perils of Obedience. According to Milgram, “A person does not get to see the whole situation but only a small part of it and is thus unable to act without some kind of overall direction” (324) […] According to Seymour Hersh, “The issue was not only direct torture, but the Administration’s obligations under federal law and under the United Nations Conventions against torture… that barred torture as well as other ‘cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’”(4) […]

• Situational Obedience
  o Stanford Prison Experiment
  o Post 9/11 Mentality and Bush Doctrine

• Authoritative Obedience
  o Milgram Experiment
  o MI’s pressure upon MPs
  o Chain of Commands pressure all the way to Administration to interrogate […]

Student I Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why women think that being dangerously thin is attractive)

[…] One possible reason why models have continued this dangerous lifestyle is because of group pressure […] “If they can’t see their clavicle, they think they’re pregnant!” (Psychologists). According to Crispin Sartwell in “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror”, a persons “willingness to respond to people as members of groups, and to expect groups, overall to display certain qualities” (363) can lead people to do things that they may not want to do or think of as good […]

Stanley Milgram proved that people are more resistant to go against authority in a situation. “Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process” this process could be thought of models starving themselves (Milgram). […] A former model
described the type of pressure she experienced “She said the pressure of being ultra-thin, keeping a very busy schedule and modeling for runway shows resulted in a weight of 106 pounds, hair loss and being very nervous and overly sensitive all the time” (Model) is what makes many models in the industry so easily influenced […] The society we live in is very much influenced by the media and focuses on looking good […] In “The Perils of Obedience” Milgram states that “even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority” (321). Milgram is simply stating that even though the models know that starving themselves is not the best thing, their business requires them to look good […]

Student J Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why people of no authority do not take action on something that is unjust or morally wrong such as genocide)

[...] When it comes to standing up for what is right, most people are cowards, and they are not willing to stand up for what they believe in when they have someone with authority standing over them. “In order to disobey, one must have the courage to be alone, to err and to sin.” (Fromm, Erich “Disobedience as a psychological and moral problem”).

“Thirteen years ago, the Hutu government of Rwanda mobilized its citizenry into a killing of machine and started stacking the corpses of Tutsis toward the sky” (Sartwell, Crispin “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror”) […] With knowledge of what was going on, why did no one ever do anything about what was happening to the Tutsis in Rwanda? […] When is the proper time for someone of no authority to take action on something that is unjust or morally wrong?

Group pressure plays a major role in determining the choices you make and the actions you take [...] This mindset that the human population carries is what gets genocides carried out [...] “Ordinary people simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destruction process.” (Milgram, Stanley “The Perils of Obedience”)

Another reason why people do not step outside of their boundaries to stand up for themselves or someone else is that people automatically obey the commands of authority [...] “The essence of obedience is that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another persons wish, and he therefore no longer regards himself responsible for his actions.” (Milgram, Stanley “The Perils of Obedience”) [...] “Man has continued to evolve by acts of disobedience” (Fromm, Erich “Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem”)

[...] In order to prevent future genocides or acts of genocide from happening in the future, we as humans must learn to not be so submissive to authority and to stand up for what is right. “To what extent do we allow ourselves to become imprisoned by docilely accepting the roles others assign to us?” (Zimbardo, Phillip G. “Stanford Prison Experiment”) [...]
have any online dialogue about them. Only four student drafts (Students C, D, B, and G) indicate source transfers from the online transcripts, though additional sources are still supplied. Students C and D use one of the two sources suggested online, Student G uses the only source previously mentioned in the Chat room, and Student B uses a majority of the sources from the forum. Except for Student C who was active in both forums, Students D, B, and G talk about possible textual support only in the first forum.

The effect of the online activity on the essay’s citation and synthesis of sources is minimal, since those who exhibit direct transfers (Students C, D, B, and G) still have additional sources in their essay drafts that strengthen their textual support. At first, this pattern suggests a weakness of the Chat activity. However, the fact that more than half of the students shared possible sources online signifies that the Chat activity was successful in terms of helping them work together as a community of learners. In other words, the use of synchronous CMC in discussing possible sources “supports a more communal learning experience” (Light, Light, Nesbitt, and Harnad 199) as opposed to full reliance on the teacher for information. Student conversations about possible sources or their lack of source ideas online must have triggered them to think further outside the Chat room. As a result, all of them were able to incorporate sources in their rough drafts. Perhaps the need for a separate class period where students solely talk about the reading assignments might allow more fruitful exchange on sources online and increase the rate of transfer in this regard. Based on the analyzed data, it seems that intense planning on the part of the instructor is needed. Janet Eldred points out that “networking will work … only if we plan carefully how we will use it in our classrooms” (239).

Interestingly, contrasting results are quite evident in the essays of those with no transfer. One is the lack of logical connections in some of the sources used by three students (Students H,
I, and J) who similarly did not engage in online discussions. Another student (Student G), though actively shared ideas online, encounters the same problem with one of the sources not previously discussed. However, three students (Students A, E, and F) still manage to use logical textual support in their essays even though they did not draw source ideas online. Therefore, the faulty logic of Students G, H, I, and J’s sources could not be directly attributed to the lack of transfer of their sources from the Chat room, strengthening its minimal effect.

Because most of the participants’ online dialogues about sources are kept to a minimum and the transfer of sources is not relevant, lexical and syntactic observations from Chat transcripts are likewise irrelevant. Perhaps the only detectable pattern in this case is the usage of synthesis verbs and transitions between sources in student drafts. These contrasting lexical patterns indicate minimal effect of source transfers:

- Most of the student essays (cf. Students E, H, I, and J) that indicate no transfer do not have synthesis verbs between sources; however, two other essays with no transfer (cf. Students A and F) have synthesis verbs “agrees” and “concurs” between sources in all main idea paragraphs.

- Among those who show direct transfer of online suggestions to the essay, Students G and D connect sources with the verb “agrees” and Student B with the phrase “in agreement”; however, Student C fails to connect sources with any synthesis verb or transition.

**Opposing Views and Refutations**

The last category of the essay, opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, is the shortest in this data set. Student rough drafts reveal that eight student participants (Students A, B, C, D, E, G, I, and J) do not have opposing views or counterarguments in their essays and only two students (Students F and H) do. These results prompted me to trace the online discussion on counterarguments and found that majority of the Chat transcripts do not contain meaningful exchange in this category.
Only five student essays (Students C, E, G, I, and J) reflect the nature of the online activity. That is, these essay drafts have no counterarguments because the students either admit their lack of counterargument ideas online (Students C, E, and G) or are consistently silent in the Chat room about it (Students I and J). Nevertheless, the absence of counterarguments in the online dialogue is transferred to their essay drafts (Chat transcripts and essays without counterarguments were not included here):

STUDENT C (group mate of Student D) – admits to having no counterargument ideas in the second forum as reflected in the essay

Second Chat Invention

| Student D: | My counter arguments are that there are many other factors such as individuality involved, and sometimes my general criteria do not apply to all circumstances | Feb 12, 2007 9:47:22 AM EST |
| Student C: | Some of my ideas is dehumanization and hysteria and authrotization | Feb 12, 2007 10:02:55 AM EST |
| Student C: | I dont have a counterargument yet | Feb 12, 2007 10:03:10 AM EST |
| Student D: | My counterarguments are that there might be other circumstances that influence teens decisions | Feb 12, 2007 10:06:32 AM EST |

STUDENT E (group mate of Student F) – also admits to having no counterargument ideas in the second forum as reflected in the essay

Second Chat Invention

| Student F: | I'm making this up as i go...people start smoking because of social pressure from friends - other ideas would be parents, celebrities, media, etc - i dont have a counter yet im not that smart | Feb 12, 2007 9:41:42 AM EST |
| Student E: | People attend college when they really do not want to because of authoritative pressure and group pressures. | Feb 12, 2007 10:02:40 AM EST |
| Student E: | im not sure about any sources or counterarguments | Feb 12, 2007 10:03:47 AM EST |

STUDENT G (group mate of Students H, I, and J) – admits to having no counterargument ideas in the second forum and expresses its unimportance

Second Chat Invention

| Student G: | same here i am going to talk about pressure from coaches, teammates and wanting to make it to the next level | Feb 12, 2007 9:40:28 AM EST |
| Student G: | I havent really given much thought to counterarguments | Feb 12, 2007 9:40:28 AM EST |
9:42:38 AM EST
Peer 1: me either Feb 12, 2007 9:42:58 AM EST
Peer 1: do we have to have counterarguements in our paper? Feb 12, 2007 9:43:23 AM EST

[...]
Student G: i dont think so [on including counterarguments] i think that our main paragraphs should be fine in presenting our ideas Feb 12, 2007 9:44:19 AM EST
Peer 1: all right Feb 12, 2007 9:44:36 AM EST

STUDENTS I and J (group mates) – counterarguments are neither found online nor in print

The other five student essays (Students A, B, D, F, and H) do not reflect the nature of the online activity. Students A, B, and D raise possible counterargument ideas online but do not include any in their essays. Student F admits to not having any counterargument ideas but writes a paragraph about it in the draft. Meanwhile, Student H remains silent online but includes a counterargument outline in the rough draft. The following data support these observations:

STUDENTS A and B (group mates) – a counterargument suggestion from Student B to Student A does not transfer to either drafts

Second Chat Invention

Student A: My two main ideas i was going to use are how the situation and group/media pressures Feb 12, 2007 9:44:24 AM EST
[...]
Student A: yea and almost any tv series has something to do with sex in it Feb 12, 2007 9:48:55 AM EST
Peer 1: even on basic cable such as the soap operas...its been around for years. Feb 12, 2007 9:49:31 AM EST
Student B: [suggestion for Student A] it might not be true, but you could use this as a counter arguement: "but parents/colleges can regulate the television channels that their kids/students watch" Feb 12, 2007 9:50:15 AM EST
Peer 1: that could be a good one. Feb 12, 2007 9:50:44 AM EST
Student B: it would be about every channel though Feb 12, 2007 9:50:53 AM EST
Student A: true Feb 12, 2007 9:51:11 AM EST

STUDENT D (group mate of Student C) – mentions two versions of counterargument online which do not transfer to the essay draft

Second Chat Invention

Student D: My counter arguments are that there are many other factors such as individuality involved, and sometimes my general criteria do not apply to all circumstances Feb 12, 2007 9:47:22 AM EST
[...]
Student C: Some of my ideas is dehumanization and hysteria and authrotization Feb 12, 2007 10:02:55 AM EST
[...]
STUDENT F (group mate of Student E) – admits to having no counterargument ideas in the second forum but includes a full paragraph in the essay draft

Second Chat Invention

Student F: I'm making this up as I go...people start smoking because of social pressure from friends - other ideas would be parents, celebrities, media, etc - I don't have a counter yet I'm not that smart

Student E: People attend college when they really do not want to because of authoritative pressure and group pressures.

Student E: I'm not sure about any sources or counterarguments

Student F Rough Draft – Counterargument
(topic: why people smoke)

[...] Some may say that people start smoking because it is their own free will to do as they please. They say that they can do it if they want to because it makes them feel better, but this is just to fit in with the people that they hang around. If they were to stop smoking, the group would see them differently and they would be rejected most likely. Therefore, the main reason that anyone smokes is because of group pressure from the majority [...]
of ten essays without transfer in this category. Students A, B, and D discuss possible counterarguments online, but these ideas are not transferred to their essays. Thus, the collaborative Chat activities regarding counterarguments do not seem to have any effect on this group. This negative data pattern suggests that “simply putting students online does not necessarily increase their rates of participation in course-related discussions” (Yagelski and Grabill 35). Similar to the implication of source dialogues, a separate class period with specific directives for counterargument invention in the Chat room might allow more opportunities for students to discuss their possible opposing views and refutations and conversely affect the rate of transfer to print. Incorporating counterarguments during the initial stage of composition requires greater mental effort as it is, and if students are still trying to specify their topics, thesis statements, and so forth at the same time, the online dialogue about counterarguments would not be as meaningful and productive. In this vein, Cynthia Selfe argues that the use of technology in the classroom “necessitates the involvement of innovative and creative faculty who are willing to undertake a careful program of planning and design … and use the lab resources to encourage and support writers’ communities within a particular setting” (5).

Consequently, no relevant data on language use is found online and in print.

Attitude and Perception toward Synchronous Chat as Collaborative Invention

Based on the second research question, this section describes the teacher–student attitude and perception toward synchronous Chat as collaborative invention strategy in support of the previous textual analysis. Generally speaking, the teacher was fairly open with using synchronous Chat in the classroom despite previous inclination towards asynchronous Discussion Board. Student interviews show that a majority had positive experiences with the activity, and a minority shared reservations as well as provisions for its success in the future.
Incidentally, similar positive and negative points were raised by the teacher and students regarding the process.

Within the following pages, interview highlights were divided into subsections according to responses to the second research question: “What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?”

**Teacher**

During the interview, the teacher expressed that using technology in her composition classes proved to be very beneficial to students in the past. Although she was not convinced that “doing things completely online is the way to go,” she remained very open with trying out new strategies and figuring out how and why they would work best with different groups of students. More emphasis was personally given to asynchronous collaboration, but both synchronous and asynchronous modes of communication had been incorporated in the classroom. In fact, she had experimented with several online practices (Blogs, My CompLab, Whiteboard, etc.) to engage students further in the composing process. Though the teacher admitted to getting varied results from each experience, this experimentation affirms her proficiency in teaching writing with computers for many years.

*General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference*

The following points describe the teacher’s perception about the advantages and disadvantages of synchronous Chat based on recent collaborative online invention activities:

**Advantages**
- much less chaotic because students were divided into small groups
- very fluid, dynamic, and immediate, capable of producing interesting ideas that students can go back to when archived
- approximates “messiness” of the invention process

**Disadvantages**
- greater tendency for students to go off on little tangents because of informal environment
• more random and less-focused conversation at certain times
• hard to keep track of responses
• hard to control at times, especially with bigger groups
• absence of visual cues in real-time can cause difficulty

Although the teacher personally preferred face-to-face settings for synchronous
communication because of the presence of visual cues, she would still use synchronous Chat in
the future with the following provisions:

• students should have a common set of information (e.g., assigned readings, social
theories, etc.) to work on to help them go back and refocus every time online dialogues
get off-tangent
• the teacher should avoid online activities where students do not have a common base or
knowledge to hold conversations together (i.e., do not allow them to write about
anything); spending too much time educating peers online with individual topics would
result to lesser meaningful argumentation

Assessment of the Process in terms of Student Participation

According to the teacher, synchronous Chat was more fluid and immediate in that
students could easily “come and go” and say anything online, whether their ideas were relevant
or not. The teacher in this regard should “pull them back” to keep the conversation more focused
and meaningful.

In line with this observation, below is a sample transcript that depicts student tendencies
to get “off track” in this fluid environment (in this case, note Student F):

| Student F: [name of Peer 1] Feb 12, 2007 9:54:20 AM EST |
| Peer 2: yea.that would be a really good topic to do this paper on Feb 12, 2007 9:54:26 AM EST |
| Student F: glad i didnt piss off your friend lol Feb 12, 2007 9:54:27 AM EST |
| Peer 3: yeah both of those are good topics Feb 12, 2007 9:54:45 AM EST |
| Peer 1: hahahah she isnt my friend Feb 12, 2007 9:55:07 AM EST |
| Student F: dont worry i wont tell her that Feb 12, 2007 9:55:38 AM EST |
| Peer 1: i dont even know who u are talking about hahahha Feb 12, 2007 9:55:55 AM EST |
| Student F: so what time do you think we can leave? Feb 12, 2007 9:56:16 AM EST |
| Student E: hopefully soon Feb 12, 2007 9:56:27 AM EST |
| Peer 3: no idea :-\ Feb 12, 2007 9:56:30 AM EST |
| Peer 1: yeah Feb 12, 2007 9:56:32 AM EST |
| Student F: anna nicole smith died =\ Feb 12, 2007 9:57:20 AM EST |
| Peer 2: does anyone know how yet? Feb 12, 2007 9:57:45 AM EST |
Peer 1: hahahahhha  
Student F: why was that so important that it was on basically every tv station  
Peer 3: who knows?!  
Peer 2: good point  
Student F: i saw a news station and some guy on national tv was like, “is anna nicolle still dead over there tim?”  
Student F: i almost died as well  
Student F: ok peace, hopefully no class wednesday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>why was that so important that it was on basically every tv station</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:57:49 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>hahahahhha</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:57:49 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 3</td>
<td>who knows?!</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:58:00 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 2</td>
<td>good point</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:58:01 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>i saw a news station and some guy on national tv was like, “is anna nicolle still dead over there tim?”</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:58:51 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>i almost died as well</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 9:58:58 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student F</td>
<td>ok peace, hopefully no class wednesday</td>
<td>Feb 12, 2007 10:00:40 AM EST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nevertheless, the teacher believed that every student participated in this recent collaborative invention activity. Some of them might have contributed less than others in the Chat room, but they were all generally engaged – reacting to each other’s ideas, to the teacher’s prompts, and so on. Here is another Chat transcript that supports the teacher’s observation about a fruitful collaboration among participants (note Student D):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Message</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>How might I tie in the readings to the subject of peer pressure on sexual immorality</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:40:07 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>Do you think Milgrams experiment was controversial?</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:40:23 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:40:37 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>I'm not sure but sexual immorality sounds like a good topic</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:40:59 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>Milgrams experiments were controversial because he was torturing people, even though he wasn't</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:41:00 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 2</td>
<td>of course it was controversial</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:41:05 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>You can start with the group pressure articles with sexual immorality and then I am sure there are other articles in chapter nine that will tie in even better</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:41:20 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>What steps are you taking in putting together this paper?</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:41:37 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>Sexual immorality is a good topic because it is a big issue today. I think its GREAT go for it</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:41:49 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>I honestly just want to read all the articles before I even think about a topic first so that I can be better prepared. All the articles introduce something new, so I want to have all of that information first before choosing a topic</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:42:46 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>How many sources do you think would be necessary to convey your message with a strong argument</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:42:58 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student C</td>
<td>I think you must first define sexual immorality. Because what once was considered immoral in one time, can be considered ok in another due to the changes and morals and values</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:43:14 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer 1</td>
<td>3 or 4 sounds good and that is not difficult at all with all the articles that we will be reading in chapter nine</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:43:38 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>That is a great idea of reading all the articles first, so far I have only read the first set and those were based almost exclusively on Milgrams experiment</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:43:48 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>The assignment says we need 4 sources--but what theories can you use to back up this argument?</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:43:52 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student D</td>
<td>What do you mean by theories?</td>
<td>Feb 5, 2007 9:44:19 AM EST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for Modification

If she were to use this collaborative invention in the next writing assignment (i.e., Researched Essay), the teacher suggested that the same goals and assignment preparations should be required for the students before they go online. That is, she would have to make sure that students have a common foundation to discuss about – similar issues, problems, sources, theories, etc. – in order for them to avoid spending too much time educating each other online about personal topics, sources, and so on, instead of creating meaningful argumentation. Finally, she would also strengthen her online presence in the Chat room so as to keep students more on track.

Students

Three student interviews (Students C, G, and J) about the collaborative Chat invention process were included in this section. Except for Student C who had no prior experience with online practices, Students G and J shared that their previous classes used various online activities for different purposes. Student G talked about the convenience of Blogs (Ethnic Studies) and Group Pages (Chemistry) for collaboration, while Student J felt Blogs and Discussion Boards
(Developmental Writing) were especially helpful in getting everyone started with writing because all were exposed to different ideas/opinions of other students online. Student C admitted that it was only a week after this collaborative online invention activity that the Chat forum was introduced in another class (Educational Psychology). Meanwhile, all of them agreed that they were proficient with computers.

General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference

Student J felt that the Chat invention process was very helpful because a lot of ideas/input from others were made available which led to a more focused thesis statement and essay outline. The teacher also helped a lot by initiating online conversations through questions and suggestions; in fact, Student C shared that the teacher kept everybody right on track by asking questions when students ran out of ideas. Admitting to a limited online contribution because of his unfamiliarity with the medium, Student C also thought that with this current experience, more input will be brought to the forum in the future. In contrast, Student G liked the idea that students could share essay topics in the Chat room but thought Chat conversations were “pretty random” and students easily got off-track. Aside from that, most students decided not to participate in the conversation, so only two people were fully engaged, negatively affecting the collaborative aspect of the activity.

Finally, when asked whether they would use the same invention strategy in the future, both Students C and J said they would do it especially for the opportunity to “bounce off” argument and counterargument ideas with other students” (Student C) and “solicit input from other people aside from one’s self” (Student J). Student G, on the other hand, thought the Chat process might work (a) if it is done within a bigger group to maintain the momentum of the
conversation when some people “straggle off,” and (b) if there is a more defined set of participation requirement as in a Discussion Board.

Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Chat to Essay Draft

In terms of getting essay ideas from the Chat forum, Students C and J both expressed that some of the sources they used in the essay were taken from online peer suggestions, as opposed to Student G who did not get much from the activity. Students C and G, though, similarly reported that the Chat invention exercise allowed them to “evaluate their ideas” after sharing them online – for student C, it was to see what other people thought about his ideas, and for Student G, it was to go back and personally recast his thesis after posting it in the Chat room. Student J felt that everyone was “still getting it together” during the activity so a few essay ideas must have been sparked by the online dialogue.

Description of Other Invention Strategies

Both Students J and G confirmed that they brainstormed on their own, though Student J admitted that a lot of ideas she came up with “branched off from the Chat [activity].” Describing another form of invention, Student G said “making a web, going back to the assigned readings/sources, starting with a broad topic, and narrowing it down based on the readings” worked pretty well for all writing assignments. In contrast, Student C brainstormed ideas with an outside tutor aside from reading the assigned articles to come up with a clearer essay focus.

Other Comments on Language Use

Only Students C and J admitted to reflecting a few language features found online. Student C adopted the same structure of thesis statement from one of the online posts, and Student J used exactly the same quotation suggested by a peer online (“In order to disobey one must…”). However, Student G said “everything was spun into my own words.”
Chapter Summary

The textual analysis of Chat transcripts and student rough drafts signify interesting comparisons with the teacher and student interview data. Affirming both the teacher and students’ positive assessment of the Chat invention process is the frequent transfer of two essay categories, (a) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, and (b) main ideas and supporting details, respectively indicating successful to average effects of Chat. Conversely, the teacher and a minority of the student interviewees raised negative points about the collaborative nature of the Chat activity and even suggested some modifications for future reference. These negative comments are strongly supported by the quality of transfer of two essay categories, (c) textual support or synthesis of sources and (d) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, respectively indicating minimal to null effects.

The table below represents a descriptive summary of the data (Chat transcripts, rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews) in response to two major research questions. Each research question was treated with analyzed data patterns and source connections to emphasize the nature of collaborative invention and the role of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in the process of writing academic essays:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1: How effective is the collaborative Chat invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?</th>
<th>Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement</th>
<th>Main Ideas and Supporting Details</th>
<th>Textual Support / Source Synthesis</th>
<th>Opposing Views and Refutations / Counterarguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(successful)</td>
<td>(average)</td>
<td>(minimal)</td>
<td>(null)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?</td>
<td>9 essays with transfer</td>
<td>4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with transfer (but more sources are added to the rough draft)</td>
<td>4 essays with source transfer (but more sources are added to the rough draft)</td>
<td>0 essay with transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b) How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rough Draft</th>
<th>1 essay without transfer</th>
<th>5 essays with added ideas, 1 essay without transfer</th>
<th>4 essays with added sources, 6 essays without transfer</th>
<th>10 essays without transfer (2 essays have counter-arguments but are not transfers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

c) In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?

| Rough Draft | 3 cases of more formal thesis structure and word choice in rough draft; 2 cases of more specific details found in rough draft’s thesis statement | 1 case of exact word choice and sequencing of main ideas both online and in print; 4 cases of replaced, reworded, or recast main ideas in the essay for specificity or formality; logical reorganization of main ideas and supporting details in 3 rough drafts | contrasting results in the use of synthesis verbs indicate minimal effect of source transfer: 4 rough drafts with no source transfer do not have synthesis verbs between sources, but 2 rough drafts with no source transfer do; and 3 rough drafts with source transfer have synthesis verbs, but 1 rough draft with source transfer does not | irrelevant |

Table 1: This table represents the transfer of invention ideas based on four essay categories from online transcripts to student rough drafts. The summary of data patterns answers the first research question and sub-questions pertaining to the effect of the collaborative Chat invention strategy.

Displaying successful to average transfer of (1) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, and (2) main ideas and supporting details from cyberspace to print, the collaborative Chat invention activity suggests strong potential for collaboration and knowledge construction. Based on the data, students who engaged in rigorous online interactions seem to have participated in what might be referred to as active “social construction” of essay plans – from possible topics to thesis statements to main ideas and supporting details. The notion that students were sharing ideas and getting feedback from peers, asking questions and negotiating meanings, and expressing initial thoughts in a variety of language forms also implies a direct shift in learning methods. Because students were given the opportunity to discuss their essays’ rhetorical features among themselves in a Chat forum, pedagogical practices have changed positively from
strict reliance on “competitive, individual learning to recent electronic environments rich in meaning-making negotiation and collaborative text generation” (Bonk and King 7). The data’s successful and average transfer of topics and supporting ideas, respectively, contribute to the strength of CMC and its possibilities for knowledge construction and collaboration. As students generated potential topics online, they were apparently “thinking out loud” within the environment’s social context. Indeed, majority of the students in this study experienced “sufficient motivation, procedural guidance, and expert and on-going peer feedback” (Hand and Prain 753).

However, the minimal to null transfer of (3) textual support or source synthesis, and (4) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments from cyberspace to print sends a different message. One possibility could be that students focused more on generating ideas for the first two rhetorical features of the academic essay – topics or thesis statements as well as main ideas and supporting details. In this regard, textual support and discussion of readings were kept to a minimum and were rendered mostly as individual activities. Online discussions on counterarguments were not as meaningful as they should have been, so no essay transfers were detected in the data. Perhaps a unique set of activity guides for students to follow in a separate class period for source synthesis and argumentation and debate could have bolstered their online engagement to meaningfully generate ideas. Negative data patterns on sources and countearguments definitely imply that “simply putting students online does not necessarily increase their rates of participation in course-related discussions” (Yagelski and Grabill 35). Based on the analyzed data, intense planning on the part of the instructor for assigning Chat conversations in the last rhetorical features – textual support or source synthesis and counterarguments – is needed. Eldred insists that “networking will work … only if we plan
carefully how we will use it in our classrooms” (239). With the implementation of reassessment and course planning in terms of source and counterargument invention activities, it is highly probable that Bakhtin’s theory of interaction and the benefits of CMC (Warshauer 471) would strongly impact composition classrooms and higher learning at large.

Descriptive Summary of Teacher and Student Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 2: What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative Chat invention process?</th>
<th>Teacher Interview</th>
<th>Student Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Interview</td>
<td>(willing to use Chat as invention strategy though provisions must be followed because of the activity’s negative features)</td>
<td>(majority had positive experience with the activity, while a minority shared the same negative comments as the teacher; evidence of a few contradictions with teacher preference and textual analysis)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Advantages**
- much less chaotic because students were divided into small groups;
- very fluid, dynamic, and immediate capable of producing interesting ideas that students can go back to when archived; and approximates “messiness” of the invention process

**Disadvantages**
- greater tendency for students to go off on little tangents because of informal environment;
- more random and less-focused conversation at certain times;
- hard to keep track of responses;
- hard to control at times, especially with bigger groups; and absence of visual cues in real-time can cause difficulty

**Preference**
- will use Chat as invention in the future provided students have a common set of information to work on

**Advantages**
- 2 students with positive experiences shared that interesting ideas were posted that lead to a more focused thesis statement; these students also commented that the teacher kept everybody right on track when they ran out of ideas by initiating online conversations through questions and suggestions

**Disadvantages**
- 1 student with negative experience shared peers go off on tangents, random ideas often prop up, and discussion seems less focused

**Preference**
- 2 students preferred the use of the same invention strategy; 1 student was willing to use Chat invention provided there will be bigger groups to maintain conversation if others “straggle off” [this suggestion contradicts teacher’s positive evaluation of the Chat activity in small groups for ease of control]
| b) How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not? | Everyone participated, some more than others; Teacher needed to "pull students back" sometimes to keep conversation focused; Fluid and immediate, students were on a "come and go" mode and said anything online. |
| c) If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification? | Teacher suggested that the same goals and assignment preparation must be required for students so they have a common foundation to discuss; Teacher must strengthen online presence. |
| d) How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue? | 2 students reported getting source ideas from online Chat [this experience is contrary to the textual analysis on source synthesis having minimal effect]; 1 student did not get much from the activity except that, as another student said, the Chat activity "helped them evaluate their ideas" after posting online or helped them go back and personally restate their thesis, and so on. |
| e) How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online? | Other invention strategies – 2 students said individual brainstorming; 1 student said collaborative brainstorming (with a tutor). |
| f) Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay? | Only 2 students adopted some language features expressed online (thesis structure and a peer-suggested quotation); 1 student expressed ideas originally. |

Table 2: This table represents the teacher and students’ attitudes and perceptions toward the collaborative Chat invention strategy. The summary of interview responses answers the second research question and sub-questions pertaining to the role of Chat in the process of writing academic essays.

The nature of synchronous Chat as collaborative invention practice is described in the transfer of textual variables from online transcripts to essay drafts as well as in the narratives of face-to-face interviews. As the second primary research question, the subjects’ perception and preference, assessments of participation or transfer, and suggestions for modification are all inscribed in the table above. The teacher’s comment on the fluidity and dynamic conversations...
visible in Chat transcripts affirms the positive feature of the synchronous activity. This observation is re-aligned with previous scholarship on Internet Relay Chat (IRC): “IRC can be useful for discussion among a small number of people, especially as the discussion can be ‘logged’, i.e. a copy can be saved on disk, to look at more carefully later” (Windeatt, Hardisty, and Eastment 113). And because immediate responses are possible through Chat, students may have felt a stronger sense of belonging perfect for online collaboration. Unlike frequent delays characteristic of asynchronous forums, synchronous Chat modalities “provide teachers and learners with a forum for an immediate and dynamic interchange of ideas. This real-time interactive exchange can be an exciting asset to collaborative learning environments” (Cooney 263). Student perceptions regarding the benefits of this synchronous collaborative activity are simultaneously reflected in the positive transfer of thesis statements and essay plans from cyberspace to print.

But technological innovations do not come without a price. Both the teacher and a student minority expressed similar disadvantages of the Chat invention strategy. In terms of maintaining online focus, for instance, they shared that the spontaneous interchange of ideas in Chat could easily propel discussions into random, off-tangent points. Much of this might be attributed to computing speed or familiarity, but the fact of the matter is that the immediacy of synchronous CMC needs careful teacher-student attention: “Unfortunately, the more people join in a ‘chat’, the more disjointed the discussion is. In addition, the contributions to the discussion are often short and people tend to use abbreviations, and make a lot of typing mistakes” (Windeatt, Hardisty, and Eastment 113). It is for this reason that the teacher expressed special preference for smaller groups in the chat room to maintain a more focused dialogue, something that interestingly contrasts the student minority’s preference for bigger groups to keep the
dialogue going in case others “straggle off.” In addition, a possible factor for the poor transfer of source and counterargument ideas from cyberspace to print might be due to the absence of focused dialogues or spatial time devoted to these categories. At any rate, because the main purpose of the study is to describe the transfer of ideas of four rhetorical essay features along with relevant linguistic usage in the analysis, the presence of abbreviations and typing mistakes online was deliberately excluded. Needless to say, these language irregularities are present in a majority of the Chat transcripts.

Aside from operating in smaller groups, the teacher strongly suggested that students participating in synchronous Chat should have a common set of information to work on. Otherwise, with the fluidity of chat room conversations, much time will be wasted on useless explanation of individual topics instead of producing meaningful feedback and argumentation. The uniformity of assignment preparations and the teacher’s strong online presence are vital in keeping conversations under control. As a result, the spirit of collaboration will remain where “two or more people work in concert on a common text project in an environment supportive of their text and idea sharing” (Bonk and King 7). This collaborative effect is evidently a desired learning outcome of the invention activity.

With regard to student participation, the teacher emphasized that everyone in class participated online, although some more than others. Overall, synchronous Chat transports equal access to online conversations and everyone may, as the teacher said, “come and go” and express whatever they want. The immediate and fast paced nature of the activity might presuppose the teacher to project a stronger online presence to lead more focused online dialogues. But the equal opportunity for everyone to ask questions, share ideas, negotiate meanings, and start conversations is beneficial for collaborative invention. Martha Pennington grants, “An advantage
[of CMC] is the equality of the interaction, as every participant has the same chance to initiate a topic and/or respond to another’s turn. There is also the possibility of any number of people composing input at the same time” (413). This observation is substantiated by real-time dialogues and the positive transfer of ideas on essay topics and supporting details to student drafts, and consequently implies the need for adequate time and online space for discussing source synthesis and counterarguments.

Lastly, two students related that the Chat activity helped them evaluate or restate their ideas after posting these online. The dynamic, collaborative nature of the Chat environment strongly supports this insight as student writers, whether they receive immediate feedback or not, have the opportunity to read the thoughts they initially wrote down for revision within a social context. Of this, Hewett explains that “Such writing and revision changes … generated by students or online instructions or through shared interaction, demonstrate a highly collaborative process” (4). Moreover, two students reported that they received source ideas from the Chat activity; albeit a direct contrast to the data’s minimal transfer of sources, “these discussions [nevertheless] offer possibilities for expanding the student writers’ ability to gather and refine their ideas through interaction with others” (Pennington 413).

Finally, since the act of writing and immediate feedback is primarily emphasized in synchronous Chat, the data set indicating higher transfer rates on topic and main ideas signify that this invention activity is most useful for discussions pertaining to decision-making, content, and clarification of meaning (Mercer 144).

Re-examining Asynchronous Discussion Board as Collaborative Invention: An Overview

Chapter Four will present a description of my findings and analysis for another mode of collaborative online invention, asynchronous Discussion Board, based on the transfer of ideas to
student academic writing and teacher-student interviews as supplement. The same procedure for analysis used in this chapter will be applied to the next set of data – online Discussion Board transcripts and rough drafts as well as teacher and student interviews – to describe in detail the effectiveness of asynchronous Discussion Board invention in academic writing.
CHAPTER IV. RE-EXAMINING ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION BOARD AS COLLABORATIVE INVENTION

My examination of the data using grounded theory analysis opened up the richness of the collected data, specifically the effects of asynchronous Discussion Board invention on student academic writing. As with Chapter Three, this chapter’s first two main sections – (1) Effect of Asynchronous Discussion Board on Essay Drafts and (2) Attitude and Perception toward Asynchronous Discussion Board as Collaborative Invention – were structured after the study’s two main research questions: (1) How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays? and (2) What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? The chapter summary at the end presents a description of the effects of the Discussion Board activity on essay writing in response to the research questions based on the results of the data. Comparisons between the textual analysis and interview data indicate relevant points about the nature of asynchronous Discussion Board as a collaborative invention exercise in composing essays. To close, a forecast of the next chapter includes the similarities and differences of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention strategies.

Effect of Asynchronous Discussion Board on Essay Drafts

This section provides a textual analysis of Discussion Board transcripts and student rough drafts describing the transfer of ideas from cyberspace to print. Ten students, labeled K through T, were included in the discussion. Patterned after the previous chapter’s structure, the first research question “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?”, directed the examination of four categories in ten student rough drafts to detect the effectiveness of asynchronous Discussion Board as a collaborative online invention
strategy. These categories include the following: (a) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; (b) main ideas and supporting details; (c) textual support or synthesis of sources; and (d) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments. The same thesis-driven argumentative essay with synthesized sources, or the research-based essay assignment, was used so the categories selected and examined reflect this requirement. The online transcripts and rough drafts presented here were original and set inside tables with distinct fonts for ease of recognition. Relevant parts of the text were printed in bold and italic for emphasis. To shorten the posts and drafts not critical to the analysis, an ellipsis […] was used; not all Discussion Board posts were included as well in order to streamline the presentation of data.

As a whole, results indicate that Discussion Board activities for the first category – possible essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement – have the most frequent transfer of ideas to essay drafts while the least transfer is the last category, opposing views and refutations or counterarguments.

**Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement**

In terms of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, the rate of transfer from the first and second collaborative Discussion Board transcripts to student drafts is fairly evident. Both online transcripts manifest varying degrees of consistency in terms of topic, purpose, or thesis generation, but most of the ideas expressed online show positive transfer to the written essays. Only two student participants have not shown any transference at all in this category.

Five students express essay topic, purpose, and/or thesis statement ideas in Discussion Boards that are completely transferred to their essay drafts. Based on both online transcripts, Students K and O start with broad ideas in the first online activity, narrow them down in the second activity, and reflect these ideas in their rough drafts. On the other hand, Students P, Q,
and T actively share their topics only in the second Discussion Board forum, but these ideas are transferred to their essays.

Others have not shown complete transfers of essay topic, purpose, and/or thesis statement. Three students indicate the transfer of only a portion of their ideas from cyberspace to print. For instance, Student M, who consistently shared the same topic in both Discussion Boards, and Student R, who posted significant topic ideas only in the second Discussion Board, equally reflect their topics in both essay drafts but not their thesis statements. Student N shares the same topic in both online transcripts but the purpose of the essay changes in the written draft. In contrast, only two students, Students L and S, fail to indicate transfer of topic ideas from the Discussion Board to their essays.

The following excerpts from Students K and O’s first and second Discussion Board invention transcripts and corresponding rough drafts seem to suggest consistent development in terms of topic, purpose, or thesis statement:

STUDENT K (group mate of Students L and M) – consistent discussion of the same topic in both online activities which is transferred to the essay draft with a clear thesis statement

First Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: iPods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Student K  <strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:50 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:50 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total views:</strong> 51  <strong>Your views:</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*It might be pretty interesting to explore why so many people have iPods. I mean, sure they’re really neat but I’m sure that half the people that own them only own them because a lot of other people have them. If you have an iPod, did you get it because you researched all mp3 players and that was the best one? Or did you feel socially obligated to spend more for the iPod?*

| Author: Student M  **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:50:56 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:50:56 AM EST |
| **Total views:** 11  **Your views:** 1 |

*i think this is a really good topic, i wrote a paper on it last semester and found a lot of good information that would go good with the topic.*
My essay isn’t about a really serious issue like drugs or gangs. It is still an exploration of why people do the things they do. More specifically, why people buy iPods. […] The truth: Currently, there are better and cheaper mp3 players on the market. In my case, I got my iPod before they were even popular (yes, there was a time). I’m sure there are some people like me that got their iPod out of curiosity. My target audience for this argument is the majority of iPod owners that got an iPod just because everyone else was getting one.

are you writing that ipods are a good investment or that people should be buying mp3 players?

STUDENT O (group mate of Students N, P, and Q) – as with Student K, maintains gradual but consistent topic development in both Discussion Boards that is transferred to the written draft except for the thesis statement.

I'm thinking that I want to pursue something along the lines of human isolationism. In almost every study I've seen the majority of humans voluntarily or involuntarily seem to want to keep at least some form alliance, companionship. No one wants to be the outsider or that guy who says and/or does weird stuff.
Note the essay purpose expressed in the second forum below suggests an argumentative speculation essay with a tentative thesis statement:

Second Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Topics...Mine is Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Student O  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date last modified:</td>
<td>Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total views:</td>
<td>26  Your views: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the topic of Essay #2 I have selected to focus on Greek Life, more specifically, Fraternity Life. The question of my essay will be "Why do college age men join and pay dues to social organizations which do not appear to provide an adequate readjustment as compared to their cost." I personally have my own ideas, I also have the men of my chapter to further support my argument. My tentative thesis is this: Men in their never ending quest for merit and advancement, join exclusive social organizations to surround themselves with others of the same virtue, moral, and social characteristics. Men feel secure in numbers and by having a code of conduct and minimum entrance requirements, those not able to make the proverbial "bar" are not included in membership therefore allowing only the best and the brightest men to carry on the legacy of the organization.

| Author: | Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:10 AM EST |
| Date last modified: | Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:10 AM EST |
| Total views: | 8  Your views: 1 |

You could talk about the type of people that joins frats and the type of people that are against them. What values and similarities between people that join greek life? […]

| Author: | Student Q  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:56 AM EST |
| Date last modified: | Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:56 AM EST |
| Total views: | 6  Your views: 1 |

Are you calling yourself the best and the brightest? That is funny to me, I'm sure you are! Anyway, this sounds like a great paper. Fraternity/Sorority is a good topic for this paper, especially because we are talking about joining because of authority, group, or a situation. This is the perfect example because I know how people have joined for all three of these reasons, just make sure you tie that into your paper! I like your thesis; I feel it will be very effective if you can then explain yourself!

Though demonstrating complete transfer of topic, the rough draft below lacks the relative clause “which do not appear to provide an adequate readjustment as compared to their cost” from the second forum to clearly indicate the essay’s argumentative purpose. As well, the thesis
statement is not clearly stated in the introductory paragraph. Nevertheless, the linguistic transformation mentioned previously does not undermine the holistic transfer of the essay’s topic and purpose:

Student O Rough Draft – Introduction

Can you remember the sights sounds emotions and thoughts of your first visit to college or university campus? Think about the energy abounding from the students, the modern facilities, the seemingly limitless degree programs, and social structure of the large student body. As you acquainted yourself to the campus how long was it before you recognized the Greek letters and foreign symbols that appeared seemingly everywhere on the campus? They appeared everywhere on hats, hoodies, handbags, posters, and even buildings [...] Every fall thousands of high school graduates pack up their belongings, hug their parents, and take the foundation of learning which they have attained in the last 12 plus years of education and relocate to distant campuses across the United States to further their education and prepare them for the adventures of adulthood and the world of corporate America. [...] This creates a question that I strive to answer: why do college age men dedicate considerable resources to attain membership in the Social Fraternities on campuses across America? To answer this question I resort to my own personal experiences and that of the men of own Greek organization.

Remarkable transformations are evident in Student M’s thesis statement and Student N’s essay purpose. But like Students K and O, Students M and N seem to show consistent topics in both of their online transcripts and rough drafts.

STUDENT M (group mate of Students K and L) – develops the same general topic in both transcripts and essay draft with traces of progression; thesis statement undergoes remarkable changes all throughout

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:potential essay topics and thesis statements
Author: Student M Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:39:56 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:39:56 AM EST
Total views: 14 Your views: 1

A potential topic that I am thinking of writing about is why people drink and do drugs when they know that they are both bad for them. A potential thesis for this topic would be: Even though people know that drugs and alcohol are harmful to them, they still participate in these harmful acts because of outside pressure.

Author: Teacher Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST
Total views: 12 Your views: 1

OK--so why do we do this stuff when we know it's bad for us?
Second Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** Thesis/main ideas/counterargument

**Author:** Student M  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
**Total views:** 16  **Your views:** 1

**Topic:** Why teens drink alcohol

**Thesis:** Although there are many possible reasons why teens use alcohol, the most plausible reason is because of the media’s influence.

**Main Ideas:** The main ideas that I am going to be using in the paper are- 1. How kids with no older role model are more likely to make the mistake of drinking underage. 2. How peer pressure influences teens to do what their friends are doing. 3. The family background can influence how teenagers act and what they do. 4. How the media influences what teens do. [...] 

Apparently, Student M’s previous Discussion Board transcripts and rough draft below seem to indicate a progression of essay topic from general to specific and a transformed thesis statement:

Topic: “drugs and alcohol” → “alcohol” → “teens drinking alcohol”

Thesis: “outside pressure” → “media” → “peer pressure”

Student M Rough Draft – Introduction

There are many things in today’s modern day world that people do that does not make any sense. One example of this would be why teenagers continue to drink alcohol when they know that the act is illegal. Over the years, teenagers have continued to go against law and have been drinking regardless of what the consequences could be. Although teens decide whether or not they drink themselves, there are many different reasons why they decide to use alcohol underage. Although there are many possible reasons to why teens drink, the most plausible is peer pressure.

STUDENT N (group mate of Students O, P, and Q) – except for the essay purpose which is changed from arguing a position to speculating causes, a consistent topic is discussed in both invention forums and the essay draft with a hidden thesis statement

First Discussion Board Invention

**Author:** Student N  **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:01 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:01 AM EST  
**Total views:** 9  **Your views:** 1

I guess either way I could still do a paper on this topic and my thesis would be something like: Whether or not it is mandatory for motorcyclists to wear helmets when riding, the whole concept of travelling at very high speeds without any protection (such as the body of a car would provide), is just pure stupidity.

**Author:** Teacher  **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:43 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:43 AM EST  
**Total views:** 12  **Your views:** 1
So if it's so dangerous—why do people still not wear helmets?

Second Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** Motorcyclists and Helmets

**Author:** Student N  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:38:10 AM EST

**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:38:10 AM EST

**Total views:** 21  **Your views:** 2

*I think that motorcyclists should always wear a helmet when riding. I just think that no matter how good of a driver someone is, they cannot prevent the bad drivers on the road from making mistakes. If there are bad drivers on the road (which, there always is), even the best driver in the world cannot prevent an accident 100% of the time. I know that a lot of people won't really agree with me and say that this should be up to the motorcyclists cuz if the person is old enough to drive it, they are old enough to decide to protect themself or not. To help prove my point, I plan to use a personal story about how one of my friends got in an accident and the doctors told him that the only thing that saved his life was his helmet.*

**Author:** Student Q  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:56 AM EST

**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:56 AM EST

**Total views:** 6  **Your views:** 1

I think this is going to be a really good and interesting paper. I feel that a personal experience story will really put the reader in your place and make them feel what you are feeling.

**Subject: Final Thing...**

**Author:** Student N  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST

**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST

**Total views:** 2  **Your views:** 1

1.) With so many automobile accidents these days, it just seems completely illogical to drive a motorcycle without wearing a helmet. [...]  

Student N Rough Draft – Introduction

Picture this, you have had your license for over 30 years now and have yet to get into one accident, so you are flying down the road on two wheels at about 60 mph. You did not want wear a helmet because you are a “pro” by now and know what you are doing on a motorcycle. You know how to pull wheelies and have mastered all of the tricks in the book. *So you are cruising down the road like any other day when all of a sudden some jerk in a big pick-up truck pulls out in front of you because you were in his blind spot. Although you are the best driver out there, you could not be the best driver for the jerk that knocked you off of your bike.* No matter how good of a driver you think you are, there is just no telling what kind of drivers will be out on the road with you, on any given day. *Because you were not wearing your helmet, you die.* Doctors tell your family that there is a very good chance that you would have survived if you had just been wearing one of those hard things that protect your skull. *There are so many reasons that people come up with to try and make not wearing a helmet sound logical, but in reality, all of those reasons are nothing more than pure stupidity.*

The next group of students – Students P, Q, R, and T – share topic ideas only in the second Discussion Board but manage to transfer these into their rough drafts.
STUDENTS P and Q (group mates) – with clear thesis statements, topic ideas posted in the second Discussion Board are directly transferred to their essays

Second Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** Binge Drinking  
**Author:** Student P  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST  
**Total views:** 28  
**Your views:** 2

1) **Binge drinking is a common problem among college society. There are many reasons as to why kids binge drink yet there is no positive outcome.**  
2) **Kids binge drink because of social pressure, they may like the feeling of being drunk, media, etc. [...]**

Student P Rough Draft – Introduction

Many adults enjoy having a drink from time to time, if one enjoys drinking it's important to know when and where to draw the line and to know how to limit yourself. Binge drinking can be taken into perspective in many different ways. Some people think binge drinking is known as having five or more drinks in one occasion. Others think of binge drinking as drinking too much alcohol at a given time, such as drinking for the primary purpose of getting drunk or getting to the point at which you lose control. **What concerns a lot of people is the excessive drinking culture which exists within students and other young people when they are at college or university. There are many reasons as to why people binge drink including peer pressure, to relax, glamorous advertisements, celebrations, boredom, stress and depression.**

Note the specificity of Student P’s topic ideas when spelled out in the essay draft. For instance, “social pressure” becomes “peer pressure” and “media” becomes “glamorous advertisements,” suggesting constant revisions in the drafting stage. On a similar note, Student Q’s topic posts and written draft also indicate transformation, this time from a more informal “dumb and professional” to a more euphemistic “silly thing to do” to describe “people getting tattoos.” The rest, including the thesis statement, seems to demonstrate exact transfer.

Second Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** Tattoo’s  
**Author:** Student Q  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:15 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:15 AM EST  
**Total views:** 16  
**Your views:** 2

*I chose to do my multiple source essay on why people decide to get tattoo’s. To people that do not have a tattoo they may find it dumb and unprofessional, but I want to know why the people that have one, have one! My possible thesis statement would be....Power from authority, as well as high tension situations may be two possible causes for people to get tattoo’s, but the most logical reason would be from the pressure of well-known peers. My main points would then be: *Religious beliefs and gangs, which would classify
Day in and day out, people make decisions. All of the decisions we make can either be classified as a good or a bad decision. Have you ever wondered why you chose the choice you made? Most every decision we make on a daily basis relies on the power from an outside source. For instance, why do people decide to get tattoos? To me it seems like a silly thing to do considering they are permanent and I may end up regretting it later in life when I age. It is also such a painful process for something that is only appealing to the eye. The answer to the question is simple, pressure. Power from authority as well as high tense situations are two possible causes for people to get tattoo’s, but the most logical reason would be from the pressure of well-known peers.

Two participants also share topic ideas only in the second forum but consistently use them in the written essay. The following details Students R and T’s online invention and rough draft:

STUDENTS R and T (group mates) – topics shared in the second Discussion Board are directly transferred to their essays, with the exception of Student R’s thesis statement that is not stated in the introductory paragraph.
I agree that authority is the main reason for people to practice a religion. If one is raised to believe in something that strong, they are most likely to carry that with them. Thinking of a countersrgument may be more difficult because it is more of a sensitive subject.

**Author:** Peer 2  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:09 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:09 AM EST  
**Total views:** 9  **Your views:** 1

I like this choice, you will probably find a lot of information also.

**Subject:** Religion  
**Author:** Student R  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:51 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:51 AM EST  
**Total views:** 4  **Your views:** 1

1. **My thesis is that while there are a multitude of reasons for people practicing religion, the most prevalent one is the pressure from authority.**
2. **My main ideas include: their family was religious, they find themselves at a difficult place in their lives so they turn to religion, they want answers and/or salvation later in life, or they want to fit in with their social group [...]**

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**Student R Rough Draft – Introduction**

Karl Marx once said, “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” It is human nature to seek guidance, comfort, and reassurance during various times of life and many people choose religion to do just that. Religion is also, however, highly controversial and has indeed started many wars, conflict, and separation between people. This seems to be rather counterproductive considering the alleged mantra of many religions is to bring people together and bring peace. As there are many idiosyncrasies with religion and many logical people belong to organized religions that produce more questions than answers, there is much more at work here than people simply seeking salvation.

Student T fails to participate in the first invention activity, but the essay draft following the second online transcript below seems to show an exact sequencing of ideas. The only difference is that the last idea in the transcript, “friendship,” is not included in the introductory forecast of the essay. On the whole, this minute discrepancy does not affect Student T’s positive transfer of ideas and clarity of thesis statement:

**Second Discussion Board Invention**

**Subject:** MSE ideas  
**Author:** Student T  **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST  
**Total views:** 36  **Your views:** 2

**Topic: Why people do drugs**
Main Ideas: Peer pressure, family issues, personal problems, the media, popularity and friendship […]

Author: Student R  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:45 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:45 AM EST
Total views: 5  Your views: 1
This sounds like a pretty good idea! You have a lot of reasons about why people do drugs, too, and it seems like you’ve already thought of how you’re going to support them […]

Student T Rough Draft – Introduction

One of the biggest problems in today’s society is the amount of people who take, sell, or involve themselves in some way with drugs […] With all that we know today about how drugs can negatively affect you either physically or mentally, it is hard to understand why and how people start taking or participating in the first place […] One of the big questions when it comes to drugs is, why do people start in the first place? There are many different reasons, the example I just explained would probably fall under the most common which is peer pressure. Some other factors might be things such as family issues, personal problems, the media, popularity and so on. To make the drug problem cease to exist in America it is very important to recognize the main things that make someone start abusing drugs and fix it from there. You need to stop the problem before it starts, or else it will become much more difficult to erase the issue that the person has.

Finally, only two student participants do not use the same topic ideas from both Discussion Boards. Though some of Students L and S’ ideas are reflected in their rough drafts, the topics used are not absolute transfers of the invention activity. In addition, both rough drafts have no clear thesis statement in the introductory paragraph.

STUDENT L (group mate of Students K and M) – post from the first online forum is a response to the teacher’s initial post which becomes the topic of the essay, but the second forum shows a shift of topic focus altogether

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:RE:Authority in Sports

Author: Teacher  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:08 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:08 AM EST
Total views: 16  Your views: 1
Does anyone follow a particular player and root for his/her team regardless?

Author: Student L  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:57:42 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:57:42 AM EST
Total views: 13  Your views: 1
I have always rooted for the same teams ever since i was a little kid whether it be in college or pro sports. It drives me nuts when people change who they like just because they are doing good or that they are not having any success. The pressure of the bandwagon is most prominent here because no one ever wants to root for a losing team.

Author: Student O  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:53:41 AM EST
I agree with [Student L] … I never ever remember seeing a detroit tiger or a cinni red until I was ? It was always Cleveland Indians. My nephew is 7 months old.... by his choice or not he wears apparel of the Tribe, Browns, and BG. So I think parental and family values also affect this.

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Role models being pro athletes

Author: Student L Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST
Total views: 14 Your views: 1

Why is it that kids today have an overwhelming amount of role models that are professional athletes even though these people tend not to be the greatest role models for kids. With many pro athletes being involved in drugs, steroids, fights, and carrying guns, shouldn’t we discourage the youth to look up to other people […]

Student L Rough Draft – Introduction

For some unknown reason to man, every sports fan has a team that he/she roots for in every game that they play […] Even though there are an increasing number of fans who switch their favorite teams over the course of time, I have remained true to my most liked athletic teams ever since I was a small child. […] Consequently, I have to field questions from everyone who asks why is it that I have chosen to support a team that not many others around me support […] With the Indiana Pacers struggling to even make the playoffs the past few years and also the fact that they haven’t won a championship as long as I have been a fan, why is it that I am such a huge follower of them?

STUDENT S (group mate of Students R and T) – without a clear introductory thesis statement like Student L, contrasting theses and potential topics are found in both invention forums and the rough draft

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:potential essay topics and thesis statements

Author: Student S Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:45:47 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:45:47 AM EST
Total views: 11 Your views: 1

I want to write about people wearing clothes that just aren’t the ones to be worn in that weather. My thesis will be something like: “Even though people are aware of the discomfort and possible health problems this will follow, they still are dominated by the social pressure when choosing clothes.”

Author: Teacher Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:29 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:29 AM EST
Total views: 7 Your views: 1

So is society a group pressure or an authority? Or situation? Why?

Author: Peer 1 Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:55:04 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:55:04 AM EST
Total views: 7 Your views: 1
I like this idea. I think that is it a good one because no matter what, people are always judged by what they wear and how they wear it. It just shows that if you wear sweatpants... most people think you are lazy.... but if you wear short skirts... people think you are easy. So I think that this is important. Judgement dominantly plays a part of how we look.

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: mse essay

Author: Student S  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:04 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:04 AM EST
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

so my paper topic is 'why kids are letting their parents make them do certain professional things? why do they let them choose their professions? Especially when they're so young, why do they obey, over-work and give away basically their lives?' That's authority pressure I guess.

Student S Rough Draft – Introduction

As living creatures, humans are primarily oriented to survive. All our instincts and basic demands, habits and desires are designed so that we can easily focus on the main point of living on. We are concerned with food, health, sex, wealth, all to accomplish this target. That is why an interesting phenomenon is worth paying attention to - why do people become kamikaze terrorists? What forces people, mainly of a young age, to kill themselves? Why do people who could have had a lot to experience ahead of them in life say no to everything? And even more tragically than simple suicide, committers kill themselves so that other people die as a result of their choice?

Highlights of Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement

To recap, eight out of ten student transcripts indicate varying degrees of successful transfer in terms of essay topic, purpose, or thesis statement. Among these, five students (K, O, P, Q, and T) show complete transfer of ideas, and three students (M, N, and R) demonstrate partial transfer of topic (Students M and R) and essay purpose (Student N). Only two students (Students L and S) fail to transfer invention ideas in this category.

It is interesting to note that majority of those who show complete transfer of ideas (Students K, P, Q, and T) have clear thesis statements in their essay introductory paragraph. In turn, a majority of those who show partial or null transfer (Students L, N, R, and S) do not clearly state their theses in the introduction. This pattern suggests a positive effect of the collaborative online invention activity on generating essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement.
Students who show complete transfer of ideas used the Discussion Board wisely to their benefit with meaningful reflection and clear transportation of preliminary ideas to their rough drafts. Consequently, such clarity of idea transfer signifies that the asynchronous nature of the Discussion Board or “the time lag between messages promotes a highly planned discourse” (Kitade 10).

Finally, asynchronous CMC possesses distinguishable linguistic features – “greater accuracy, complex, formal, and longer [texts]” (Kitade iii). In support of this claim, the following data patterns characterize relevant language features found in both Discussion Board transcripts and rough drafts:

- more or less exact thesis statement or word order found online and in print (cf. Students Q and T)
- more argumentative essay purpose online vs. rough draft (cf. Student O)
- more specific topic and thesis statement in written drafts vs. online (cf. Students M and P)
- more formal choice of words in rough draft vs. online (cf. Student Q)

**Main Ideas and Supporting Details**

Upon close examination of main ideas and supporting details, I noticed that a majority of the participants’ online discussion in this category are transferred to their essays. Four students (Students M, N, Q, and R) indicate complete transfer of main ideas where all points used for argumentation are found in the Discussion Board transcripts and written draft. On the other hand, five students (Students K, L, O, P, and T) either modify, add, or reduce the main ideas posted online onto the essay. There is one case of zero transfer (Student S) where the student’s essay ideas do not match any of those found online. It is interesting to note that some main ideas are transferred to the essay as supporting details instead, enhancing the recursive nature of writing where the dialogue of the collaborative invention activity is extended.
Comprising the group of students with the highest rate of transference, Students M, N, Q, and R’s online posts and written drafts show complete transfer of main ideas. Except for Student N who came up with all main ideas and supporting detail in the first invention activity, Students M, Q, and R gradually develop their main ideas and are able to post all of them in the second activity. Students M and R change their thesis or most plausible cause in their rough draft; however, just like Students N and Q, they are able to forecast all main causes online that are completely transferred to their essays. The following is a detailed description of the transfer of items in this category:

STUDENT M (group mate of Students K and L) – starts with a few main ideas but posts all four ideas in the second invention activity; thesis or most plausible cause is switched in the rough draft

First Discussion Board Invention

| Author: Teacher | Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST |
| Total views: 12  Your views: 1 |

OK--so why do we do this stuff when we know it's bad for us?

| Author: Student M | Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:21 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:21 AM EST |
| Total views: 5  Your views: 1 |

people continue to do these harmful things because of the outside pressure and the fact that everywhere you look there is a media ad or a commercial for alcohol or cigarettes.

Second Discussion Board Invention

| Subject: Thesis/main ideas/counterargument |
| Author: Student M | Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST |
| Total views: 16  Your views: 1 |

Topic: Why teens drink alcohol
Thesis: Although there are many possible reasons why teens use alcohol, the most plausible reason is because of the media’s influence.
Main Ideas: The main ideas that I am going to be using in the paper are- 1. How kids with no older role model are more likely to make the mistake of drinking underage. 2. How peer pressure influences teens to do what their friends are doing. 3. The family background can influence how teenagers act and what they do. 4. How the media influences what teens do […]
As mentioned earlier, note the change of thesis statement or most plausible cause in the rough draft below:

Student M Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why teens drink)

One of the minor causes to why teens drink alcohol would be that they have **no older role model in their household to provide good influence on their lives** [...] For example if a teenager has an older brother or father that has been in trouble before then that younger teenager has an example of what can happen if they were to get caught doing something wrong for example drinking alcohol [...] Another possible cause to why teens drink is because of their **family background.** If a teenager comes from a family of alcoholics then that teenager is more likely to start drinking at an earlier age because they are around alcohol so much [...] Also another example of why the teenagers’ family background will be a cause is that maybe the family is for example Irish [...] Another plausible cause to why teenagers drink underage is because of the **media** [...] For example when a teenager is watching TV and their favorite sports idol comes on an commercial advertising alcohol this has a major affect on the teen. This can influence them to go out and try to be like that specific authority figure on TV and start drinking what it was that the idol was advertising [...] **Finally the most plausible reason** to why teenagers use alcohol underage is because of **peer pressure.** Peer pressure is one of the strongest influences on teenagers in modern day [...] Students N and Q, who belonged to the same group, have varying degrees of development. Student N comes up with all main ideas in the first forum including an idea from her peer, while Student Q explores possible ideas and comes up with all three in the second forum. Both of their transcripts show direct transfer of thesis to the essay.

STUDENTS N and Q (group mates) – Student N’s main causes and peer suggestion are found in the first forum, while all of Student Q’s causes are mentioned in the second; both show exact transfer of thesis or most probable cause to the essay draft

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:RE:RE:Helmet law?
Author: Teacher  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:43 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:43 AM EST
Total views: 12  Your views: 1
So if it's so dangerous--why do people still not wear helmets?

Author: Student N  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:49:35 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:49:35 AM EST
Total views: 8  Your views: 1
**It either messes up their hair, makes them look "cooler", or sometimes, people just don't have one with them. For instance, if someone went somewhere by him/herself and then got to that place and someone else wanted to go for a ride, there would only be one**
It's terrible, but if I was a biker, I think I might feel kind of like a sissy with a helmet on.

Author: Student N  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:53:47 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:53:47 AM EST
Total views: 5  Your views: 1

Maybe because you think others (especially other bikers), would feel like you were wearing a helmet because you weren't truly confident in your motorcycle skills?? I just think it's a bad idea not to wear one because no matter how good of a driver YOU are, there are tons of other bad drivers out there that could still cause you to be involved in an accident.

Author: Peer 1  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:54:54 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:54:54 AM EST
Total views: 5  Your views: 1

I think people ride motorcycles without a helmet because it's a bigger thrill. People like to be scared and do things that others might find "dangerous."

Author: Student Q  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:58:32 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:58:32 AM EST
Total views: 5  Your views: 1

I think this is a really good important topic to discuss. Many people are unaware of the many dangers that could occur even on a one-minute ride to get milk or something. Accidents happen all the time which is a great reason to make people aware of how important it is to wear a helmet. A lot of motorcycle riders try to be cool and get chicks, but actually they look stupid and unattractive without the helmet!

The second transcript below simply affirms the most plausible cause:

Second Discussion Board Invention

Author: Peer 1  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:58:20 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:58:20 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

I think this is also a good topic to write on. It has always seemed to amaze me that people are too stubborn to wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle. My uncle for example (who is a cop) does not wear a helmet while riding his motorcycle, however is crazy when it comes to wearing your seatbelt in a car!

Author: Student N  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:03:49 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:03:49 AM EST
Total views: 1  Your views: 1

haha that is weird about your uncle...but possibly the reason for that could be because people can very easily see whether or not you are wearing a helmet, but when in a car, it's harder to tell if someone is wearing a seatbelt or not (from the outside view), so maybe then your uncle doesn't worry about looking like a wussy or being too cool. just a thought.
One of the reasons that have been thrown out there is the fact that motorcycle helmets mess up the rider’s hairdo. Although men are in the majority for riding motorcycles there are plenty of women who also enjoy the 2-wheeled thrill […]

Another likely explanation for why some motorcyclists decide not to wear a helmet is the fact that there is not always one right there easily accessible. It is possible for instance that someone rode over to a friend’s house and then the friend decided that he/she wants the driver to take him/her for a ride on the motorcycle. Odds are the driver did not bring a spare helmet (if he was even wearing one himself) so depending on that particular state’s law a decision has to be made on the rider’s part […]

Yet another probable cause for why some people choose not to wear a helmet while riding on a motorcycle is the fact that not wearing one makes the whole experience more dangerous. Some people thrive on fear and danger to give themselves and adrenaline rush […]

The real reason for why people do not always wear a helmet when on a motorcycle is because they are trying to go for the “cool” factor […] In states that do not require helmets the majority do not wear one; therefore the outcasts would be those who actually do wear one. In most societies the “outcasts” are not the “cool” ones which then turns helmet-wearing into something that the un-cool people do […]

Interestingly, Student Q suggests an idea (“manipulation of manager”) to another student in the first forum and uses the same concept under a new term (“authority”) in the draft.
peers. My main points would then be: *Religious beliefs and gangs, which would classify under authority. *For remembrance of a loved one, which would classify under a high tense situation. *My last point would be doing it just for the fun of it because of friends, which would be pressure from well-known peers […]

Student Q Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people decide to get tattoos)

One reason many people have tattoos is because they are active in a form of religion or group that permits them to have one […] Whether it be a ruler or a leader of this organized group, there is a greater power of authority that is forcing them to mark their bodies […]

Although pressure from authority may seem like the best cause as to why people get tattoo’s, when put in a high tense situation, it is hard to turn down. There are serious emotional events that happen in a person’s life that they would like to embrace forever […]

The most probable cause of this tattoo trend would be because of the rebellion against parents and group pressure […]

And finally, Student R also posts all main ideas in the second activity, and like Student M, switches the most plausible cause in the essay.

STUDENT R (group mate of Students S and T) – data seems to show a few main ideas (including one suggested to another student) in the first forum, complete ideas in the second forum, and an altered thesis in the essay draft

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Wrangler jeans are cool
Author: Teacher  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:55:37 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:55:37 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

Why are Wrangler jeans the "coolest?" They're durable and cheap--isn't that what pants are supposed to be?

Author: Student R  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:58:43 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:58:43 AM EST
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

Some people also want pants to fit better, too, and sometimes the cheapest isn't necessarily the best at accomplishing that. But then in this sense, you could consider why people want their jeans to fit nicely. You could say that they want the jeans to fit so they'll look nicer, so that would somehow imply that they're dressing for other people, so they want other people to accept them. So in this sense, they just want acceptance and approval from the group. I don't agree with all of that, but it is another way of looking at it.

Subject: RE:Religion
Author: Student R  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:58 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:58 AM EST
Total views: 7  Your views: 1

I think that you could write an essay incorporating the various theories about obedience
I'm thinking of writing my MSE essay on why people practice religion. It seems like a pretty interesting topic to consider, especially since religion is important in a lot of peoples’ lives. My tentative thesis, at this point, is that while there are a multitude of causes, the most important reason why people practice religion is pressure from authority, whether it’s family, church authorities, or even God perceived as an authority figure. There are, of course, many other reasons. But I think one of the most important and one of the most influential is the pressure from authority.

I agree that authority is the main reason for people to practice a religion. If one is raised to believe in something that strong, they are most likely to carry that with them.

1. My thesis is that while there are a multitude of reasons for people practicing religion, the most prevalent one is the pressure from authority.
2. My main ideas include: their family was religious, they find themselves at a difficult place in their lives so they turn to religion, they want answers and/or salvation later in life, or they want to fit in with their social group.

The transformation of the independent clause “they find themselves at a difficult place in their lives so they turn to religion” from the second Discussion Board to the nominal phrase
“situational pressure” in the essay draft depicts the most plausible cause of the topic “why people belong to organized religions.” Save for this and the alteration of the thesis from “authority pressure” to “situational pressure,” all main ideas mentioned online indicate exact transfer to the essay draft as seen below:

Student R Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people belong to organized religions)

| One possible reason why people belong to organized religions when its very premises are not at all logical is their hope for salvation or forgiveness. Many potentially see religion as a quick way to absolve them of their sins [...] |
| [...] many people belong to the religion that their family believed in, thus making their family an authority figure. Every Sunday, their parents would rouse them early, dress them in their finest clothes, and go to church, temple, or mosque [...] |
| One of the likelier causes for participation in an organized religion is, quite simply, group or social pressure. The group can be in the form of many different things, the most prevalent obviously being the family [...] The outside pressure can come from friends as well [...] Another form of pressure could be from that person’s significant other or spouse [...] |
| [...] the most common, likely cause for a person to belong to an organized religion is situational pressure. People can be pushed to do many illogical, seemingly inexplicable things simply because of the strange, unfamiliar situations in which they find themselves [...] |

The main ideas in the essay above are fairly organized except for one logical problem found in the third paragraph’s supporting detail “family,” which overlaps with the second main idea “family as authority figure.”

Some students (Students K, L, O, P, and T) either add, reduce, or modify the main ideas they posted online onto the essay. The highest rate of transfer is detected in Student P’s Discussion Board transcript and rough draft, where two of the essay’s three main ideas are found online and one idea is used as supporting detail. Student T follows next with one exact transfer of the essay’s three main ideas, two rephrased ideas, and one used as supporting detail. Like Student T, Student K posts one of the three main ideas and uses two as supporting details, while Student O posts supporting details and two of the five main ideas. And the lowest transfer rate, Student L, posts one of the essay’s four main ideas. The data suggests that Student O’s supporting detail is transferred from online, while Students K, P, and T’s online ideas are
transformed into supporting details. Finally, all student participants, except for Students L and T, seem to gradually develop their main ideas in both Discussion Board activities.

STUDENTS K and L (group mates) – according to peer suggestions, Student K modifies three main ideas in the second forum, uses one idea in the essay, and lumps two ideas as supporting details; Student L uses only one from the first forum.

**First Discussion Board Invention**

| **Subject:** iPods                                                                 |
| **Author:** Student K **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:50 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:50 AM EST                  |
| **Total views:** 51 **Your views:** 2                                           |

*It might be pretty interesting to explore why so many people have iPods. I mean, sure they're really neat but I'm sure that half the people that own them only own them because a lot of other people have them. If you have an iPod, did you get it because you researched all mp3 players and that was the best one? Or did you feel socially obligated to spend more for the iPod?*

| **Author:** Student M **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:50:56 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:50:56 AM EST                  |
| **Total views:** 11 **Your views:** 1                                           |

*I think this is a really good topic, i wrote a paper on it last semester and found a lot of good information that would go good with the topic.*

| **Author:** Student N **Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:15 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:15 AM EST                  |
| **Total views:** 12 **Your views:** 1                                           |

*I think a big part of iPods is the social status of having one. Because people know how expensive they are, people think it will make them look "cooler" if they have one of their own.*

Based on the last post of the transcript below, Student K modifies three main ideas after peer comments and re-organizes two online ideas, “easiest mp3 player” and “best mp3 players on the market,” as supporting details of the main idea, “general public’s technological ignorance,” in the rough draft.

**Second Discussion Board Invention**

| **Author:** Student M **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:27 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:27 AM EST                  |
| **Total views:** 5 **Your views:** 1                                            |

*Are you writing that ipods are a good investment or that people should be buying mp3 players?*

| **Author:** Student K **Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:53:51 AM EST |
| **Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:53:51 AM EST                  |
| **Total views:** 4 **Your views:** 1                                            |

*Well I think everyone should own an mp3 player, but I am writing that people buy iPods mainly because of the misconceptions that a) iPods are cheaper b) everyone else has*
one and c) iPods are the best mp3 players on the market.

Author: Student K  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:52:07 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:52:07 AM EST
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

Main ideas: 1. iPods are cheaper. 2. Everyone else has an iPod. 3. The iPod is the best mp3 player on the market.

Author: Student L  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

You could use the fact that there are better mp3 players out there but they don’t let you play songs that are illegally downloaded. I don’t know what these new ones are called but I know people like iPods because they let you play music that you can rip off the internet for free. Also, an advantage of an iPod is that it is a really easy way to store a ton of different songs. These are just some ideas about why people still get iPods instead of the fact that everyone else has one.

Author: Student K  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST
Total views: 2  Your views: 1

It is my opinion that people buy iPods because they are the popular choice of mp3 player and not necessarily because it is the best on the market. Why do people buy iPods over all other mp3 players? Main ideas: a) iPods are the easiest mp3 player. b) they are the best mp3 players on the market. c) everyone else has one. […]

Student K Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why iPods became a trend)

Apple’s iPod ads play a very large role in the sales and popularity of the product. They used revolutionary marketing techniques that earned them a spot in every single television commercial break […] The ad simply implies that the iPod is a trend and reminds consumers that the trend exists, so therefore the consumer should go out and purchase an iPod if they haven’t all ready […]

Another reason why the iPod trend machine continues to grow is due to the general public’s technological ignorance. People are always looking for two main things: fast and easy […] There are many common misconceptions that follow the iPod. One of the major ones is that it is the best mp3 player available. It is a quality product, no doubt, but Apple’s competitors do offer cheaper and similar solutions. The problem with those products is that they just do not have the popularity that the iPod has.

[...] One final and major reason that the iPod is more of a trend than a product is the fact that people actually believe that everyone has one […]

Student L, on the other hand, does not use any main idea posted in the second online forum because they are of a different topic altogether (i.e., from “why do you root for a team” in the first forum to “why teens consider pro athletes as role models” in the second). And out of the two main ideas posted in the first forum, only one suggested idea (“family”) is transferred to the essay.
First Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** RE:RE:Authority in Sports

**Author:** Teacher  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:08 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:51:08 AM EST  
**Total views:** 16  
**Your views:** 1

Does anyone follow a particular player and root for his/her team regardless?

**Author:** Student L  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:57:42 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:57:42 AM EST  
**Total views:** 13  
**Your views:** 1

*I have always rooted for the same teams ever since I was a little kid whether it be in college or pro sports. It drives me nuts when people change who they like just because they are doing good or that they are not having any success. The pressure of the bandwagon is most prominent here because no one ever wants to root for a losing team.*

**Author:** Student O  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:53:41 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 10:53:41 AM EST  
**Total views:** 14  
**Your views:** 1

*I agree with [Student L]...I never ever remember seeing a detroit tiger or a cinni red until I was? It was always Cleveland Indians. My nephew is 7 months old....by his choice or not he wears apparel of the Tribe, Browns, and BG. So I think parental and family values also affect this.*

**Author:** Student L  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 5, 2007 11:00:32 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 5, 2007 11:00:32 AM EST  
**Total views:** 11  
**Your views:** 1

*Family is important in who you root for because it can go either way. Some follow what their parents have been making them wear ever since they were a baby but then others root for the other team to be different. Like in a family where there is always one person who likes michigan in a family of buckeye fans just because they want to be the person that stands out.*

Second Discussion Board Invention

**Subject:** Role models being pro athletes

**Author:** Student L  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST  
**Total views:** 14  
**Your views:** 1

*Why is it that kids today have an overwhelming amount of role models that are professional athletes even though these people tend not to be the greatest role models for kids. With many pro athletes being involved in drugs, steroids, fights, and carrying guns shouldn’t we discourage the youth to look up to other people... Some reasons why kids choose pro athletes as role models is because they want the skills, fame, and fortune that these people already possess. Also, kids want to be able to play the sport that they love for the rest of their lives. [...]*

Student L Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support  
**(topic:** *why I am a loyal follower of Indiana Pacers*)

**There are an abundant amount of different reasons why I am a loyal Indiana Pacers fan and probably the least likely of those is that I was drawn to the color of their jerseys when I was little [...] With my two favorite colors to this day being blue and yellow that rationale for liking the Pacers is not that far fetched [...]**

**Another possible but not likely reason why I am an avid Indiana Pacers fan is that I enjoy that they are labeled as the “Bad Boys” in today’s NBA [...] Maybe the rebellious side in me makes me feel as if I can relate to all the trouble that the Pacers are continually finding themselves in [...]**
A slightly more realistic explanation for being a loyal fan over all the years is because I have a large majority of my family that lives in Indiana. With so many people close to me being admirers of the same team I felt like I had to cheer on the same team so that I would fit into the group […]

[…] There is no doubt that the situation played an integral part in my approval of the Indiana Pacers basketball team […] Due to the situation I was in when I was first watching the Pacers it is certain that the main reason I am an Indiana Pacers fan is because of the games I watched them play against the Bulls in the playoffs.

Belonging to the same group, Students O and P use two main ideas and supporting details from online and incorporate them into their essays. Between them, Student P has a higher transfer rate as the essay contains only three main ideas as opposed to Student O with five main ideas. Both rough drafts seem to suggest significant lexico-semantic transformations as well as faulty logical organization based on the transcripts and rough drafts that follow:

STUDENTS O and P (group mates) – both transcripts show two main ideas and supporting details that are transferred to their rough drafts

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Religion
Author: Teacher Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:37:18 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:37:18 AM EST
Total views: 37 Your views: 1

IS there any way we can incorporate out theories into an essay about religion?

Author: Student O Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:49 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:46:49 AM EST
Total views: 12 Your views: 1

I think religion is something a little more valued than say the clothes I wear. I also find, for me, at least religion is heritage. It's more of a family thing. Why do I go to church, because it was the way i was raised. I don't think religion has enough social value in modern society to make the upper echelons of this discussion

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Topics… Mine is Good
Author: Student O Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST
Total views: 26 Your views: 2

For the topic of Essay #2 I have selected to focus on Greek Life, more specifically, Fraternity Life. The question of my essay will be “Why do college age men join and pay dues to social organizations which do not appear to provide an adequate readjustment as compared to their cost.” I personally have my own ideas, I also have the men of my chapter to further support my argument. My tentative thesis is this: Men in their never ending quest for merit and advancement, join exclusive
social organizations to surround themselves with others of the same virtue, moral, and social characteristics. Men feel secure in numbers and by having a code of conduct and minimum entrance requirements, those not able to make the proverbial "bar" are not included in membership therefore allowing only the best and the brightest men to carry on the legacy of the organization.

Author: Student Q  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:56 AM EST  Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:56 AM EST  Total views: 6  Your views: 1

Are you calling yourself the best and the brightest? That is funny to me, I'm sure you are! Anyway, this sounds like a great paper. Fraternity/Sorority is a good topic for this paper, especially because we are talking about joining because of authority, group, or a situation. This is the perfect example because I know how people have joined for all three of these reasons, just make sure you tie that into your paper! I like your thesis; I feel it will be very effective if you can then explain yourself!

The tentative thesis statement in the second transcript “never ending quest for merit and advancement” is recast as “leadership opportunities” or the third main idea in the rough draft. Unfortunately, the essay’s first paragraph contains three separate main ideas, “wider range of curriculum,” “higher cumulative grade point average,” and “study sessions among members,” that negatively affect its logical organization. But the supporting details “of the same interest, values, and beliefs” and “only the best and the brightest of each class” from the second Discussion Board invention add strength to the last main idea paragraph below:

Student O Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why college men join fraternities)

First off, in the early days of classes men find themselves immersed in a much wider range curriculum than ever before in their lives. They find professors, who are not the known to the community, programs that they have not previously been a part of, and often search for a means to help them achieve a desired assessment in the class […] Additionally many of the men in the ranks of these organizations boast a higher cumulative grade point average than the campus average creating a wealth of knowledge for other members to tap into. Further many implement study sessions among their members in which those who have excelled in certain areas of study mentor those who are currently enrolled in that area. Men see this as an advantage to traditional means of study, something an unaffiliated person may not have access to […] Moving on men some seek to gain notoriety from all that they do […] Every fraternity has something that it is known for, whether it be intramurals, intelligence, social activities or philanthropies, we all have a some reason to be proud members of the organization to which we pay dues or simply we would not be there.

Another explanation to this question might be that men are attracted to these groups for the leadership opportunities that they offer […] […] Some men possess legacy, a direct blood link to the fraternity, in which someone, their father, brother, uncle or other close family member holds membership in the society. From a young age these men see membership in these
organizations as a right of passage and see membership as bringing honor and pleasure to the dominant figures in their lives [...]

Finally the primary reason that men rush Greek life is the sense of belonging, brotherhood, and the camaraderie demonstrated by their brothers, in turn creating a feeling of safety and stability when the individual is presence of the Fraternity membership [...] Additionally, many first year students [...] found men that have many of the same interest, values, and beliefs as they themselves hold to be true. A fraternity could be seen as a filter, allowing only the best and the brightest of each class into its ranks [...]

Student P states three main ideas in the second online activity, one of which is modified as a supporting detail and two are transferred to the essay draft.

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Media
Author: Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:42:11 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:42:11 AM EST
Total views: 25  Your views: 2

I think many people go along with or listen to the media to do things to fit in. The media is a very big part of how we view things and puts images into our head that are advertised.

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Binge Drinking
Author: Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST
Total views: 28  Your views: 2

1) Binge drinking is a common problem among college society. There are many reasons as to why kids binge drink yet there is no positive outcome. 2) Kids binge drink because of social pressure, they may like the feeling of being drunk, media, etc. [...] 

Author: Student O  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:03:05 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:03:05 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

Binge drinking...is bad.... yeah ok that’s the educated idiots answer to everything..... In reality.... from my own experiences, many of the nights that I binge drank.. I use the phrase “it just kind of snuck up on me” I agree the atmosphere of a college party is not the same as the atmosphere of my dad's shop. The energy that is involved encourages one to continue to consume and really you do not keep a steady focus on the number of drinks that you consume. Peer pressure also plays a role, No guy can walk away from the table when one of their buddies set up the shot glasses and toast to a respectable concept, organization, or man.

The written draft that follows seems to suggest that Student P’s essay contains an unorganized third paragraph regarding the idea of “situation.” In it, there’s “peer pressure” which overlaps with the first idea paragraph, and “social factor,” “wanting to be adults,” “making up for
lost time attitude,” “stress from work or school,” and “depression” which could all have been developed into separate paragraphs. Finally, the supporting detail “to make you feel happy, confident, and more sociable” within that paragraph is generated and syntactically revised from the second online forum “they may like the feeling of being drunk.”

Student P Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people binge drink)

One probable cause is peer pressure; the pressure to be accepted and to fit in ...

Like in most things in life, it is a different story when you are actually in a situation where there is the potential for binge drinking [...] It is easy for teens to get caught up in the social scene of peer pressure [...] Many people see drinking as a social activity to make you feel happy, confident, and more sociable. Some people are just naturally shy or introverted and binge drinking helps get over that fear so they do it for the social factor [...] Drinking is seen as an adult activity, and teenagers want to be adult as soon as possible [...] Additionally, when the opportunity to drink occurs there is a kind of “Let's make up for lost time” attitude which outcomes in binge drinking [...] Another reason why people may binge drink is because they are either stressed from work or school [...] Also, some of the time depression is the cause of drinking among college students either because of homesickness, relationship problems, or failing grades [...]

Perhaps the only student who did not participate in the first Discussion Board activity, Student T posts five main ideas in the second forum with one direct transfer (“media”) and one null transfer (“personal problems”). In addition, the transcript shows two cases of revision (“family issues” is changed to “situation” and “peer pressure” to “group pressure”) and one modification (“popularity and friendship” is used as supporting detail instead), signifying the continuous generation of ideas even after both collaborative invention activities.

Student T (group mate of Students R and S) – posts five main ideas in the second forum with only one direct transfer, while other ideas are either revised or modified in the essay

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: MSE ideas
Author: Student T  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST
Total views: 36  Your views: 2

Topic: Why people do drugs ... Main Ideas: Peer pressure, family issues, personal
One possible reason why someone may start taking drugs is that they feel left out or unpopular [...] If you are a person who was never really into it, you feel bad because you aren’t making any friends, because of this social problem you begin taking the drugs to get into those groups, and just like that there is another person added to the statistics. Once the person gets into that group they get a sense of belonging [...] This situation clearly falls under pressure from groups [...] In today’s society media is one of the greatest contributing factors to the way that teenagers act and conduct themselves during their daily lives [...] 

The most plausible reason why people begin taking drugs has to do with the situation that they have grown up in. There are many different things that could affect the reason why a child or young adult begin using. One of the most common is the lack of parents in their lives [...] What kind of influence are poor drug addicted parents going to have on their children? Most likely the kids are going to turn out just like their parents [...] 

And finally, only Student S’ transcripts and rough draft exhibit null transfer since two different topics, apart from the essay’s actual topic, are shared in both Discussion Board activities.

STUDENT S (group mate of Students R and T) – no main idea transfer due to contrasting topics discussed online and in print; however, the topic of the last post in the second forum somehow evolves into a second main idea in the essay

First Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:potential essay topics and thesis statements
Author: Student S  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:45:47 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:45:47 AM EST
Total views: 11  Your views: 1

I want to write about people wearing clothes that just aren’t the ones to be worn in that weather… My thesis will be something like, "Even though people are aware of something like, "Even though people are aware of the discomfort and possible health problems this will follow, they still are dominated by the social pressure when choosing clothes.”

Second Discussion Board Invention

Author: Student S  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:43:13 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:43:13 AM EST
Total views: 11  Your views: 1

I am not sure yet, but I’ll probably write about the kids who obey their parents, when they
make them choose their professions. especially talking about little kids, and the parents who want them to become 'Infant prodigies'. like you know, making them work a lot, much more than their peers do, and thus making them look successful. Why do they obey, when the parents are taking their childhood away from them? and after they've taken the childhood, they aren't letting them live a normal teen life. so why do they do nothing about it.

Author: Peer 1 Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:36 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:36 AM EST
Total views: 8 Your views: 1

I have a friend that is a lot like that, she let her dad pick out the college that she attended and the major that he thought was best suited for her. I think that in her situation, she feels that her father knows what is best for her in the long run, so she lets him make these decisions for her, not realizing that she really should have a say in it

Subject: mse essay

Author: Student S Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:04 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:04 AM EST
Total views: 3 Your views: 1

so, my paper topic is 'why the kids are letting their parents make them do certain professional things? why do they let them [parents] choose their [kids] professions? Especially, when they're so young, why do they [kids] obey, over-work and give away, basically their lives? That's authority pressure I guess.

Student S Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support
(topic: why people become terrorists)

[...] Unfortunately the vast majority of today's kamikazes come from developing countries. Their social level is often beyond the border. Financial problems won't let them receive education [...] People without education are easy to manipulate [...] For those uneducated people places of religious gatherings become only ways to obtain any kind of information or education [...] Another reason why people decide to become kamikazes is because of other family members or relatives who have already made that decision [...] Especially if the ones they [relatives/family members] are impacting are young and still personally undeveloped their psychics are extremely easily breakable. In some cases individuals can be afraid to 'look bad' in their authorities' eyes or might want to 'keep up' with the high standards of their family/friend circle believes [...] As a result of these high demands and surrounding situation people who are being raised under this pressure and partially loose their ability to think independently develop a very strong alter ego [...] This becomes an idée fixe in Asian societies but in extremist Asian cultures this is the crucial point [...] 

Highlights of Main Ideas and Supporting Details

In retrospect, the effect of the collaborative Discussion Board invention activity on the transfer of main ideas and supporting details to student rough drafts is quite average. Four students (Students M, N, Q, and R) previously mention each of their essay ideas online, while five students (Students K, L, O, P, and T) add, reduce, or modify the main ideas they posted online onto the essay. Only one student (Student S) shows the use of main ideas not shared in the
online forum at all. Some main ideas are transferred to the essay as supporting details instead, enhancing the recursive nature of the writing process. Because asynchronous CMC primarily allows reflective interaction within a collaborative environment, preliminary ideas posted online generally undergo transformation before print. The patterns previously mentioned simply enhance the positive effect of the Discussion Board – that independent of time, asynchronous CMC allows students to “formulate, articulate, and edit responses of high quality” (Mercer 144). Furthermore, other supporting details used in student essays are not transfers from the Discussion Board forums.

After examining each essay’s argument, results indicate that there are three cases of logical problems in terms of paragraph organization. A majority comes from student participants with partial transfer (Students O and P) and a minority from those with complete transfer (Student R). Interestingly, Students O and P with partial transfer have similar organizational problems where a paragraph contains either two or more main ideas that could have been developed separately. On the other hand, Student R with complete transfer only exhibits an overlap of supporting detail with another idea paragraph. On the whole, articulating and spelling out initial thoughts in the Discussion Board still allow students to “improve their thinking and meta-cognitive awareness” (Mercer 21) despite the lapse of logical organization of three students’ essays. As a matter of fact, the quality of logical problem exhibited in Student R with complete transfer, as opposed to Students O and P with partial transfer, generally proves the efficacy of asynchronous CMC.

In terms of language use, two remarkable distinctions are previously identified that support the Discussion Board’s capacity for further revision in print (note that Student T has two separate counts of transformations):
• three cases of online main ideas recast as supporting detail in the rough draft (cf. Students K, P, and T)

• four cases of online ideas reworded either as a main idea or thesis in the rough draft (cf. Students O, Q, R, and T)

**Textual Support**

Online interactions about textual support from the reading assignment reveal that a majority of the student drafts do not exhibit transfer. Though all students use textual support in their rough drafts, most of these sources are not previously discussed online as part of the collaborative invention. Only two student drafts (Students R and T) show relevant transference of textual support, where all sources mentioned online are used in the essay. Conversely, eight student drafts (Students L, O, Q, S, K, M, N, and P) display no transference at all and have minimal to null dialogues about the assigned readings.

Students whose rough drafts indicate complete transfer from the collaborative online invention activity use the exact number of sources posted online despite the fact that they were active only in the second Discussion Board activity. Student R posts four sources altogether and uses two sources each in two main idea paragraphs, while Student T posts two sources and uses both in one idea paragraph. Student R has no online dialogue about source plans but actively suggests four sources to three different peers which are all reflected in her own essay, and Student T starts an individual thread with two source plans that are directly reflected in his own draft. The following transcripts and essay drafts demonstrate these transfers:

**STUDENTS R AND T (group mates) – all sources either suggested to peers (Student R) or individually shared (Student T) online are transferred to their rough drafts**

**Second Discussion Board Invention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: RE:MSE topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Student S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:43:13 AM EST</td>
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i am not sure yet, but i'll probably write about the kids who obey their parents, when they make
them choose their professions. Especially talking about little kids, and the parents who want them to become 'Infant prodigies'. Like you know, making them work a lot, much more than their peers do, and thus making them look successful. Why do they obey, when the parents are taking their childhood away from them? and after they've taken the childhood, they aren't letting them live a normal teen life. so why do they do nothing about it.

I think this is a very interesting topic. I think you could definitely work in pressure from authority and the desire to obey an authority figure here. [...] why do they want to succeed so much? Do they want to be so different from the crowd, thus disproving Sartwell and Asch that people want to belong? Or is it that those children want to belong to a different, seemingly better crowd? Either way, I think you could work in the sources, albeit in slightly different, unconventional ways.

I was thinking about writing my essay on why people join sororities or fraternities. I'm not too sure on how I am going to use the sources yet [...]

I think this sounds like a really good idea. It is interesting why people join sororities or fraternities, especially given their somewhat negative reputation in society and the media. I think if you were going to go with the "sense of belonging" as one of your ideas, you could use Asch's article or Sartwell's as well. The peer pressure also works under that category as well. If you were going to go with the family route, you could probably work in that the family acts as an authority figure, in which case you could use Milgram's article, too. I think that getting involved in campus could also be considered a situation where people might do things they wouldn't normally do (as college is a new experience and such) so in that case, you could use Baumrind's article as one of your sources as well.

I thought about writing this essay on athletes, and why they play their various roles and positions. I think there is a lot of information behind this topic. I could talk about the most obvious one, money, but then there is also for the success of the team, and because of the coaches.

This is an interesting topic. I think you could work each reason into the articles we have. For the money, you could investigate why people want money in the first place--is it strictly for reasons of survival (i.e. you need food, shelter, clothing, etc.) or is it so that they can keep up with the "famous athlete" image and have a big house and nice cars? If it's the second case, then they merely want to fit in, in which case you could easily use the articles, especially Sartwell's. If they want success for the team, then that too could go along with fitting into a group and not wanting to feel ostracized or blamed if the team does poorly. And if the athletes merely want to appease their coaches, then that signifies that they want to appease an authority figure, which is supported by Milgram's article.
One of the likelier causes for participation in an organized religion is quite simply group or social pressure. When discussing past psychological experiments which tested how likely man is to conform to the group in his article "Opinions and Social Pressure," social psychologist Solomon Asch writes, "Most of these studies had substantially the same result: confronted with opinions contrary to their own many subjects apparently shifted their judgments in the direction of the views of the majorities or the experts." Crispin Sartwell, author of "The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror," concurs with Asch about peoples’ willingness to go with the crowd by confirming that "people are herd animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances." People are indeed creatures with a tendency to flock and desiring the approval and acceptance of their acquaintances is something all do.

The most common likely cause for a person to belong to an organized religion is situational pressure. People can be pushed to do many illogical seemingly inexplicable things simply because of the strange unfamiliar situations in which they find themselves. In "Review of Stanley Milgram's Experiments on Obedience," Diana Baumrind criticizes Stanley Milgram’s prison experiments and defends that as "the laboratory is unfamiliar as a setting and the rules of behavior ambiguous" people are "more prone to behave in an obedient suggestible manner." Baumrind is essentially saying that situations themselves can put enormous pressure on people and will therefore dictate their behavior in a direction it might not normally have gone.

Marianne Szegedy-Maszak affirms Baumrind’s belief that situation can significantly affect a person’s behavior in her article about the US military’s abuse of Iraqi prisoners, "The Abu Ghraib Prison Scandal: Sources of Sadism." Szegedy-Maszak writes that "the particulars of the soldiers’ life in Abu Ghraib also need to be taken into account....The anxiety and helplessness are exacerbated by difficult living conditions and constant danger." The soldiers were in new exceedingly stressful situations which led them to act as they normally would not.

As with Student R’s rough draft above, Student T’s essay below after the Discussion Board thread seems to show strong synthesis between sources:

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: MSE ideas
Author: Student T  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST
Total views: 36  Your views: 2

Topic: Why people do drugs  Sources: So far I have used 1 source from "The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror" [by Sartwell]. Probably going to use Asch’s article as a source as well for the "group" topic

Student T Rough Draft – Citation of Sources

(topic: why people do drugs)

One possible reason why someone may start taking drugs is that they feel left out or unpopular. This situation clearly falls under pressure from groups. Crispin Sartwell, in "The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror" states that "Desire for your own security and that of your family and friends, to the extent you are willing to make moral compromises to preserve it." This quote illustrates that people will sacrifice what they believe is morally right to secure friends. Likewise, Solomon E. Asch, in his
article “Opinions and Social Pressure” states that “we have found the tendency to conformity in our society so strong that reasonably intelligent and well-meaning young people are willing to call white black is a meaning of concern” (311). Asch is basically saying that even well educated, intelligent people are surrendering their beliefs and morals to conform with what the rest of society is doing; in this case it is drugs […] 

All rough drafts contain sources but eight of these drafts do not exhibit any transfer from the online forum. Students L, O, Q, and S have no online activity about sources but their rough drafts have varying degrees of source citations and synthesis. Students L and Q display strong source synthesis, Student O indicates source disconnection and weak synthesis verbs, and Student S has no source synthesis at all.

STUDENT L (group mate of Student K and M) – no online dialogue about sources but essay draft shows strong source synthesis

Student L Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why I am a loyal follower of Indiana Pacers)

[…] A slightly more realistic explanation for being a loyal fan over all the years is because I have a large majority of my family that lives in Indiana. With so many people close to me being admirers of the same team I felt like I had to cheer on the same team so that I would fit into the group […] That pressure to want to belong to a group correlates very well with the various articles discussed in the Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum (WARAC). Crispin Sartwell depicted this need to belong to a group in his article entitled “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror” when he quoted “People are herd animals they seek to associate themselves with the consensus of their acquaintances” (363). Similarly Solomon Asch confirmed the effects of group pressure in his article “Opinions and Social Pressure” when he stated “Life in society requires consensus as an indispensable condition. But consensus to be productive requires that each individual contribute independently out of his or her experience and insight. When consensus comes under the dominance of conformity the social processes polluted and the individual at the same time surrenders the powers on which his functioning as a feeling and thinking being depends”(311). Both articles written by these scholars offer advice that explain how social pressures influence which team I am a fan of […] 

[…] The principal reason for me being a Pacers fan ever since I was a small child is because I started watching and enjoying the Pacers’ organization when Reggie Miller was their star player who was always going up against Michael Jordan and the Chicago Bulls in the Eastern Conference Playoffs. I was one of those people who never really liked Michael Jordan and I instead fell in love with the team that was constantly pestering the Bulls on their way to the NBA Finals year in and year out […] The situational pressure in this event was that I felt the pressure to root for the underdog which was the Indiana Pacers against the juggernaut Chicago Bulls. Phillip Zimbardo documented this situational pressure in his article “The Stanford Prison Experiment” when he made the point “abnormal social and personal reactions are best seen as a product of their transaction with an environment that supported their behavior” (354). In agreement with that statement Ian Parker was quoted saying “people tend to do things because of where they are not who you are” in his article “Obedience” which affirms the point that people are effected by the situation they are in (340) […]
STUDENTS O and Q (group mates) – both have no online dialogues about sources but Student Q’s rough draft suggests stronger synthesis of sources than Student O.

Student O Rough Draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why college men join fraternities)

[...] Next many men have recognized affiliation of one of the characters who have in some way left a positive influence on their lives. Some men possess legacy a direct blood link to the fraternity in which someone their father brother uncle or other close family member holds membership in the society [...] Milgram comments “For many people obedience is a deeply ingrained behavior tendency indeed a potent impulse overriding training in ethnic sympathy and moral conduct” (Milgram 314). Further Asch states “Confronted with opinions contrary to their own many subjects apparently shifted their judgments in the direction of the views of the majorities or experts” (Asch 307) [...] The question is then raised why do fraternities target college men not middle aged men in the labor force or perhaps the freshman in high school? [...] The thought of being alone isolated or falling behind your peers in any number of categories is often enough to influence men into joining social fraternities. “People are herd animals” (Sartwell 363) claims Sartwell explaining further the tendency of men to seek the security of the group regardless of the consequences. Moreover Parker claims “People tend to do things because of where they are not who they are and we are slow to see it” (Parker 340). Caught in this rare medium men commonly make decisions that in other settings they would not make thus joining Greek Social Fraternities.

Student O’s rough draft above contains two different sources in each main idea paragraph that are not strongly synthesized due to the use of accumulative words “further” and “moreover,” respectively, instead of synthesis verbs. In addition, both sources in the first paragraph do not seem to support each other and the topic sentence does not seem to make sense. Except for the last paragraph that contains only one source and an admission of the need for another (see parenthesis), Student Q displays a much stronger synthesis:

Student Q Rough draft – Citation of Sources
(topic: why people decide to get tattoos)

[...] One reason many people have tattoo’s is because they are active in a form of religion or group that permits them to have one [...]Whether it be a ruler or a leader of this organized group, there is a greater power of authority that is forcing them to mark their bodies. Pressured not to disappoint anyone, despite any moral values, every member will be tattooed. This concept was supported by Stanley Milgram in his essay, “Perils of Obedience” when he stated, “the extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any length on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation” (314). What this means is that some people are so involved in their religious aspect of life that they will do whatever their leader commands them to do in order to be accepted [...] In agreement with Milgram, Diana Baumrind states in her essay, “Review of Stanley Milgram’s Experiments On Obedience”, that in fact, the interpersonal relationship between
experimenter and subject additionally has unique features which are likely to provoke initial anxiety in the subject' (326). Once again, when a person is in a situation where authority is forcing you to feel tense, you are going to go to any length just to please the authority.

Although pressure from authority may seem like the best cause as to why people get tattoo’s, when put in a high tense situation, it is hard to turn down. There are serious emotional events that happen in a person’s life that they would like to embrace forever […] This concept was supported by Ian Parker in his essay, “Obedience”, when he said, “the emphasis on the way in which differences in situations had caused differences in degrees of obedience: the closer the learner to the teacher, the greater the disobedience, and so on” (333). Although this situation deals with Milgram’s experiment of obedience, they both have the same concept of how people can be put into an apprehensive position to give into a situation […] In Zimbardo’s essay, “The Stanford Prison Experiment”, he, in the same way, agrees with Parker by saying how, “it was remarkable how readily we all slipped into our roles, temporarily gave up our identities, and allowed these assigned roles and the social forces in the situation to guide, shape, and eventually to control our freedom of thought and action” (349). What he is saying here is that they, because of the situation the guards were put in were forced to act out the role regardless if they had wanted to or not […] The most probable cause of this tattoo trend would be because of the rebellion against parents and group pressure […] One can be pressured, or feel obligated into getting a tattoo just because their friends have one. “I might not want to do this, but I do” is what Crispin Sartwell says in his essay, “The Genocidal Killer in the Mirror”, when he is explaining the thoughts of people pressured by peers or groups. This works perfectly for tattoo’s because most people will get their tattoo and then decide later that they do not want it because they realize it is permanent and you can never get rid of it. (I need to add another citation here) […]

STUDENT S (group mate of Students R and T) – no online dialogue about sources and the rough draft does not show any source synthesis at all

Student S Rough Draft – Citation of Sources

(topic: why people become terrorists)

[...] People without education are easy to manipulate [...] For those uneducated people places of religious gatherings become only ways to obtain any kind of information or education. What is being said there is the only truth for them but even more important is who says that truth. This is how Yale psychologist Stanley Millgram regards the social environment: “The problem of obedience is not wholly psychological. The form and shape of society and the way it is developing have much to do with it.”(Milligram 194). This person becomes an authority with practically no limits to his power [...] Another reason why people decide to become kamikazes is because of other family members or relatives who have already made that decision [...] This is what Solomon Asch a psychologist from the Rutgers University says about it: “That social influences shape person’s practices judgments and beliefs is a truism to which anyone will readily assent.…..a member of cannibals accepts cannibalism as altogether fitting and proper” (Asch 176).

[...] As a result of these high demands and surrounding situation people who are being raised under this pressure and partially lose their ability to think independently develop a very strong alter ego. They are concentrated on staying on the ‘adequate height’ of moral qualities of their family/friend circle. This becomes an idée fixe in Asian societies [...] Last century’s greatest thinker Erich Fromm analyzes in his ‘Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral problem’ the word ‘conscience’ and mentions the following phenomenon : “…the ‘authoritarian conscience’ which is the
internalized voice of an authority whom we are eager to please and afraid of displeasing” (Fromm 229).

However the situation surrounding those individuals doesn’t affect only their inner world or alter ego. Very easily they try to fit in the trend of hating the Western Civilization often without even knowing what it actually is. If they feel that this feeling is being supported by their social environment some might wish to go ahead and become ‘successful’ in this fight. This is when the idea of self destruction with additional victims involved is coming up as a perfect decision. This point is interestingly illustrated in the ‘Genocidal Killer in the Mirror’ by Crispin Sartwell as a “response to social consensus”; “People are herd animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances” (Sartwell 233) […]

Students K and M share posts about sources in the second Discussion Board activity, though no specific articles are mentioned. Instead, plans of using articles from the textbook to support either “why people conform” (Student K) or “peer pressure” and “media” (Student M) are posted. Student K uses two sources altogether with one source for each main idea paragraph, while Student M uses four sources altogether with two sources for each idea previously mentioned online.

STUDENTS K and M (group mates) – both simply mention broad plans to use sources in the second activity, but Student M seems to have stronger synthesis than Student K

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Student K's Essay
Author: Student K  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:30 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:30 AM EST
Total views: 28  Your views: 1

[...] There are many online articles about why people buy iPods rather than better, cheaper mp3 players that I'm sure I will quote in my essay. Also, since I have to use 4 different articles from the WARAC I think I will find parts in the articles that discuss the authors theories on why people do what large groups of people are doing. Why do people conform? […]

Student K Rough Draft - Citation of Sources
(topic: why iPods became a trend)

[...] Apple’s iPod ads play a very large role in the sales and popularity of the product. They used revolutionary marketing techniques that earned them a spot in every single television commercial break […] A person can relax if he or she is “blending in” and appears anonymous. Erich Fromm’s article Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem states “As long as I am obedient to the power of the States the Church or public opinion I feel safe and protected.” People feel a sense of protection by owning an iPod and becoming a part of the trend that is being presented to them in a colorful way daily as they watch television.  

[...] One final and major reason that the iPod is more of a trend than a product is the fact that people actually believe that everyone has one. According to Crispin
Based on the rough draft above, Student K uses only one source for each paragraph so no synthesis is evident and the source of the first paragraph does not seem to connect to its topic sentence. In contrast, Student M’s rough draft below seems to suggest stronger source synthesis with transitions and synthesis verbs “Likewise … he confirms Milgram’s thoughts” and “In the same way… Zimbardo’s study… confirms the idea that” used in both paragraphs, respectively.

**Second Discussion Board Invention**

**Subject:** Thesis/main ideas/counterargument  
**Author:** Student M  
**Creation date:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
**Date last modified:** Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
**Total views:** 16  
**Your views:** 1

[...]

**Sources:**  
- I'm going to incorporate the sources in with the peer pressure paragraph. I'm going to relate that paragraph to the Group Pressure idea.  
- I'm also going to incorporate the sources with my media paragraph. I'm going to relate this paragraph to the authority idea.  

[...]

**Student M Rough Draft – Citation of Sources**

(topic: why teens drink)

[...]

Another plausible cause to why teenagers drink underage is because of the media. It seems like everywhere one turns today there is an advertisement for alcohol. In **Stanley Milgram’s experiment** “The Perils of Obedience” he illustrates how much of an impact authority has on people. Even though this experiment demonstrates much harsher circumstances than the media having an affect on teenagers it still shows how authority can overtake a human being. “Stark authority was pitted against the subjects’ strongest moral imperatives against hurting others and with the subjects’ ears ringing with the screams of victims authority won more often than not”(Milgram).  

**Likewise in Theodore Dalrymple’s article** “Just Do What the Pilot Tells You” he confirms Milgram’s thoughts on obedience to authority and how authority can overpower someone’s conscience. “Disobedience to authority is not inherently more glorious than obedience”(Dalrymple) [...]

Finally the most plausible reason to why teenagers use alcohol underage is because of peer pressure. In **Solomon Asch’s experiment** “Opinions and Social Pressure” he confirms the idea that group pressure can be a very manipulating force. Asch’s experiment states “Whereas in ordinary circumstances individuals matching the lines will make mistakes less than 1 per cent of the time under group pressure the minority subjects swung to acceptance of the misleading majority’s wrong judgments in 36.8 per cent of the selections”(Asch) [...]

**In the same way Philip G. Zimbardo’s study “The Stanford Prison Experiment” confirms the idea that peer pressure can be the strongest influence on someone’s behavior.** For example “Still the behavior of these good guards seemed more motivated by a desire to be liked by everyone in the system than by a concern for the inmates welfare”(Zimbardo). This statement proves the fact that
the reason that teens would drink is because of the peer pressure […]

And finally, Students N and P engage in a dialogue about sources in the second Discussion Board forum where Student P suggests a web source to Student N and Student N, in turn, agrees to use the source in the essay. However, aside from the fact that the source does not transfer, the sources Student N used in the first idea paragraph do not seem to logically connect; in addition, the second idea paragraph displays weak synthesis with the use of “also” between sources. On the other hand, Student P’s rough draft shows no source synthesis at all.

STUDENTS N and P (group mates) – share source ideas in the second online activity but no sources are traced in either essay

Second Discussion Board Invention

http://www.saferoads.org/issues/fs-helmets.htm I found this website...it may help? […]

http://www.saferoads.org/issues/fs-helmets.htm I found this website...it may help? […]

I am gonna use a website giving statistics about motorcycles and I am going to use a personal story and just state the reasons why it makes no sense […]

Student N Rough Draft – Citation of Sources

(topic: why people do not wear motorcycle helmets)

[...] Yet another probable cause for why some people choose not to wear a helmet while riding on a motorcycle, is the fact that not wearing one makes the whole experience more dangerous. Some people thrive on fear and danger, to give themselves an adrenaline rush [...] For example, in Philip G. Zimbardo’s article about the Stanford Prison Experiment, he stated that, “Although initially warned that as prisoners their privacy and other civil rights would be violated and that they might be subjected to harassment, every subject was completely confident of his ability to endure whatever the prison had to offer for the full two week experimental period” (346). In his study, the participants were fully aware that they were going to be at risk and would not be treated properly, but each and every one of them was ok with this, because each participant was confident enough in himself that everything would be fine [...] According to Diana Baumrind, “From the subject’s point of view procedures which involve loss
of dignity, self esteem and trust in rational authority are probably most harmful in the long run and require the most thoughtfully planned reparations” (330). What she is saying here is that those whose self esteem, dignity and trust were altered with (in reference to an experiment) are the ones who would have the hardest time moving on. This is the same with motorcyclists who thrive on the risk of not wearing a helmet, because as soon as their self esteem and confidence is messed with, paths they will follow will also be altered […]

The real reason for why people do not always wear a helmet when on a motorcycle is because they are trying to go for the “cool” factor […]. In most societies, the “outcasts” are not the “cool” ones, which then turns helmet wearing into something that the uncool people do. This type of behavior can be explained by what Crispin Sartwell defines as “response to social consensus”. Sartwell explains this by saying, “People are herd animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances. If you hate being excluded by a clique, or dress in terms of trends, you are responding in this way (363). Also, in Solomon Asch’s experiment about the affects of a group on an individual, he found that, “Whereas in ordinary circumstances individuals matching the lines will make mistakes less than 1 percent of the time, under group pressure the minority subjects swung to acceptance of the misleading majority’s wrong judgments in 36.8% of the selections” (309). For these reasons, it appears that the most likely reason why people do not wear a helmet while riding a motorcycle is because they want to be like the majority, because being in the majority is “cool” […]

Based on the rough draft below, Student P uses five sources all with one source each in the first and last paragraphs and three un-synthesized sources in the middle paragraph:

**Student P Rough Draft – Citation of Sources**

(topic: why people binge drink)

[...] College students are more apt to binge drink because they constantly are surrounded by the drinking atmosphere. In the article “The Stanford Prison Experiment”, a study performed by Philip G. Zimbardo, he states “abnormal social and personal reactions are best seen as a product of their transaction with an environment that supported their behavior” (354). College students are a major victim of this issue of binge drinking, especially freshman […]

One probable cause is peer pressure; the pressure to be accepted and to fit in. Solomon Asch in “Opinions and Social Pressure” shows that “under group pressure the minority subjects swung to acceptance of the misleading majority’s wrong judgments in 36.8 percent of selections” (309). Therefore this can conclude that for most individuals fitting in is more important than going against your own values. In conclusion to Ian Parker’s article “Obedience” he states, “people tend to do things because of where they are, not who they are” (340) […] Crispin Sartwell in “Genocidal Killer in the Mirror” concludes that people often go along with the group their in by stating “People are herds of animals; they seek to associate themselves with a consensus of their acquaintances” (363).

We are surrounded by the message that alcohol is fun, sexy, desirable and harmless. We get this message many times a day. We get it from the ads and, far more often, we get it from the media, which depend upon alcohol advertising for a large share of their profits (Center). These media messages, that show drinking is a positive or attractive activity is developing by a very young age, seen at carry outs, on television and heard on the radio. Jean Kilbourne states in her article Deadly Persuasion “The tab for alcohol use doesn't end there. More than $2 billion a year - a sizable chunk of the over $90 billion the industry takes in annually - goes to prime the advertising and promotion pump and keep drinkers’ money flowing freely” (Center) […]
Highlights of Textual Support

On the whole, eight student drafts (Students L, O, Q, S, K, M, N, and P) display no transfer of textual support, but each of these essays contains sources. Students L, O, Q, and S have no online activity about sources at all, while Students K and M post source ideas without any specific titles in the second activity. Also active only in the second forum, Student P shares a specific web source to Student N that is not transferred to the essay. Finally, only two student drafts (Students R and T) indicate direct source transfers from the Discussion Board transcripts.

Because of these patterns, it is safe to conclude that the effect of the Discussion Board activity on the essay’s citation and synthesis of sources is minimal, since there are only two cases of direct transfers and the rest of the essay drafts have added sources that strengthen textual support. In this case, asynchronous CMC allows students to reflect on their own ideas “at their own convenience when or where they want and are able to control the pace of instruction” (Guy 9). The minimal rate of source transfer does not necessarily suggest the failure of the collaborative Discussion Board invention; on the contrary, the presence of sources in all of the participants’ written drafts strongly implies that critical reflection is triggered by the online activity. Based on the data set, students need more time to incorporate possible source ideas into their essays. Those with direct transfers (Students R and T) contain strongly connected sources with synthesis verbs, while those without transfer have contrasting results. On the one hand, three essay drafts (Students K, N, and O) lack logical source connections, but on the other, three essay drafts (Students L, M, and Q) demonstrate strongly synthesized sources. Such discrepancy implies that the faulty logic of Students K, N, and O’s sources can not be directly attributed to the lack of source transfer from the Discussion Board forum, thereby strengthening its minimal effect.
Since most of the participants’ online posts about sources are kept to a minimum and the transfer of sources is not significant, lexical and syntactic observations from the transcripts are likewise irrelevant. Perhaps the only detectable pattern in this case is the usage of synthesis verbs and transitions between sources in student drafts. Overall, these patterns surprisingly indicate the positive effect of source transfer on the use of synthesis verbs, highlighting the Discussion Board’s enormous potential for retrieving, modifying, and connecting information due to its “unique time and space … and storage” (Chappell 232):

- The majority of student essays that indicate no source transfer (cf. Students N, O, K, S, and P) have either weak synthesis (cf. Student N’s use of “also” and Student O’s “further” and “moreover” between sources) or no synthesis at all (cf. Students K, S, and P).
- Only three students without source transfer (cf. Students L, M, and Q) use synthesis verbs to connect their sources (cf. Student L’s “similarly” and “in agreement with,” Student M’s “Likewise…confirms” and “In the same way…confirms,” and Student Q’s “In agreement” and “In the same way, agrees”).
- Both students that exhibit direct source transfers (cf. Students R and T) use synthesis verbs to strongly connect their sources (cf. Student R’s “concurs” and “affirms” and Student T’s “likewise”).

**Opposing Views and Refutations**

The last category of the essay, opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, shows relevant patterns in this data set. Student rough drafts reveal that six student participants (Students K, L, O, Q, R, and T) do not include opposing views or counterarguments in their essays and only four students (Students M, N, P and S) do. These results prompted me to trace the discussion posts on counterarguments and I found that quite a few transcripts contain some meaningful exchange in this category despite their non-transference in print (essays without counterarguments were not included here).

Among those who did not include counterarguments in their rough draft, Students R and T both express either difficulty (Student R) or lack of counterargument ideas (Student T) in the
second Discussion Board activity. These admissions, despite two peer suggestions for Student T, are reflected in their essays’ lack of counterarguments:

STUDENTS R and T (group mates) – admit to having no counterargument ideas in the second forum as reflected in their essays:

Second Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: RE:MSE topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Student R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:03 AM EST</td>
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<td>Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:03 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total views: 14 Your views: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[…] I am anticipating many counterarguments but I’m having some trouble thinking of some. Religion is a very controversial topic and a very personal one at that, so I’m not sure how people will react.

| Author: Peer 1 |
| Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:51 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:51 AM EST |
| Total views: 8 Your views: 1 |

I agree that authority is the main reason for people to practice a religion […] Thinking of a counterargument may be more difficult because it is more of a sensitive subject.

Student T receives possible opposing views from Students R and S in the second collaborative forum but neither of these is transferred to the written draft:

Second Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: MSE ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author: Student T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST</td>
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<td>Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:48 AM EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total views: 36 Your views: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Topic: Why people do drugs […] I'm not sure of many counter arguments yet.

| Author: Student R |
| Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:45 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:46:45 AM EST |
| Total views: 5 Your views: 1 |

[counterargument for Student T] […] I agree, though, the counterarguments are the hardest to think of. I suppose someone might say that they started taking drugs for medicinal purposes but then got addicted, though I don't really know how that could be a counterargument.

| Author: Student S |
| Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:50 AM EST |
| Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:50 AM EST |
| Total views: 5 Your views: 1 |

[counterargument for Student T] I don't know what the counterargument can be either, but maybe you could say just for pleasure and fun?

Perhaps the only online dialogue about counterarguments between Students O and Q is found in the second Discussion Board forum, where Student Q suggests a counterargument for
Student O’s topic. This idea, apparently, does not transfer to Student O’s essay, just as Student Q does not include counterarguments in the rough draft.

STUDENTS O and Q (group mates) – in the second collaborative invention forum, Student Q suggests a possible counterargument to Student O which is not reflected in the draft

Second Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Topics..Mine is Good</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Student O</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation date:</td>
<td>Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total views:</td>
<td>26  Your views: 2</td>
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For the topic of Essay #2 I have selected to focus on Greek Life, more specifically, Fraternity Life. The question of my essay will be "Why do college age men join and pay dues to social organizations which do not appear to provide an adequate readjustment as compared to their cost […]"

| Author: | Student Q          |
| Creation date: | Monday, February 12, 2007 11:00:13 AM EST |
| Date last modified: | Monday, February 12, 2007 11:00:13 AM EST |
| Total views: | 6  Your views: 1 |

Oh, and along with that... there are definitely people out there that hate fraternities and sororities so you could get some good counterarguments if you ask around. I think it is stupid for people to pay money to make friends, basically. It is also a lot of extra busy work that takes away time from schoolwork or outside friends.

And finally, among those who did not include opposing views and refutations in their rough drafts, only Students K and L post counterargument plans in the Discussion Board.

Student L responds to the teacher’s post about sports with a counterargument in the first activity and, in the second, starts a counterargument thread based on peer suggestions and adds another one. Nevertheless, Student L writes about a different essay topic altogether, so no transfer is evident. The Discussion Board transcripts that follow substantiate this pattern:

STUDENTS K and L (group mates) – both post counterargument plans online and receive suggestions from peers but none is transferred to either drafts

First Discussion Board Invention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject:</th>
<th>Sports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author:</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation date:</td>
<td>Monday, February 5, 2007 10:36:29 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date last modified:</td>
<td>Monday, February 5, 2007 10:38:24 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total views:</td>
<td>43  Your views: 3</td>
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IS there any way we can incorporate our theories into an essay about sports?
One topic that I am thinking about discussing is why society keeps looking to professional athletes as role models even though a large majority of them are not people we would want our children looking up to […] The role models should be people making a difference in the world instead of people that play games for a living. A counterargument might be the fact that there are some professional athletes that do a lot for their communities and are good, charitable people. However most of these athletes are not.

Author: Student N  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:59:45 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 10:59:45 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

[counterargument for Student L] Can you back it up when you say "most" of these athletes are not?? I am just saying that because of what our media thrives on, it may seem like the majority of athletes are these "not so good" role models, but in reality, I think it is a possibility that it is only a small percent of the overall group of athletes. Think about it, with our society, media is not going to focus on "Shaq helps old lady take groceries to her car"...the media is more likely to say "Kobe convicted of rape". I don't know...just my thoughts.

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Role models being pro athletes
Author: Student L  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:47:04 AM EST
Total views: 14  Your views: 1

Why is it that kids today have an overwhelming amount of role models that are professional athletes even though these people tend not to be the greatest role models for kids […] Some counterarguments would be that there are many kids who have role models that are not athletes. Another one could be that some one does not think pro athletes are bad role models.

Subject: RE:Role models being pro athletes
Author: Student K  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:55:36 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:55:36 AM EST
Total views: 6  Your views: 1

[counterargument for Student L] I think its a counterargument that a reason why kids want to be a pro athlete is that they want to continue playing the sports they love and get paid for it […]

Subject: Role models/pro athletes
Author: Student L  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

 […] counter: people don’t look to athletes for role models and pro athletes make good role models.

On the other hand, Student K shares counterargument ideas in the second invention forum below and revises the plan based on peer feedback. As the second transcript above shows,
Student K also suggests a counterargument to Student L but unfortunately, no counterargument is included in both essay drafts.

**Second Discussion Board Invention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject: Student K's Essay</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Student K</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:30 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:30 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total views:</strong> 28</td>
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<td><strong>Your views:</strong> 1</td>
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...possible counter arguments: iPods are just better than all other mp3 players. The truth: Currently, there are better and cheaper mp3 players on the market [...]  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[counterargument for Student K]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Student L</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST</td>
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<td><strong>Total views:</strong> 4</td>
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<td><strong>Your views:</strong> 1</td>
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You could use the fact that there are better mp3 players out there but they dont let you play songs that are illegally downloaded. i dont know what these new ones are called but i know people like ipods because they let you play music that you can rip off the internet for free. Also, an advantage of an ipod is that it is a really easy way to store a ton of different songs. these are just some ideas about why people still get ipods instead of the fact that everyone else has one

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<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Student K</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST</td>
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<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST</td>
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<td><strong>Total views:</strong> 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your views:</strong> 1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

...possible counter arguments: iPods are just better than all other mp3 players. You can put illegally downloaded music on them. They are really easy to use.

Four student essays (Students M, N, P, and S) include counterarguments in their rough drafts, but only Students M and P show partial transfer of their online plan to the essay. Though Students N and S raise possible counterargument ideas in the second Discussion Board forum, the nature of this activity is not reflected in their written drafts. The following data support these observations:

STUDENTS M (group mate of Students K and L) – reflects a counterargument in the essay that is not from peer suggestions

**First Discussion Board Invention**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:44:44 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total views:</strong> 12</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Your views:</strong> 1</td>
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OK--so why do we do this stuff when we know it's bad for us?

<p>| |</p>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Author:</strong> Student M</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creation date:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:21 AM EST</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date last modified:</strong> Monday, February 5, 2007 10:47:21 AM EST</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
people continue to do these harmful things [drink and do drugs] because of the outside pressure and the fact that everywhere you look there is a media ad or a commercial for alcohol or cigarettes.

Author: Peer 1  Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:04:34 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:04:34 AM EST  
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

[Counterargument for Student M] But not everyone is pressured to do drugs someone in the pattern started doing it on their own.

The second transcript below shows that Student M incorporates a peer-suggested counterargument online but not in print. Instead, the counterargument reflected in the essay is transformed from a more general online plan “I’m thinking of saying...some people may think peer pressure is not the most plausible cause...and go into detail why they would think that it is not” to a more specific “some might continue to say it [peer pressure] is not [and] one might believe that the media is a more plausible cause”:

Subject: Thesis/main ideas/counterargument  
Author: Student M  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST  
Total views: 16  Your views: 1

Topic: Why teens drink alcohol [...] Counterarguments: I'm not quite sure of what counterarguments I'm going to use. I'm thinking along the lines of saying that some people may think peer pressure is not the most plausible cause when I believe that it is. And go into detail on why they would think that it is not.

Author: Peer 1  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:07 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:07 AM EST  
Total views: 3  Your views: 1

[Counterargument for Student M] One counterargument you can use is people may say that drinking is a way for them to relax, or to get loose for a party (LoL) or maybe just because they can. A lot of freshman college students drink just because they have the option to do so because they're not around their parents or anyone who they lived with.

Subject: Thesis  
Author: Student M  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:56 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:56 AM EST  
Total views: 2  Your views: 1

[...] maybe change it [counterargument] up and use [Peer 1]'s idea that people may drink because they can and are around alcohol more.
Student M Rough Draft – Counterargument
(topic: why teens drink)


Although the evidence points to the fact that peer pressure is the most plausible cause of why teens drink some might continue to say that it is not. One might believe that the media is a more plausible cause to why teenagers decide to drink at such a young and illegal age. While there are some facts that could lead one to believe the idea that the media is the main cause of why teenagers drink still the most plausible reason goes back to the idea of peer pressure. Teenagers are constantly in the spotlight trying to make impressions on their friends.[…]

Student P posts a counterargument idea and receives another from Student N all in the second activity. But similar to Student M above, only the individual plan is transferred to the essay draft where the subject that is being referred to changes from specific (singular “person”) to general (plural “people”), as seen below:

STUDENT P (group mate of Students N, O, and Q) – also reflects counterargument ideas in the essay that are not from peer suggestions

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Binge Drinking
Author: Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:42:28 AM EST
Total views: 28  Your views: 2

1) Binge drinking is a common problem among college society […] (3) People may argue its not college kids amongst the problem or social pressure or media. They may say that the person should be able to have self control

Author: Student N  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:54 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:44:54 AM EST
Total views: 6  Your views: 1

(counterargument for Student P) I don’t know if this works or not…but maybe a possible counterargument could be that some people are just naturally shy or introverted and binge drinking helps get over that fear…so some people might do it for the social factor.

Student P Rough Draft – Counterargument
(topic: why people binge drink)

[…]

Potential objections one may raise would be that just because people are surrounded by alcohol doesn’t mean they binge drink. They could argue that the environment isn’t the case but that people should have self control. One also may disagree that college students are the major victims of this issue, that it may affect high schools just as much if not more. Either way these arguments still can’t deny that binge drinking is a problem that needs to be reduced. Alcohol remains the number one drug problem in the United States, causes health problems and doesn’t do the least bit of good […]
Two student drafts (Students N and S) do not reflect the second Discussion Board posts about counterarguments in their essays. Student N posts twice, adding another counterargument to the first post, but none of these is transferred to the rough draft that has two different counterarguments.

STUDENT N (group mate of Students O, P, and Q) – posts two counterarguments in the second activity but none is reflected in the essay.

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Motorcyclists and Helmets
Author: Student N Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:38:10 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:38:10 AM EST
Total views: 21 Your views: 2

I think that motorcyclists should always wear a helmet when riding. I just think that no matter how good of a driver someone is, they cannot prevent the bad drivers on the road from making mistakes. If there are bad drivers on the road (which, there always is), even the best driver in the world cannot prevent an accident 100% of the time. I know that a lot of people won't really agree with me and say that this should be up to the motorcyclists cuz if the person is old enough to drive it, they are old enough to decide to protect themself or not. To help prove my point, I plan to use a personal story about how one of my friends got in an accident and the doctors told him that the only thing that saved his life was his helmet.

Author: Student Q Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:56 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:48:56 AM EST
Total views: 6 Your views: 1

I think this is going to be a really good and interesting paper. I feel that a personal experience story will really put the reader in your place and make them feel what you are feeling.

Subject: Final Thing...
Author: Student N Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:08:09 AM EST
Total views: 2 Your views: 1

[...] 3.) Counterarguments-“Land of the free” so they should be able to do what they want. Also, if old enough to drive = old enough to make own decisions about personal safety.

Student N Rough Draft – Counterargument (topic: why people do not wear motorcycle helmets)

 [...] Some people may argue that not everyone cares about being “cool” so this cannot be the most likely reason but although this is true these are not the people we are talking about. If people do not care about being cool then they are the ones that wear helmets. Also someone might say “well maybe they did not have the extra money to spend on a helmet that is not necessary”. The response to this absurd statement would be that if someone has enough money to buy the motorcycle, insurance, registration, plates, etc., they will make sure there is enough money. When it comes down to it the reason why people neglect to wear a helmet 100 percent of the time it is because they are trying to fit in with the crowd [...]


In the same vein, Student S actively shares and receives peer suggestions online, but no counterargument idea is transferred to the essay, as seen below:

STUDENT S (group mate of Students R and T) – active only in the second forum, Student S either receives or shares ideas to peers but the essay reflects a different counterargument

Second Discussion Board Invention

Subject: RE:MSE topic
Author: Student S  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:43:13 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:43:13 AM EST
Total views: 11  Your views: 1

i am not sure yet, but I'll probably write about the kids who obey their parents, when they make them choose their professions. especially talking about little kids, and the parents who want them to become 'infant prodigies'. like you know, making them work a lot, much more than their peers do, and thus making them look successful. Why do they obey, when the parents are taking their childhood away from them? and after they've taken the childhood, they aren't letting them live a normal teen life. so why do they do nothing about it.

Author: Student R  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:53:12 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:53:12 AM EST
Total views: 5  Your views: 1

[counterargument for Student S] […] I guess a possible counterargument is that some children really do have the drive and the desire to succeed and are willing to give up their childhoods for just that, but even in that case, why do they want to succeed so much? Do they want to be so different from the crowd, thus disproving Sartwell and Asch that people want to belong? Or is it that those children want to belong to a different, seemingly better crowd? Either way, I think you could work in the sources, albeit in slightly different, unconventional ways.

Subject: Essay Topic
Author: Peer 1  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:06 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:40:06 AM EST
Total views: 38  Your views: 2

I was thinking about writing my essay on why people join sororities or fraternities […] A possible counterargument is that people just do it because they feel that they should and they have no other reason than that.

Author: Student S  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:59:21 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:59:21 AM EST
Total views: 4  Your views: 1

[…] The counterargument is that maybe they join only because there isn't much to do in free time for those kids, so they just join to do something. but here again, why do they want to be somewhere, interacting with the society? Isn't that another kind of group pressure?

Student S Rough Draft – Counterargument
(topic: why people become terrorists)

[…] Possibly my opponents could argue that another reason and even predominant is one deriving again from the financially heavy situation. Some members of extremely socially insecure families may simply be willing to give their lives as 'sacrifice' for other members of their families […] In response to this I will just say that even though this idea is definitely a possible explanation it still doesn't seem to be a truly powerful one. We should remember that we are
discussing one of the most ‘against-the-nature’ phenomena that can occur in this world - people destroying themselves in order to break someone else’s lives [...] people have to go against their natural instincts have to literally turn their psychics upside down. To cause such a dramatic change a very strong psychological reason should occur. Even though some people may wish to become sacrifices for the brighter future of the ones they love it is hard to find humans with moral qualities of that height [...] 

Highlights of Opposing Views and Refutations

In summary, the transfer of opposing views and refutations or counterarguments from the Discussion Board to student draft is very minimal. Six student essays do not have counterarguments (Students K, L, O, Q, R, and T) and four essays do (Students M, N, P, and S). Based on the Discussion Board transcripts, Students M and P display only partial transfer of counterargument ideas because they did not incorporate their peers’ suggestions. Students N and S, on the other hand, do not draw any counterargument ideas from online but include different counterarguments in their essays. And finally, those who have online dialogues about counterarguments (Students K, L, O and Q) do not transfer any of these to their rough drafts with zero counterarguments.

On the whole, the high rate of online interaction on counterarguments, despite its very minimal rate of transfer, suggests that students’ critical thinking skills are being enhanced (Guy 9) and their insights are being developed (Chappell 232) by the use of this asynchronous CMC forum. Just as the previous category on source ideas indicates, the Discussion Board activity implies that students need more time to reflect on their own and their peers’ counterargument ideas in order to increase the rate of transfer. With prolonged counterargument invention sessions, students will be able to seek more feedback on half-formed ideas at their own pace (Chappell 232) and incorporate them meaningfully into their written drafts.

Because the effect of the collaborative Discussion Board activities in this category is very minimal, only two relevant patterns pertaining to language use is found online and in print. One
is the transformation from general to specific plan (cf. Student M) and the other is the pluralization of a subject reference (cf. Student P).

**Attitude and Perception toward Asynchronous Discussion Board as Collaborative Invention**

This section describes the teacher-student attitude and perception toward asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention strategy in support of the previous textual analysis. Generally speaking, the teacher indicated more preference for the Discussion Board and had been using it in class for many years. Student interviews show that a majority had positive experiences with the activity and a minority still preferred synchronous face-to-face communication. Incidentally, important benefits regarding the process were raised by the teacher and students.

Within the following pages, interview highlights were divided into subsections according to the second research question: “What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?”

**Teacher**

As previously mentioned in Chapter Three, the same teacher expressed that using technology in the teaching of writing proved to be beneficial to her students in the past. Specifically, she found great success with the use of asynchronous Discussion Board as a tool for collaboration because of its convenience. According to her, students could possibly go back and look at the things they posted online as well as work at their own space and time in this forum. Comparing the Discussion Board with synchronous Chat, she claimed students do have their own space in Chat but not their own time and “if it’s not a good time for you [to share or respond in the chat room], you still have to be there.” This observation clearly endorses her preference for a more controlled classroom environment characterized by the use of an asynchronous
collaboration tool: “If I’m gonna have them there anyway, I’d rather have them in front of me all
together and we can interact in that way.” Nevertheless, the teacher remained very open about
experimenting with various ways of using technology in the composition classroom to find out
what would work best for different groups of student writers. This willingness strongly affirms
her status as a seasoned computers and writing practitioner.

General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference

With regard to the teacher’s perception of the Discussion Board for collaborative
invention, her preference for this tool is quite obvious because drawbacks were never mentioned
during the interview. Except for a little bit of uncertainty when asked about its effectiveness
(which she believed will be clarified after this study), the teacher described the following
advantages of using asynchronous Discussion Board for invention:

Advantages
  • more structured to look like an outline with threads and categories
  • more formal to put students in a structured mindset
  • more focused to avoid weird little tangents in conversations

The teacher had been using the Discussion Board for invention in the past and will
continue doing so in the future. For her, this tool is more effective if students have the same topic
or pre-assigned readings for discussion. But in their next argumentative essay, the Researched
Essay, she anticipated the difficulty of setting up groups for collaborative invention because
students would have free reign of topic choices (e.g. environmental, campus-related, or
discipline-specific issues). She believed that if they were in a Chat together, their common
knowledge would not be enough to sustain the dialogue, and they would end up educating each
other about their topics instead of getting any meaningful argumentation online. However, this
would not be the case in the Discussion Board because subject groups can be blocked together
for students to generate good ideas and add specific threads within a more structured and formal
setting. Having different ideas threaded and expecting each student to put his/her idea where it fits is necessary: “My golly,” she said, “that makes such a big difference!”

Assessment of the Process in terms of Student Participation

According to the teacher, students took much longer to respond to Discussion Board posts because of the formality of the forum; that is, students were taking more time looking at threads, reading everything that had been said about the subject, thinking about what to post, and so on. At one point, she said that she observed them in the room and noticed everybody was on task, each one fully engaged mentally and physically. Students were responding to her and to one another, thinking things through before posting online, doing tasks that are much more deliberate in the Discussion Board. Consequently, students seemed to respond more in this forum and “took on a little bit more ownership of keeping things going to a certain extent.”

In line with this observation, below are sample transcripts that show the positive effects of the Discussion Board. First is the capacity of its recipients to modify either main ideas (Student K) or counterarguments (Student M) based on peer feedback:

Student K – Discussion Board Invention

| Subject: | RE: Student K’s Essay
| Author: | Student K    |
| Date last modified: | Monday, February 12, 2007 10:52:07 AM EST |
| Total views: | 3 Your views: 1 |
| Main ideas: | 1. iPods are cheaper. 2. Everyone else has an iPod. 3. The iPod is the best mp3 player on the market. |

Author: Student L  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST  Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:55 AM EST  Total views: 4 Your views: 1
You could use the fact that there are better mp3 players out there but they don’t let you play songs that are illegally downloaded. I don’t know what these new ones are called but I know people like ipods because they let you play music that you can rip off the internet for free. Also, an advantage of an ipod is that it is a really easy way to store a ton of different songs. These are just some ideas about why people still get ipods instead of the fact that everyone else has one

Author: Student K  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST  Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:07:12 AM EST  Total views: 2 Your views: 1
It is my opinion that people buy iPods because they are the popular choice of mp3 player and not necessarily because it is the best on the market. Why people buy iPods over all the other mp3 players? Main ideas: a) iPods are the easiest mp3 player. B) they are the best mp3 players on the market. c) everyone else has one […]

Student M – Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Thesis/main ideas/counterargument
Author: Student M   Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:45:52 AM EST
Total views: 16   Your views: 1

Topic: Why teens drink alcohol […]
Counterarguments: I'm not quite sure of what counterarguments I'm going to use. I'm thinking along the lines of saying that some people may think peer pressure is not the most plausible cause when I believe that it is. And go into detail on why they would think that it is not.

Author: Peer 1   Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:07 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:07 AM EST
Total views: 3   Your views: 1

One counterargument you can use is people may say that drinking is a way for them to relax, or to get loose for a party (LoL) or maybe just because they can. A lot of freshman college students drink just because they have the option to do so because they're not around their parents or anyone who they lived with.

Author: Student M   Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:56 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:06:56 AM EST
Total views: 2   Your views: 1

[For Counterargument] Maybe change it up and use Peer 1’s idea that people may drink because they can and are around alcohol more.

Another is the capacity of its recipients to generate essay ideas to be read (and affirmed) in a sequential manner. The sample below demonstrates the transfer of a response from the Discussion Board to a student rough draft (Student L):

Student L – Discussion Board Invention

Author: Peer 1   Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:02:36 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:02:36 AM EST
Total views: 9   Your views: 1

All my family lives in North Carolina and are UNC fans but I know growing up I personally would cheer for Duke just to piss them off so would that be like reverse of the authoritative influence? But at the same time they influenced me to cheer for one team so is it the same thing even though its not who they wanted me to cheer for?

Author: Student L   Creation date: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:00:32 AM EST
Date last modified: Monday, February 5, 2007 11:00:32 AM EST
Total views: 11   Your views: 1

Family is important in who you root for because it can go either way. Some follow what their parents have been making them wear ever since they were a baby but then others root for the other team to be different. Like in a family where there is always one person who like michigan in a family of buckeye fans just because they
want to be the person that stands out.

Student L Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support  
(topic: why I am a loyal follower of Indiana Pacers)

[...] A slightly more realistic explanation for being a loyal fan over all the years is because I have a large majority of my family that lives in Indiana. With so many people close to me being admirers of the same team I felt like I had to cheer on the same team so that I would fit into the group [...] 

On the contrary, the transcript below seems to defy the formal structure of the Discussion Board as students may post responses in the wrong thread and create confusion. One student (Student P) posts two different suggestions in a single thread and realizes it afterwards. But Student P’s rough draft also includes a paragraph with multiple ideas that could possibly be an attribute of her weak organization skills (though this remains to be proven). Nevertheless, this is the only incident of a disorganized post throughout the forum, which further suggests that students need adequate time to read and think before posting ideas online. The following transcript and rough draft stand out from the rest of the data:

Student P – Discussion Board Invention

Subject: Topics…Mine is Good  
Author: Student O  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:51:18 AM EST  
Total views: 26  Your views: 2 

For the topic of Essay #2 I have selected to focus on Greek Life, more specifically, Fraternity Life. The question of my essay will be “Why do college age men join and pay dues to social organizations which do not appear to provide an adequate readjustment as compared to their cost” […]

Author: Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:10 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 10:57:10 AM EST  
Total views: 8  Your views: 1 

You could talk about the type of people that joins frats and the type of people that are against them. What values and similarities between people that join greek life?

[another topic suggestion] For gambling…maybe how easily it can become an addiction and how now its becoming so much easier to do because its all over online now

Author: Student P  Creation date: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:10 AM EST  
Date last modified: Monday, February 12, 2007 11:01:10 AM EST  
Total views: 4  Your views: 1
Student P Rough Draft – Main Ideas and Support

(topic: why people binge drink)

[...] Like in most things in life, it is a different story when you are actually in a situation where there is the potential for binge drinking [...] It is easy for teens to get caught up in the social scene of peer pressure [...] Many people see drinking as a social activity to make you feel happy, confident, and more sociable. Some people are just naturally shy or introverted and binge drinking helps get over that fear so they do it for the social factor [...] Drinking is seen as an adult activity, and teenagers want to be adult as soon as possible [...] Additionally, when the opportunity to drink occurs there is a kind of “Let's make up for lost time” attitude which outcomes in binge drinking [...] Another reason why people may binge drink is because they are either stressed from work or school [...] Also, some of the time depression is the cause of drinking among college students either because of homesickness, relationship problems, or failing grades [...]

Suggestions for Modification

As far as modifying the collaborative Discussion Board invention is concerned, the teacher thought both activities went really well, so nothing needs to be done except for her to maintain a stronger online presence. She related that students generated valuable ideas online as they engaged in dialogues with her and with each other, took off when they needed to take off, and kept one another in tow. Having used the Discussion Board numerous times before helped everyone in class understand how it works, so the teacher attributed that to its overall success. At the end of the interview, she expressed interest in the outcome of this study.

Students

Three student interviews (Students O, Q, and R) about the collaborative Discussion Board invention process were included in this section. Except for Student Q, Students O and R had previous online experience with the Discussion Board. Student O narrated that in an Arts course, this asynchronous tool allowed users to see what others were thinking about with regard to a subject or an artwork. He recalled that one half of their assignment required them to post a subject or topic online and submit a “general entry” of 1-1/2 pages, and the other half required them to go back online and post a refutation or support to other topics. For Student R’s Biology
course, students were required to share and discuss current events related to their lessons to facilitate learning. Student R also said that since the Biology teacher was not too involved online, the students practically ran the Discussion Board with their posts.

No online practice other than the Discussion Board was previously experienced by a majority of the respondents. Only Student R used another digital technology in high school, where several teachers had their own course web sites that students could visit and download homework assignments or links needed for their papers. Admittedly, Student R felt that this practice proved to be very helpful for everyone.

Finally, despite their various online experiences, Students O, Q, and R agreed that they were proficient with computers.

General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference

Students O and R shared that they really liked using the Discussion Board for collaborative invention. Student O pointed out that simply looking at the posts could spark something, especially if one does not have anything to write about. Moreover, Student R believed that the success of both collaborative activities could be attributed to the freedom students have in expressing their thoughts online as opposed to face-to-face where others may have reservations. On top of that, the Discussion Board was also very helpful because it allows users to see posts from other people to refer back to at anytime. In contrast, Student Q thought that the process was both effective and ineffective. Unlike Student R who claimed that the Discussion Board prompts people to share their thoughts uninhibitedly, Student Q believed people would talk more thoroughly in face-to-face situations because they are not just trying to get an assignment done quickly. Face-to-face communication likewise guarantees a much more immediate response in this case ideal for prewriting and class discussion. However, Student Q
also enumerated some possible benefits of using an asynchronous communication tool. First, the Discussion Board would pave the way for users to receive information and interact with peers despite their physical absence. Second, finding a topic in this forum would be possible because numerous ideas are posted for others to explore, adopt, or refer back to.

In terms of their preference for future invention strategies, both Students O and R were in favor of using the Discussion Board. Student O agreed to use the same invention tool most especially on the second day of composition when topics have already been explored and research articles have been read. Student O believed that going online allows free access to different thoughts, thus creating more possibilities for those without any topic to begin with. Student R liked the thought of bouncing off ideas, receiving immediate feedback, and referring back to them all at once in the Discussion Board. Also, typing out ideas and reading them on the computer screen might encourage one to think further and generate even more ideas in the process. On the other hand, Student Q shared that using the Discussion Board only when there are no classes (e.g. Fridays) would work well, but talking face-to-face would still work best for invention sessions during regular class periods.

Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Discussion Board to Essay Draft

When asked how many of the ideas discussed online were tapped into their writing, the students admitted that they significantly used a lot from the Discussion Board. Student O was uncertain about the topic at first, but after the collaborative activity, other people’s comments helped clarify some things and led to a new topic. On hindsight, Student O shared that the Discussion Board was a great way to modify possible topics since other views that could stimulate one’s thoughts were there. However, he maintained that one should also be careful when taking advice from classmates other than the instructor. Student R enthusiastically related
that half of the ideas used in the essay were from the Discussion Board. She began only with an essay topic in mind; after posting a crafted thesis statement online, she received feedback and revised her thesis to its final form. Some main ideas were also suggested, encouraged, and eventually used in the essay. And finally, Student Q used all the main points about her topic [“tattoos”] from the Discussion Board. She started by exploring possible ideas in the first forum; when others raised possible causes related to her topic, Student Q immediately thought about them in relation to her previous paper on “tattoos” and adopted them.

Description of Other Invention Strategies

Three different invention strategies were raised by the respondents. Student O made an outline of the paper, Student Q researched other people’s thoughts and experiences about the topic, and Student R did freewriting to come up with examples in support of the thesis statement. However, all of them agreed that part of the invention for this research-based essay was reading the assigned articles from the textbook.

Other Comments on Language Use

Both Students O and R admitted to using a few language features from online, but they did not specify these. Student O believed it is human nature to adopt the style of writing of something just read, while Student R insisted it is possible to use some online ideas and terms in the essay. Only Student Q responded otherwise.

Chapter Summary

The textual analysis of Discussion Board transcripts and student rough drafts signifies interesting comparisons with the teacher and student interview data. Affirming both teacher and students’ positive assessment of the Discussion Board invention process is the frequent transfer of invention ideas in two essay categories, (a) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, and
(b) main ideas and supporting details, respectively indicating successful to average effects of the online invention. While there are a few reservations from students during the interview, these negative comments contradict each other proving the general efficacy of the invention strategy. In this vein, the last two categories, (c) textual support or synthesis of sources and (d) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, respectively indicate minimal to very minimal effects. No data indicate null transfer.

The table below represents a descriptive summary of the data (Discussion Board transcripts, rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews) in response to two major research questions. Each research question was treated with analyzed data patterns and source connections to emphasize the nature of collaborative invention and the role of CMC in the process of writing academic essays:

Descriptive Summary of Discussion Board Transcripts and Student Rough Drafts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1: How effective is the collaborative Discussion Board invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?</th>
<th>Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement</th>
<th>Main Ideas and Supporting Details</th>
<th>Textual Support / Source Synthesis</th>
<th>Opposing Views and Refutations / Counterarguments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(successful)</td>
<td>(average)</td>
<td>(minimal)</td>
<td>(very minimal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?  
5 essays with transfer, 3 essays with partial transfer  
4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with transfer (but ideas are either modified, added, or reduced in the rough draft)  
2 essays with complete transfer  
2 essays with partial transfer

b) How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?  
2 essays without transfer  
5 essays with either modified, added, or reduced ideas; 1 essay without transfer  
8 essays without transfer  
8 essays without transfer

c) In terms of language use, what lexical  
3 cases of more specific topic and formal word  
3 cases of online main ideas recast as patterns surprisingly indicate positive  
1 case of transformation from general to
Table 3: This table represents the transfer of invention ideas based on four essay categories from online transcripts to student rough drafts. The summary of data patterns answers the first research question and sub-questions pertaining to the effect of the collaborative Discussion Board invention strategy.

| and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay? | choice in rough draft; 2 cases of exact thesis statement or word order found online and in print; 1 case of more argumentative essay purpose online | supporting detail in rough draft; 4 cases of online ideas reworded either as a main idea or thesis in rough draft | effect of source transfer on the use of synthesis verbs: 2 essays with complete transfer have strong synthesis; 2 essays without transfer have weak synthesis, 3 have no synthesis at all, and only 3 have strong synthesis | specific and 1 case of subject pluralization in rough draft |

Displaying successful to average transfer of (1) essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, and (2) main ideas and supporting details from cyberspace to print, the collaborative Discussion Board invention activity suggests higher possibilities for meaningful interaction in these categories. The data indicates that students who participated in this asynchronous tool seem to have received substantial feedback from peers that are positively transferred to their essays. Because of the absence of time constraints in this mode of communication, students were able to reflect much further on their essay focus and contribute meaningfully without the worries of proper timing required in a much more fluid synchronous CMC. In between messages is a time lag that “promotes planned discourse and also shapes different interactional structures from the ones in synchronous CMC” (Kitade 10). Thus, the benefits of asynchronous CMC in this case is tacit – participants inevitably “formulate, articulate, and edit responses of high quality” (Mercer 144) within a collaborative environment that encourages more reflective interaction. The setting of both invention activities with spatial constraints did not affect the quantity or quality of online posts and responses at all. In fact, posting ideas and responses in the Discussion Board during class period at the computer laboratory gave students just enough time to think and perform the task collaboratively. Moreover, the threads and individual archives proved to be very helpful.
especially for those who wanted to refer back to their own or their peers’ ideas so they could reread, reformulate, and incorporate these ideas into their rough drafts. Therefore, higher transfer rates and relevant conceptual and linguistic modifications are evident in both topic and main idea categories.

The last two categories, (3) textual support or source synthesis and (4) opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, reveal minimal to very minimal transfer, respectively. These results seem to reflect a downside of the Discussion Board, but the data actually show traces of relevant online collaboration on each category. As a matter of fact, a majority of the participants posted source ideas online, and everyone used sources in their essays. And though a majority may not have included counterarguments in their rough drafts, everyone positively shared their counterargument ideas online. The high rate of online interaction suggests that students may have allotted more time reflecting and modifying possible ideas that germinated online. Because students need more time to reflect on their own and their peers’ ideas in the Discussion Board, their critical thinking skills, as argued by most researchers, are further enhanced and developed (Guy 9). More mental effort and time are required for the incorporation of source synthesis and counterargumentation online, and this is directly proportional to the amount of effort and time needed in print. In essence, the asynchronous exchange serves as “a venue for informal expressive writing [to] develop insights, articulate ideas, and solve problems” (Chappell 232). Also, it influences the decision whether to transfer or not the same or a modified version of the idea to the rough draft. Based on a majority of the data, both source synthesis and counterarguments reflect this pattern.

Overall, the level of satisfaction and productivity is relatively greater with the use of a time independent application such as the Discussion Board for collaborative invention. Perhaps
additional class periods devoted to the last two categories could have reversed the minimal effects of this invention practice.

Descriptive Summary of Teacher and Student Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 2:</th>
<th>Teacher Interview</th>
<th>Student Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative Discussion Board invention process?</td>
<td>(more preference for the use of Discussion Board as invention strategy evident; only one transcript is found that contradicts teacher’s positive comment about the activity)</td>
<td>(majority had positive experience with the activity, while a minority held some reservations with a few contradicting negative comments)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) What did the teacher and students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Preference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More structured to look like an outline with threads and categories; More formal to put students in a structured mindset; and More focused to avoid weird little tangents in conversations</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>Preferred the use of the Discussion Board as invention in the future because of its structured and formal forum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b) How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity?

<p>| Students took much longer to respond because of the formality of the forum [only 1 recorded transcript with a... | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?</td>
<td><strong>disorganized post evident</strong>: Everyone was fully engaged mentally and physically; More response in this forum where students had a sense of “ownership” in keeping things going to a certain extent; and More effective overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification?</td>
<td>Nothing much needs to be done except for the Teacher to maintain a stronger online presence to keep generating valuable ideas as students dialogue with her and with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?</td>
<td>Everyone admitted to using ideas from the Discussion Board with regard to topic, thesis statement, and main ideas, respectively; 1 student said taking advice from peers must still be double-checked especially if one already knows what to write about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?</td>
<td>Different invention strategies were raised by 3 students: making an outline of the paper, doing research about the topic, and freewriting for thesis support and examples, respectively; Everyone agreed that reading the assigned articles from the textbook was part of their invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?</td>
<td>Only 2 students adopted a few language features from online but did not mention any specifics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: This table represents the teacher and students’ attitudes and perceptions toward the collaborative Discussion Board invention strategy. The summary of interview responses answers the second research question and sub-questions pertaining to the role of the Discussion Board in the process of writing academic essays.

The nature of asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention is described in both the transfer of textual variables from online transcripts to essay drafts as well as in the narratives of face-to-face interviews. As the second primary research question, the subjects’ perception and preference, assessments of participation or transfer, and suggestions for modification are all inscribed in the table above. The teacher’s comment about students taking
more time to respond in this forum but with higher quality and quantity of responses corresponds with the nature of asynchronous Discussion Board. This communication tool allows students to “engage in high-level discussions by framing and presenting ideas, formulating challenging questions for peers, and responding to those questions to clarify misconceptions that arise [and, in turn] develop reasoned responses that include explanation and justification” (Hacker and Niederhauser 55). The type of exchange characterized by recent collaborative invention activities expects students to clarify some ideas posted online; in the process, their critical thinking skills are further stimulated and finding (or modifying) a good topic is possible, as a majority of the students claimed.

In addition, the teacher opined that the Discussion Board’s formal appearance encourages more focused dialogues among participants who are placed in a structured mindset. Thus, off-tangent conversations are rare due to the presence of highly organized threads and categories for students to read and respond to at anytime. Within these threads are relevant questions, answers, follow-up questions, and final responses (Simonson 32), all of which closely approximate the collaborative aspect of invention in promoting an active construction of knowledge. In line with this, students in this study acted as “meaning makers who actively select, organize, and integrate their experiences with existing knowledge” (Hacker and Niederhauser 54), as they tried to find the best place to post ideas among a variety of subject threads. A majority of the students also shared that they prefer using the Discussion Board for invention because it is easy to refer back to for ideas. Kathleen Blake Yancey calls this archived electronic discussions a “source of enrichment” (108) that provide impetus for students to get into the habit of reading and writing.

However, one student pointed out that Discussion Board responses are either delayed or not guaranteed unlike the immediacy brought about by face-to-face communication. Granted
something is missing in this type of exchange that mostly relies on “decontextualized text, written at one point, read sometime later, and responded to at perhaps an even later time” (Mercer 24), the teacher I interviewed strongly insisted that the collaborative Discussion Board invention must be conducted in class. Except for online classes that necessitate the use of asynchronous CMC beyond time and space, the teacher believed that everybody should do the Discussion Board invention exercise at the same time in this context to closely monitor the discussion in a more controlled environment. The notion that this asynchronous tool is not the richest form of communication, as one student claimed, contradicts previous statements about Discussion Board conversations that tend to be more focused and thorough since perfect “timing” when posting ideas online is no longer an issue. Though impersonal and distant (Sadowski-Rasters, Duysters, and Sadowski viii), getting more in-depth responses are still probable. Another student even testified that everyone is free to say anything online than face-to-face, proving that electronic communication allows for more dialogue because it opens up spaces to accommodate other voices. Thus, more students become active readers and legitimate contributors of, according to James Inman, a community that is best represented by the interactions and resources of its members (1).

On the whole, teacher-student attitude and perception towards asynchronous Discussion Board is generally positive. The teacher said students were mentally and physically engaged in both activities, while students admitted they used significant ideas posted in the Discussion Board. Such testimonies prove that “it is not which technologies are used but how they are used and what information is communicated using the technologies” (Simonson 29). In essence, asynchronous communication combines writing-to-learn methodology with collaborative theories necessary in composition classrooms (Chappell 229).
A Comparison and Contrast of Synchronous Chat and Asynchronous Discussion Board as Collaborative Invention Strategies: An Overview

Chapter Five will describe the similarities and differences between synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative online invention strategies. The entire chapter will be based on previous descriptions of both platforms in terms of online discussions, research-based essay rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews. Relevant data patterns from both types of invention will be highlighted, analyzed, and used as basis for the Implications and Recommendations chapter.
CHAPTER V. A COMPARISON AND CONTRAST OF SYNCHRONOUS CHAT AND ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION BOARD AS COLLABORATIVE INVENTION STRATEGIES

Chapters Three and Four explored the correlation between each type of collaborative online invention activity – the synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board – and academic writing. Descriptions of the effects of Chat and Discussion Board as collaborative invention strategies on first-year writing were based on the transferability of online dialogues to student rough drafts as well as the attitudes and perceptions of the teacher and students toward each type of invention practice. The sequence of data presentation in each chapter, Chat and Discussion Board respectively, was purely based on the order of classes that used the online invention process.

Because the impact of synchronous and asynchronous computer-mediated communication (CMC) to student learning and/or writing practices is considered remarkable (Blythe 122-25; Eldred and Toner 37; Yancey 108), more studies that address the usage of these online communication tools specifically as invention strategy and its transfer to student writing are needed. Examining the initial reproduction of ideas in both collaborative computer-mediated settings along with teacher-student attitudes and perceptions could be the first step in finding out how effective each strategy really is in helping college students acquire meaningful ideas for their research-based essays. I believe that a comparative-contrastive description of both strategies would also provide valuable information for composition teachers to help them assess the best online practice suitable to their own classrooms. In effect, the result of this pilot study hopes to contribute towards strengthening the pedagogical implications of technology in composition classrooms, most especially during invention.
To help substantiate the claim that the use of CMC is an enabling practice because it facilitates student exchange (Blythe 122-125), this descriptive study explored the following research questions:

1. How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?
   a. How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?
   b. How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?
   c. In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?

2. What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?
   a. (for teacher and students) What did the teacher and students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?
   b. (for teacher) How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?
   c. (for teacher) If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification?
   d. (for students) How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?
   e. (for students) How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?
f. (for students) Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?

Through the use of online discussions, research-based essay rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews, I was able to describe both synchronous and asynchronous platforms as collaborative invention strategies in previous chapters. Although this study did not use a large population and may not be representative of all first-year composition students, this pilot study will be able to provide tentative descriptions of the relationship between synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board as invention modes and academic writing based on this context. The descriptions of the transfer of invention ideas from online to rough drafts supplemented with face-to-face interviews of teacher-student attitudes and perceptions will be most beneficial to composition teachers teaching in computer-mediated classrooms. Specifically, the information provided will help teachers choose the most appropriate online tool for their own classes as well as design future studies in different settings or initiate replications for generalizability.

Finally, this chapter highlights, analyzes, and uses relevant data patterns from both types of collaborative invention to answer each research question and closes with a descriptive summary.

Research Questions

As mentioned earlier, I specifically examined three data sets from each class in order to describe the effects of collaborative synchronous and asynchronous invention on first-year academic writing: online dialogues, student rough drafts, and teacher-student interviews. The first research question described the transfer of invention ideas from online to print, and the second research question addressed teacher-student perceptions and attitudes toward each type of collaborative online invention forum.
**Research Question 1:** How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?

The intent of this question was to look at the transfer of invention ideas from online to student rough drafts. To address the question, I analyzed how much of what was discussed online was reflected and/or not reflected in the essay, and I also examined distinct language transformations that were evident in the online forum and the written essay. These modes of inquiry comprise three research sub-questions which are expressed in three major themes: (1) transference of ideas from online to print; (2) non-transference of ideas from online to print; and (3) (non-) transformation of linguistic structures from online to print. Specifically, I looked for any meaningful exchange of ideas/information in the Chat room and Discussion Board in terms of four categories (thesis, main ideas and supporting details, source support, and counterarguments) and compared them with the content and language of the essay draft, and vice versa. Both CMC invention forums reveal significant data patterns – both show **successful** transfer of ideas in terms of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; **average** transfer of main ideas and supporting details; and **minimal** transfer of ideas for textual support/source synthesis. However, the transfer of counterargument ideas from both forums differ – the collaborative Chat invention group indicates **null** transfer of ideas to student drafts while **very minimal** transfer can be traced back to the Discussion Board group.

Each type of online invention highlights distinct capabilities when generating ideas for academic essays. Based on the data patterns collected in terms of four essay categories (i.e. transference/non-transference of ideas and [non-]transformation of linguistic patterns), students who did collaborative invention in the Chat room display higher retention of topic, purpose, and thesis statement due to the immediacy or real-time setting of synchronous Chat that
positively affects cognition (Mercer 26). However, the modification of linguistic patterns found in student drafts is surprisingly evident in only two essay categories – (1) topic, purpose, and thesis statement and (2) main ideas and supporting details. The tendency to critically reflect and transform language patterns after the Chat session can be attributed to the online time constraints for reflection (Paulus 1323) and computation (Mercer 130) as manifested in the limited Chat dialogues. In contrast, those who used the Discussion Board for collaborative invention show multiple modifications of main ideas and supporting details and positive language transformations on all essay categories. With its organized threads of information and time-independent feature, the asynchronous platform maintains its ability to encourage meaningful interaction and critical reflection during and after the session (Henri 148–49; Kitade 10). Both Chat and Discussion Board forums equally affect source integration at a minimal rate, calling for more time, perhaps a separate class period, for collaborative invention in this category to reverse the minimal effects. The positive effect of the Discussion Board on synthesis verb usage for source connections, though, is impossible to disregard. While the same amount of exclusivity or time length is necessary for online dialogues on counterargumentation, data patterns suggest that the use of Discussion Board forums possess more capacity for meaningful interaction, critical reflection, and language transformation.

The following compares and contrasts both types of collaborative online invention based on analyzed data patterns:

*Transference of Ideas from Online to Print*

Drawing from the transfer of invention ideas from online to print in Chapters Three and Four, each online platform seems to have shown distinct strengths and weaknesses. The real-time and immediate setting of synchronous Chat causes limited dialogues that negatively affect the
transfer rate of opposing views and refutations or counterarguments. However, both Chat activities certainly allow students to retain ideas at a higher level, reflect on these outside of the Chat room, and add more ideas upon drafting (cf. topic, purpose, and thesis statement; main ideas and supporting details; and textual support or source synthesis categories). In contrast, the time-independent nature and highly organized threads of asynchronous Discussion Board illustrate more meaningful and reflective interactions during and after the sessions that result in either complete transfers or heavy modifications upon drafting (cf. all four essay categories).

Table 5 below gives a comparison-contrast description of the transfer of collaborative invention ideas from Chat and Discussion Board to research-based essay rough drafts. The summary of data patterns under this theme (“Transference of Ideas from Online to Print”) answers the first research sub-question, “How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?” of the first major research question, “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?”

Transference of Ideas from Online to Print

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Categories</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(“successful” transfer for Essay Topic, Purpose, &amp; Thesis Statement; “average” transfer for Main Ideas &amp; Supporting Details; “minimal” transfer for Textual Support or Source Synthesis; and “null” transfer for Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments)</td>
<td>(“successful” transfer for Essay Topic, Purpose, &amp; Thesis Statement; “average” transfer for Main Ideas &amp; Supporting Details; “minimal” transfer for Textual Support or Source Synthesis; and “very minimal” transfer for Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement</td>
<td>9 essays with transfer</td>
<td>5 essays with transfer, 3 essays with partial transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Main Ideas and Supporting Details</td>
<td>4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with transfer (but more ideas are added to the rough draft)</td>
<td>4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with transfer (but ideas are either modified, added, or reduced in the rough draft)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Textual Support or Source Synthesis</td>
<td>4 essays with source transfer (but more sources are added)</td>
<td>2 essays with complete transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments</td>
<td>0 essay with transfer</td>
<td>2 essays with partial transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: This table gives a comparison-contrast description of the transfer of collaborative invention ideas from Chat and Discussion Board to research-based essay rough drafts. The summary of data patterns under this theme ("Transference of Ideas from Online to Print") answers the first research sub-question, "How much of what was discussed online was reflected in the essay?" of the first major research question, "How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?"

In terms of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, both Chat and Discussion Board transcripts show successful transfer of invention ideas from online to the written draft. The Chat group reveals nine (9) essays with transfer, while the Discussion Board group notes five (5) essays with transfer and three (3) essays with partial transfer. Because of the immediacy of synchronous Chat, brainstorming and decision-making processes become more meaningful and ideas are easily retained as students receive and/or offer feedback at the right time. To say the least, the participants are engaged in productive online dialogues in both Chat invention activities and this advanced level of socialization left evident marks with nine (9) complete transfer to student drafts. The Discussion Board group, on the other hand, identifies five (5) transfer and three (3) partial transfer, a relatively lower rate compared to the Chat group but equally hints at a higher rate of critical reflection. It seems that the storage of organized messages in Discussion Board forums led students to go back and conveniently re-read online posts before drafting. In this case, most of them might have already changed their initial ideas due to the luxury of time afforded by both asynchronous invention activities for critical reflection, so student drafts do not yield exactly the same ideas in this category.

Both types of online transcripts show average transfer of main ideas and supporting details to the written drafts. Synchronous Chat transcripts yield four (4) essays with complete transfer and five (5) essays with transfer (but more ideas are added to the rough draft). On the
same note, asynchronous Discussion Board transcripts reflect four (4) essays with complete transfer and five (5) essays with transfer (but ideas are either modified, added, or reduced in the rough draft). Only one student from Chat does not share any ideas online, and one student from Discussion Board has main ideas in the essay not from the online forum at all. These data patterns seem to suggest that meaningful interactions in both online forums occur as students trade invention ideas in this category, regardless of whether the mode of communication is immediate (Chat) or not (Discussion Board). Most remarkable, though, is the quality of transformation of five (5) essays with transfer from Chat and Discussion Board forums – the Discussion Board group points to either modifications, additions, or reduction of main ideas and supporting details from online to student drafts, while the Chat group simply shows additions. This pattern strongly implies that ideas generated in an immediate/synchronous setting are highly retained and built upon (Cooney 263; Mercer 26), whereas those constructed asynchronously tend to undergo further modification, addition, or reduction due to the platform’s time-independent feature and organized posts conducive for critical reflection (Guy 9; Kitade 10; Mercer 21).

As far as source integration is concerned, both forums generally indicate minimal transfer. The Chat forum shows four (4) essays with source transfer (but more sources are added to the rough draft), while the Discussion Board forum identifies two (2) essays with complete transfer of sources. Both Chat and Discussion Board groups indicate that all ten (10) students use sources in their rough drafts and only four (4) students do not have online dialogues about sources. Based on the implications of these patterns, the use of synchronous Chat has minimal transfer rate because the quality and quantity of online posts in the Chat room are negatively affected by its real-time/immediate setting. Though more conversational, Chat exchanges are less
verbose/elaborate and directly proportional to the minimal amount of source citations in the essay. However, both synchronous activities indicate that four (4) students use and add more sources from online, suggesting that the activity itself triggers retention and critical reflection outside the Chat room. In addition, more than half of the students talk about possible sources online, and everyone use sources in their written drafts. This active engagement on source integration marks the success of synchronous Chat invention in creating a community of learners. With a separate class period and more time allotted to it, students can incorporate more sources to their essays. The same pedagogical implication goes to the Discussion Board invention activity since its use also has a minimal effect on source integration. With only two (2) cases of direct transfers, more attention given to online source discussions can increase the number of complete transfer with each added meaningful post to well-organized threads. Nevertheless, two (2) counts of complete transfer already imply productive conversations during the Discussion Board session itself with more time for critical reflection. On the contrary, the use of Chat may have caused increased retention but critical reflection usually transpires outside the Chat room.

The last essay category, opposing views and refutations or counterarguments, of both online forums has contrasting data results. The Chat invention group shows zero (0) essay with transfer indicating null effect, while the Discussion Board group shows very minimal effect with two (2) essays that have partial transfer. Collaborative Chat activities regarding counterarguments do not seem to have any effect on student essays. Only three (3) students post ideas about counterarguments in the Chat room, but these did not transfer to their written drafts – eight (8) students have no counterarguments in their essays, and only two (2) students incorporate counterarguments, but neither is drawn from Chat. This negative data pattern only
proves the same pedagogical implication as the previous category – that a separate class period with specific directives for counterargument invention in the Chat room might allow more opportunities for students to discuss their possible opposing views and refutations. As it is, incorporating counterarguments during the initial stage of composition requires greater mental effort, and if students are still trying to specify their topics, thesis statements, and so on at the same time, any online exchange about counterarguments in a time-dependent platform would not be very meaningful and productive. Though not as successful as with other essay categories, Discussion Board activities demonstrate very minimal transfer of counterargument ideas to student drafts. A separate class period devoted to counterargument invention in the Discussion Board would likewise reverse its very minimal transfer rate to print; however, it is important to note that the Discussion Board results differ significantly with the Chat results. Though six (6) students from the Discussion Board group do not have counterarguments in their essays, four (4) of those have online posts about counterarguments. In addition, four (4) other students have counterarguments online and in print – two (2) essays have partial transfer and two (2) have none. So a total of eight (8) students actually have online posts about their possible opposing views and refutations. This high rate of online interaction seems to suggest that the students have a meaningful and reflective interaction in the Discussion Board and with more time devoted solely to this category, they would be able to reflect on more counterargument ideas online and incorporate some of these to their written drafts.

Non-Transference of Ideas from Online to Print

Looking closely at invention ideas that did not transfer along with those that did, some online platforms seem to be most advantageous in certain essay categories. In terms of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, discussions held in Chat rooms seem to have satisfactory
results as the immediacy of a real-time setting propels students to retain ideas suggested to them at a crucial time, greatly improving their facility for decision-making. The Discussion Board, on the other hand, enhances the platform’s capacity for critical reflection and meaningful interaction because of its organized, threaded archives and time-independent nature, features that prove to be more beneficial for online discussions of main ideas and supporting details and counterarguments. However, both Chat and Discussion Board equally benefit student discussions on textual support and source synthesis. Table 6 below gives a comparison-contrast description of collaborative invention ideas that did not transfer from Chat and Discussion Board to research-based essay rough drafts. The summary of data patterns under this theme (“Non-Transference of Ideas from Online to Print”) answers the second research sub-question, “How much of what was not discussed online found its way into the essay?” of the first major research question, “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?”

**Non-Transference of Ideas from Online to Print**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Categories</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement</td>
<td>(“successful” transfer for Essay Topic, Purpose, &amp; Thesis Statement; “average” transfer for Main Ideas &amp; Supporting Details; “minimal” transfer for Textual Support or Source Synthesis; and “null” transfer for Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments)</td>
<td>(“successful” transfer for Essay Topic, Purpose, &amp; Thesis Statement; “average” transfer for Main Ideas &amp; Supporting Details; “minimal” transfer for Textual Support or Source Synthesis; and “very minimal” transfer for Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Main Ideas and Supporting Details</td>
<td>1 essay without transfer</td>
<td>2 essays without transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 essays with added ideas, 1 essay without transfer</td>
<td>5 essays with either modified, added, or reduced ideas, 1 essay without transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Textual Support or Source Synthesis</td>
<td>4 essays with added sources, 6 essays without transfer</td>
<td>8 essays without transfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Opposing Views and Refutations or</td>
<td>10 essays without transfer (2 essays have)</td>
<td>8 essays without transfer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the category of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, synchronous Chat invention displays one (1) essay without transfer while asynchronous Discussion Board invention reveals two (2) essays without transfer. This pattern, when juxtaposed with Chat’s nine (9) essays with transfer and Discussion Board’s five (5) essays with transfer and three (3) essays with partial transfer, seems to imply that the immediacy of synchronous Chat positively affects the cognitive facilities of students for brainstorming and decision-making. When possible topics, purpose, or thesis statements are posted in the Chat room and immediate feedback are provided, the probability for recipients to easily recall and transfer these ideas to their written drafts is greater. On the other hand, the Discussion Board causes students to critically reflect and modify their ideas further as the length of time and organized archives made things more accessible through this asynchronous platform.

The prevalence of further modifying invention ideas from the Discussion Board is equally salient when it comes to the category of main ideas and supporting details. Synchronous Chat invention produces one (1) essay without transfer and five (5) essays with added ideas. The same pattern results from asynchronous Discussion Board invention except that five (5) of these essays’ ideas are either modified, added, or reduced. Obviously, the Discussion Board possesses the capability for quality modification due to its highly-organized archives and time-independent feature (Paulus 1322), whereas synchronous Chat supports retention and addition of ideas because of its immediate setting (Armitt, Slack, Green, and Beer).
Despite their different patterns for textual support or source synthesis category, both Chat and Discussion Board invention platforms have the same minimal effects on student writing. The synchronous Chat group shows six (6) essays without transfer and four (4) essays with added sources to the rough draft, while asynchronous Discussion Board reveals eight (8) essays without transfer (and two complete transfers, as you may recall from the previous section). Based on these patterns, synchronous Chat seems to emphasize once again its capacity for cognitive retention and critical reflection outside the Chat room (cf. four essays with added sources), while the Discussion Board provides meaningful interaction during the session (cf. two essays with complete transfer). Taking into consideration the scope of transference and non-transference of source ideas, the use of both online invention platforms actually have the same effects on academic writing.

Asynchronous Discussion Board seems to have a better effect on counterargument invention than synchronous Chat based on the results. In terms of opposing views and refutations or counterarguments category, students have lesser online activity in the Chat room with only three (3) student-participants (neither reflects any of these dialogues in their rough drafts) than the Discussion Board with a total of eight (8) students (with two partial transfers). These online activities corroborate with the results of the written drafts, patterns that signify synchronous Chat’s limited exchange versus asynchronous Discussion Board’s meaningful and reflective interaction. The Chat group has two (2) essays with counterarguments (but are not transfers) and eight (8) essays without counterarguments, while the Discussion Board group has four (4) essays with counterarguments (two are partial transfers and two are not) and six (6) essays without. In total, Chat has ten (10) essays without transfer and Discussion Board has eight (8), proving that the Discussion Board invention forum is a bit more productive than Chat.
(Non-)Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print

After my examination of online transcripts and student drafts, I noticed that synchronous Chat forums apparently lead to increased rates of critical reflection and modification of language patterns in the first two essay categories after the session. On the other hand, asynchronous Discussion Board forums maintain its ability for meaningful and reflective interaction during the session and language modifications on all essay categories afterwards. Table 7 below gives a comparison-contrast description of the transfer of language use from Chat and Discussion Board collaborative invention to research-based essay rough drafts. The summary of data patterns under this theme (“[Non-]Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print”) answers the third research sub-question, “In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?” of the first major research question, “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?”

(Non-)Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Categories</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement</td>
<td>(positive language transformation on FIRST TWO essay categories only)</td>
<td>(positive language transformations on ALL essay categories)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 cases of more formal thesis structure and word choice in the rough draft; 2 cases of more specific details found in the rough draft’s thesis statement</td>
<td>3 cases of more specific topic and formal word choice in the rough draft; 2 cases of exact thesis statement or word order found online and in print; 1 case of more argumentative essay purpose online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Main Ideas and Supporting Details</td>
<td>1 case of exact word choice and sequencing of main ideas both online and in print; 4 cases of replaced, reworded, or recast main ideas in the essay for specificity or formality; logical reorganization of main ideas and supporting details in 3 rough drafts</td>
<td>3 cases of online main ideas recast as supporting details in the rough draft; 4 cases of online ideas reworded either as a main idea or thesis statement in the rough draft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3) Textual Support or Source Synthesis

Contrasting results in the use of synthesis verbs indicate minimal effect of source transfer: 4 rough drafts with no source transfer do not have synthesis verbs between sources, but 2 rough drafts with no source transfer do; and 3 rough drafts with source transfer have synthesis verbs, but 1 rough draft with source transfer does not.

Patterns surprisingly indicate positive effect of source transfer on the use of synthesis verbs: 2 essays with complete transfer have strong synthesis; 2 essays without transfer have weak synthesis, 3 have no synthesis at all, and only 3 have strong synthesis.

### 4) Opposing Views and Refutations or Counterarguments

Irrelevant

1 case of transformation from general to specific and 1 case of subject pluralization in the rough draft

Table 7: This table gives a comparison-contrast description of the transfer of language use from Chat and Discussion Board collaborative invention to research-based essay rough drafts. The summary of data patterns under this theme (“[Non-]Transformation of Linguistic Structures from Online to Print”) answers the third research sub-question, “In terms of language use, what lexical and/or syntactic similarities or differences were evident in the online forum and the written essay?” of the first major research question, “How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?”

After both Chat activities, three (3) cases of formal thesis structure and word choice and two (2) cases of detailed thesis statement characterize student rough drafts, implying an increased rate of critical reflection for topic, purpose, and thesis statement outside the Chat room.

On the other hand, the Discussion Board activities hint at meaningful interaction during the session as one (1) case of a more argumentative essay purpose online and two (2) cases of exact thesis statement or word order both online and in print are evident. In addition, the Discussion Board’s organized and threaded messages also lead to critical reflections after the sessions with three (3) cases of specific topic and formal word choice in the essays.

For the category of main ideas and supporting details, the Chat activities lead to only one (1) case of exact word choice and main idea sequence both online and in print that suggests meaningful interaction during the session. Most of the linguistic patterns, though, lean more towards critical reflection and modification outside the Chat room in support of Scott Windeatt and his colleagues’ observation (113), with four (4) cases of replaced, reworded, or recast main ideas for specificity or formality and three (3) cases of logical essay reorganization. The same
modification pattern is evident in the Discussion Board group with three (3) cases of main ideas recast as supporting detail and four (4) cases of online ideas reworded either as a main idea or thesis statement. Obviously, further modification/transformation of ideas and language patterns in this asynchronous platform is attributed to its threaded organization that promotes ease of reference and critical reflection during and after the Discussion Board activities, as similarly argued by Virginia Chappell (232) and Mercer (144).

The third category, source integration, reveals that both Chat activities have contrasting results in terms of connecting sources with synthesis verbs. As referred to in previous chapters, the use of words such as “agrees,” “disagrees,” “concurs,” “expounds upon,” “goes even further,” “contradicts,” and so forth clearly shows the connections or relationships between sources. Specifically, four (4) rough drafts with no source transfer do not have synthesis verbs between sources, but two (2) rough drafts with no source transfer do; on the contrary, three (3) rough drafts with source transfer have synthesis verbs, but one (1) rough draft with source transfer does not. Such contradictions strongly support the minimal effect of both Chat activities in this category. Both Discussion Board activities, on the other hand, surprisingly emphasize the positive effect of source transfer on the use of synthesis verbs. That is, two (2) essays with complete transfer have strong synthesis; whereas, two (2) essays without transfer have weak synthesis, three (3) have no synthesis at all, and only three (3) have strong synthesis. Again, these patterns strongly indicate the platform’s ability for critical reflection and modification due to its organized information threads.

Because of the null effect of both Chat activities on counterargumentation, the language pattern detected online and in student drafts in this category is likewise irrelevant. However, the
Discussion Board group has one (1) case of general to specific transformation and one (1) case of subject pluralization in the written draft, accounting for its very minimal effect in this category.

**Research Question 2:** What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?

In order to supplement the textual findings of the first principal research question, the intent of the second research question was to find out what the teacher and students think and feel about using the Chat and Discussion Board forums as collaborative invention platforms. I conducted post-process face-to-face interviews with the teacher after each invention activity and with the students after submission of their written drafts. After transcribing both teacher and student interviews, I subjected the data responses to analytical coding and compared them with data patterns from online transcripts and rough drafts of the previous analysis. To answer the second principal research question, three research sub-questions expressed in three major themes comprise the teacher interview: (1) general feedback about the process and teacher preference; (2) assessment of the process in terms of student participation; and (3) suggestions for modification. In addition, four thematic patterns compose the research sub-questions for student interviews: (1) general feedback about the process and student participation; (2) assessment of transfer of ideas from online to essay draft; (3) description of other invention strategies; and (4) other comments on language use. Overall, both interview data sets show that the teacher’s preference for the Discussion Board as invention forum is quite evident, while student experiences of both online platforms are generally positive, except for a minority who shared the same negative comments as the teacher regarding Chat.

On the whole, both teacher and student interview data reveal similar patterns with regard to the use of Chat and Discussion Board invention forums. The social act of invention that
directly promotes collaboration and knowledge construction is evident in both online platforms according to each group of interviews. However, the teacher and students agreed that meaningful and reflective conversations in the Chat room are deficient because of what Angela Cora Garcia and Jennifer Baker Jacobs identify as fluidity and disorganized interaction of synchronous Chat (362). On the contrary, the capacity of asynchronous Discussion Board to sustain a more focused interaction and critical reflection within an egalitarian environment is readily affirmed by Mercer (129) and this present study, making it the most preferred invention strategy among the two.

The following data compares and contrasts the teacher and student interviews regarding both types of collaborative online invention forums:

**Teacher Interviews**

The data gathered from both teacher interviews indicate stronger preference for the use of asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention than synchronous Chat, though future consideration for the latter rely on certain provisions to guarantee success. For the teacher, both online platforms positively characterize the social act of invention and knowledge construction. However, she believed that the fluid and immediate nature of synchronous Chat seems to have negatively affected its ability to realize more meaningful interactions. In contrast, the Discussion Board forum, with its organized threads and time-independent nature, seems to have facilitated more meaningful and reflective interactions among student participants without discrimination. Table 8 below gives a comparison-contrast description of the teacher’s attitudes and perceptions toward the collaborative Chat and Discussion Board invention strategies. The summary of interview responses expressed in three (3) thematic data patterns – “General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference,” “Assessment of the Process in terms of Student Participation,” and “Suggestions for Modification” – answers three (3) research sub-questions (RQ #2a to c),
respectively: (a) “What did the teacher think of the process? Would she prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?” (b) “How did the teacher assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation? Did she think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?” and (c) “If the teacher were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would she do it? What reasons would she have for her choice of modification?” These research sub-questions partially respond to the second major research question, “What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?”

Teacher Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>(willing to use Chat as invention strategy though provisions must be followed because of the activity’s negative features)</em></td>
<td><em>(more preference for the use of Discussion Board as invention strategy evident; only one transcript is found that contradicts teacher’s positive comment about the activity)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) General Feedback about the Process and Teacher Preference</td>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong> much less chaotic because students were divided into small groups; very fluid, dynamic, and immediate capable of producing interesting ideas that students can go back to when archived; and approximates “messiness” of the invention process</td>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong> More structured to look like an outline with threads and categories; More formal to put students in a structured mindset; and More focused to avoid weird little tangents in conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong> greater tendency for students to go off on little tangents because of informal environment; more random and less-focused conversation at certain times; hard to keep track of responses; hard to control at times, especially with bigger groups; and absence of visual cues in real-time can cause difficulty</td>
<td><strong>Disadvantages</strong> None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Preference</strong> Prefered the use of the Discussion Board as invention in the future because of its structured and formal forum</td>
<td><strong>Preference</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The teacher positively considered the use of synchronous Chat an approximation of the “messiness” of invention with its fluid and immediate environment. This feedback highlights the capability of Chat for producing spontaneous ideas (Hand and Prain 740; Mercer 24) as valuable references in essay composition. It seems that real-time conversations associated with Chat brings about a heightened sense of socialization that leads to knowledge construction as was the case in this study when students collaborated on possible topics, main ideas, and so on, online. But the teacher admitted that the tendency for random and less-focused conversations, the
difficulty to control and keep track of responses, and the absence of visual cues are all too real that most of the time impede meaningful interaction among participants. In contrast, she related that the more structured and formal set-up of the Discussion Board helps facilitate focused online dialogues without the presence of weird little tangents characteristic of most Chat activities. With its highly-organized threads and categories, the use of asynchronous Discussion Board seems to have increased chances for critical reflection and meaningful interaction (Chappell 232; Guy 9; Henri 149), even without the presence of a common set of information for students to work on. The teacher believed she could help generate good ideas in the Discussion Board by blocking possible subject groups together before the invention activity despite the variety of topic choices. Obviously, the Discussion Board is more preferred in this respect but the teacher also expressed willingness to use synchronous Chat provided students have a common base or knowledge to hold conversations together in small groups and avoid spending too much time educating others about individual topics online. Unlike the Discussion Board, such a provision for the use of Chat consistently aims for meaningful interaction among participants.

In terms of student participation, the teacher related that everyone was generally engaged in the Chat room – reacting to each other’s ideas, to the teacher’s prompts, etc. – though some contributed less than others due to their motivation/affect/cognition/ or technoliteracies/computing skills. Clearly, constructing knowledge becomes a social act in this case because the individual is no longer solitary (Henri 158). Nevertheless, the teacher admitted that maintaining the focus of Chat dialogues at times could pose numerous challenges because of the platform’s fluidity and immediacy that tend to ignite meaningless interactions. On the contrary, students might have taken much longer to respond to Discussion Board posts, but the teacher argued they were simply taking more time looking at threads, reading everything that had been
said about the subject, thinking about what to post, and so on. After critically reflecting on posts enhanced by the formality and structure of the forum, she insisted that students responded more frequently to one another and attained meaningful interaction in the Discussion Board than in Chat. Only one (1) recorded Discussion Board transcript shows a misplaced online post (a student posts two different suggestions on a single thread), but this is immediately repaired so the focus of the dialogue was not directly affected. At any rate, giving and receiving information asynchronously in order to modify or compose essay drafts likewise connotes the social aspect of invention and knowledge construction. In addition, the teacher confirmed the prevalence of corporate power when she claimed students “took on a little bit of ownership of keeping things going to a certain extent.” Because asynchronous communication is independent of time and computing skills and devoid of any sense of competition for the right to post messages, a state of equilibrium with regard to individual power was manifested in the Discussion Board.

Finally, two modifications suggested by the teacher for using Chat aim for meaningful interaction, which is a deficient outcome in the Chat room. First, she said the same reading assignments should be required prior to the activity to keep students consistently engaged throughout the entire dialogue. As well, the teacher should be more involved in guiding online discussions to help maintain focus and avoid off-tangent remarks. Except for the teacher to sustain an active presence online, no further suggestion was given for the success of the Discussion Board. She shared that students were able to generate valuable ideas as they gave and received posts from one another at their own pace. This observation reaffirms the sense of socialization and reflective interaction prevalent in collaborative Discussion Board activities.
Student Interviews

A majority of those who used Chat and Discussion Board invention forums shared positive online experiences, although a minority from the Chat group remarkably expressed the same negative comments as the teacher. Additionally, a few contradictions are evident with regard to the preference for group sizes and assessment of source transfer from Chat and negative comments from the Discussion Board. Nevertheless, these interview data clearly affirm the social capacity of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board to promote collaboration and knowledge construction (Bonk and King 7; Mercer 151) aside from the latter’s potential to sustain meaningful interaction and critical reflection (Hacker and Niederhauser 55; Mercer 144). Table 9 below gives a comparison-contrast description of the student’s attitudes and perceptions toward the collaborative Chat and Discussion Board invention strategies. The summary of interview responses expressed in four (4) thematic data patterns – “General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference,” “Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Online to Essay Draft,” “Description of Other Invention Strategies,” and “Other Comments on Language Use” – answers four (4) research sub-questions (RQ #2a, d to f), respectively: (a) “What did students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?” (d) “How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?” (e) “How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?” and (f) “Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?” These research sub-questions partially respond to the second major research question, “What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Chat</th>
<th>Discussion Board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1) General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference</strong></td>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong> 2 students with positive experience shared that interesting ideas were posted that lead to a more focused thesis statement; these students also commented that the teacher kept everybody right on track when they ran out of ideas by initiating online conversations through questions and suggestions. <strong>Disadvantages</strong> 1 student with negative experience shared peers go off on tangents, random ideas often prop up, and discussion seems less focused. <strong>Preference</strong> 2 students preferred the use of the same invention strategy; 1 student was willing to use Chat invention provided there will be bigger groups to maintain conversation if others “straggle off” [this suggestion contradicts teacher’s positive evaluation of the Chat activity in small groups for ease of control].</td>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong> Good way to find a topic – 3 students got good ideas from others, 2 students said it got their brain “flowing,” and 2 students frequently referred back to it; 1 student felt more free to say anything online vs. face-to-face. <strong>Disadvantages</strong> [the following negative comments about the Discussion Board contradict previous comment against face-to-face communication] 1 student compared it with face-to-face communication and thought the Discussion Board (1) has much less thorough conversations because students could be doing it just to get an assignment done, and (2) responses are delayed and not guaranteed. <strong>Preference</strong> 2 students preferred the use of the same invention strategy because of its social aspect and easy access of information through archives; 1 student was willing to use it when there is no class (e.g. Fridays).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2) Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Online to Essay Draft</strong></td>
<td>2 students reported getting source ideas from online Chat [this experience is contrary to the textual analysis on source synthesis having minimal effect]; 1 student did not get much from the activity except that,</td>
<td>Everyone admitted to using ideas from the Discussion Board with regard to topic, thesis statement, and main ideas, respectively; 1 student said taking advice from peers must still be double-checked especially if</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as another student said, the Chat activity “helped them evaluate their ideas” after posting online or helped them go back and personally restate their thesis, and so on

| 3) Description of Other Invention Strategies | Other invention strategies – 2 students said individual brainstorming; 1 student said collaborative brainstorming (with a tutor) | Different invention strategies were raised by 3 students: making an outline of the paper, doing research about the topic, and freewriting for thesis support and examples, respectively; Everyone agreed that reading the assigned articles from the textbook was part of their invention |
| 4) Other Comments on Language Use | Only 2 students adopted some language features expressed online (i.e., thesis structure and a peer-suggested quotation); 1 student expressed ideas originally | Only 2 students adopted a few language features from online but did not mention any specifics |

Table 9: This table gives a comparison-contrast description of the student’s attitudes and perceptions toward the collaborative Chat and Discussion Board invention strategies. The summary of interview responses expressed in four (4) thematic data patterns – “General Feedback about the Process and Student Preference,” “Assessment of Transfer of Ideas from Online to Essay Draft,” “Description of Other Invention Strategies,” and “Other Comments on Language Use” – answers four (4) research sub-questions (RQ #2a, d to f), respectively: (a) “What did students think of the process? Would they prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?” (d) “How many of the ideas discussed online did students think were tapped into their writing and/or how many of the ideas they have in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?” (e) “How did students come up with ideas that were not discussed online?” and (f) “Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, or clauses that were picked up online and used in the essay?” These research sub-questions partially respond to the second major research question, “What attitudes/perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process?”

According to student interviews, synchronous Chat is a valuable invention strategy because it allows instant access of different ideas from others for the improvement of individual essay plans. This description highlights the capacity of synchronous Chat for knowledge construction through collaborative endeavors (Hand and Prain 753). To help characterize the social act of invention, students claimed that the teacher helped initiate online conversations and kept everybody on track. However, one student thought Chat conversations were not quite focused throughout the dialogue, and because only a few were fully engaged, online
collaboration was negatively affected. While most students preferred the social aspect of Chat along with its ability for knowledge construction, the same student expressed the need for sustained meaningful interactions within bigger groups (in contrast to the teacher’s preference for small groups). On the other hand, the use of the Discussion Board was extremely helpful for most students because it ignited possible topics and other essay ideas, allowed freedom of expression without reservations, and gave users a chance to share and read posts from others to refer back to at anytime. These online features account for meaningful interaction and critical reflection mostly attributed to asynchronous forums (Paulus 1322). In fact, the use of the Discussion Board supports greater accountability because comments and responses are directed towards specific individuals who also tend to defend positions more rigorously than face-to-face. Only one student thought otherwise and felt that face-to-face communication guarantees a much more immediate response ideal for invention. But the same student admitted to the social benefits of the Discussion Board, especially in times of physical absence. Overall, a majority preferred using this asynchronous platform for invention because of its social and collaborative aspects that positively lead to knowledge construction and critical reflection.

In terms of their assessment on the transfer of ideas, students from the Chat group thought the online dialogue allowed them to draw possible ideas and, though a contradiction of its minimal transfer rate, sources for their essays. In addition, they reported that the Chat invention exercise helped them evaluate posted ideas on their own or through peer feedback. Altogether, synchronous Chat manifests its potential for collaboration, knowledge construction, and critical reflection – traits that are also reflected in the student assessment of asynchronous Discussion Board. Based on the interviews, a majority from the Discussion Board group thought
that critical reflection was in fact the foremost strength of this asynchronous platform as topics were modified, revised, clarified, or even introduced through online collaboration.

Admittedly, students also used other invention strategies aside from collaborative Chat and Discussion Board either as initial or follow-up activities. Students from the Chat group said individual brainstorming through webbing, listing, and reading assigned articles helped them immensely. One student combined both individual and social invention with an outside tutor; still another explained that most ideas came from Chat. In contrast, the Discussion Board group shared only three different types of individual brainstorming to supplement the online activity – outlining, freewriting, and research. These various types of invention emphasize the importance of socialization pertinent to both online platforms, moreso with asynchronous Discussion Board because no experimentation with other social strategies was mentioned.

Finally, students from the Chat and Discussion Board groups revealed that a few language features from online were reflected in their written drafts. A majority of those who used Chat invention related the transfer of thesis statement structures and quotations, while no specifications were made by those who used the Discussion Board. At any rate, this transfer of linguistic patterns from online to print directly supports the collaborative potentials of both forums (Light and Littleton 8).

Descriptive Summary

The findings of this descriptive study indicate that the transfer of invention ideas and language patterns from both online forums to student rough drafts (RQ #1) is directly supported by both teacher-student interview patterns (RQ #2). Table 10 below represents a descriptive summary of the similarities and differences between collaborative Chat and Discussion Board
invention forums with (+), (-), and (=) markers referring to the effects of each Blackboard tool as having “positive,” “negative,” and “equal” effects, respectively:

### Descriptive Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Essay Categories</th>
<th>Chat (Positive language transformations on FIRST TWO essay categories only)</th>
<th>Chat and Discussion Board (BOTH need longer invention sessions on LAST TWO essay categories)</th>
<th>Discussion Board (Positive language transformations on ALL essay categories)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1: Essay Topic, Purpose, and Thesis Statement (“successful” transfer from Chat and Discussion Board)</td>
<td>(+) rough drafts indicate higher retention of topic, purpose, and thesis statement with 9 essays with transfer, 1 essay without transfer</td>
<td>5 essays with transfer, 3 essays with partial transfer, 2 essays without transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2: Main Ideas and Supporting Details (“average” transfer from Chat and Discussion Board)</td>
<td>4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with added ideas, 1 essay without transfer</td>
<td>(+) rough drafts indicate multiple modifications of main ideas and supporting details with 4 essays with complete transfer, 5 essays with either modified, added, or reduced ideas, 1 essay without transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3: Textual Support or Source Synthesis (“minimal” transfer from Chat and Discussion Board)</td>
<td>(=) rough drafts from both online forums indicate minimal effects on source synthesis: Chat group indicates 4 essays with source transfer but more sources are added, 6 essays without transfer; and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Research Questions

1. **Research Question 1**: How effective is each type of online invention in generating ideas for writing academic essays?

2. **Research Question 2**: What is the impact of online invention on the development of academic writing skills?

3. **Research Question 3**: How does online invention influence the use of research sources in academic writing?
| Research Question 2: What attitudes / perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? |
|------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| #4: Opposing Views and Refutations or Counter-arguments ("null" transfer from Chat; "very minimal" transfer from the Discussion Board) | (-) online transcripts indicate unproductive dialogue on counter-arguments with 3 students with online posts on counter-arguments, 0 essay with transfer, 10 essays without transfer (2 essays have counter-arguments but are not transfers) | (+) online transcripts indicate traces of meaningful interaction and critical reflection on counter-arguments with 8 students with online posts on counter-arguments, 2 essays with partial transfer, 8 essays without transfer |
| Research Question 2: What attitudes / perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? | (-) the teacher and students agree that meaningful and reflective interactions in Chat are seemingly deficient due to its fluid and immediate setting | (=) according to the teacher and students, both online platforms generally demonstrate the social act of invention that promotes collaboration and knowledge construction |
| Research Question 2: What attitudes / perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? | (+) the teacher and students agree that interesting ideas are produced in Chat for future reference | (+) the teacher and students affirm the Discussion Board’s capacity to sustain a more focused interaction and critical reflection within an egalitarian environment; invention forum most preferred by the teacher |
| Research Question 2: What attitudes / perceptions do the teacher and students have toward the collaborative online invention process? | (-) according to one student, responses are delayed in the |
Table 10: This table represents a descriptive summary of the similarities and differences between collaborative Chat and Discussion Board invention forums with (+), (-), and (=) markers referring to the effects of each Blackboard tool as having “positive,” “negative,” and “equal” effects, respectively. Overall findings indicate that the transfer of invention ideas and language patterns from both online forums to student rough drafts (RQ #1) is directly supported by both teacher-student interview patterns (RQ #2).

The use of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative invention strategies in this context highlights distinct advantages of each strategy on specific categories – essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; main ideas and supporting details; source synthesis; and counterarguments. For instance, the use of Chat invention forum indicates positive retention of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement, proving that immediate/real-time collaboration tends to work better for purposes of decision-making, clarification, and thought development as evident in the studies of France Henri (149) and Mercer (26, 144). Textual patterns show that the Chat group cites nine (9) essays with transfer and one (1) essay without transfer as opposed to five (5) essays with transfer, three (3) essays with partial transfer, and two (2) essays without transfer of the Discussion Board group. However, the use of Discussion Board invention forum indicates more possibilities toward meaningful interaction and critical reflection of main ideas and supporting details due to what Henri refers to as threaded information (149) and what the studies of Henri (148-49), Kitade (10), and Mercer (144) regard as time-independent feature. While both online groups reveal four (4) essays with complete transfer and one (1) essay without transfer, the Discussion Board forum advances by five (5) essays with
multiple modifications (i.e., with either modified, added, or reduced ideas) in contrast to five (5) essays with added ideas from Chat.

In terms of source synthesis, both Chat and Discussion Board forums indicate minimal effects – four (4) essays with transfer plus added sources and six (6) essays without transfer are evident in Chat, whereas two (2) essays with complete transfer and eight (8) essays without transfer in the Discussion Board. These similar qualitative patterns strongly imply that both platforms necessitate prolonged invention sessions or a separate class period that stress the CMC time requirement set by Bolanle Olaniran (158) to attain productive interactions in this category. The same requirement for exclusivity or time-length is applicable to online discussions on counterarguments in both forums, except that the Discussion Board transcripts already indicate traces of meaningful interaction and critical reflection than Chat. While three (3) students with online posts, zero (0) essay with transfer, and ten (10) essays without transfer characterize the null effect of Chat, eight (8) students with online posts, two (2) essays with partial transfer, and eight (8) essays without transfer illustrate the very minimal effect of Discussion Board. Indeed more effort on planning needs to be exerted, though the latter hints at much promise in this respect.

Finally, those who used Chat show positive language transformations in two essay categories – topic, purpose, and thesis statement and main ideas and supporting details. I believe that since students did not have enough time for what Trena Paulus considers as online reflection (1323) and Mercer refers to as typing or computation (130) in Chat, they tried to compensate the development of limited online dialogues through linguistic modifications after class. As previously noted, more should be done to increase the productivity of Chat invention with regard to the last two essay categories – source synthesis and counterarguments. Those who used the
Discussion Board, on the other hand, show positive language transformations on all essay categories, promoting once again the propensity of Discussion Board participants to engage in critical reflection and modification during and/or after each online activity as argued by Chappell (232) and Mercer (144).

Strongly supporting the textual patterns of online transcripts and rough drafts are teacher-student interviews. According to the teacher and students who used synchronous Chat, meaningful and reflective interactions in the Chat room were seemingly deficient due to what Garcia and Jacobs consider as fluid and disorganized conversation (362). The attribution of this negative comment to synchronous Chat is proven by its null effect on counterargumentation along with its minimal effect on source synthesis. However, the use of Chat when generating possible essay topics, purpose, and thesis statements demonstrates its capacity for idea retention and immediate clarification (Armitt, Slack, Green, and Beer). Both the teacher and students agreed that Chat forums tend to produce interesting ideas that are necessary for future reference as Henri also confirms (149), and the positive retention and transfer rates of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement ideas are testament to this perception.

Based on previous textual analysis, the use of Discussion Board forums suggests more productive interaction and multiple modifications on main ideas and supporting details compared to Chat. The fact that traces of meaningful and reflective conversations about counterarguments are also evident in Discussion Board transcripts signifies what the teacher and students affirmed to be the capacity of this asynchronous platform to sustain more focused interactions and critical reflections within an egalitarian environment. As rough drafts display positive language transformations on all essay categories, the teacher expectedly preferred the Discussion Board the most because of its ability to critically engage students beyond time and space. Negative
comments about this forum are scarce and contradicting, except for one pattern that stands out – both the teacher and one student concurred that responses are delayed. While the time lag in the platform seems to hinder productivity, the teacher argued that students are actually more engaged in reading, responding, and reflecting on Discussion Board posts than in Chat as evident in Mercer’s study (24).

In closing, the teacher and students agreed that both Chat and Discussion Board forums demonstrate the social act of invention and promote collaboration and knowledge construction (Paulus 1339). These perceptions toward the use of Chat and Discussion Board are characterized by the following textual findings – the remarkable retention and transfer rate of Chat invention on essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement; the positive effect of Discussion Board invention on main ideas and supporting details and, to a certain extent, counterarguments; and the necessity for longer invention sessions to improve the effect of Chat and Discussion Board dialogues on source synthesis.

Implications and Recommendations: An Overview

Chapter Six will conclude this study with implications for theory and practice based on the analysis of synchronous and asynchronous data patterns. It will also include some pedagogical suggestions and recommendations for further research that extend beyond the scope of this project.
CHAPTER VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several trends in the data have been identified that answer the research questions of the study. Based on the data patterns described in the previous chapter, significant theoretical and pedagogical implications for using collaborative CMC invention in writing academic essays have emerged and provided more possibilities for further research on invention, collaboration, and CMC or other web-based application tools in the composition classroom. The pedagogical implications presented here are first and foremost relevant to the context in which this study was based on – i.e., first-year writing courses taught in computer-mediated classrooms at Bowling Green State University – and the context of other writing courses outside this institution that use content management tools like Blackboard.

In conclusion, this chapter presents the implications of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board analyses for theory and practice, along with other pedagogical approaches and research recommendations that extend beyond the scope of this project.

Implications for Theory

Throughout the analyses of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board, four theoretical constructs are frequently mentioned that signify the data patterns found in this study. These theoretical implications can be broken down into four main constructs: (a) socialization, (b) meaningful conversation, (c) critical reflection, and (d) equality of interaction. A brief description of each theory is provided in the following paragraphs; I suspect that more will be revealed as data analyses expand in future studies of this type.

Socialization

The use of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board as collaborative online invention forums generally demonstrates the social act of invention and promotes collaboration
and knowledge construction. Both the teacher and student interview data attest to this perception that radically oppose invention in isolation. The concepts of Bakhtin’s dialogism and Vygotsky’s language development through social interaction (Trupe 134) are clearly resonated in this case as participants post ideas, questions, feedback, and clarifications online before articulating their thoughts in print. Providing assistance just slightly beyond the learners’ current competence to stimulate development is actually an extension of Vygotsky’s notion of “scaffolding” from children to adult (Segall, Dasen, Berry, and Poortinga 173). In this regard, the teacher keeps online conversations more focused and productive by providing questions in the beginning or when ideas run out. A strong “teacher presence” in both forums from the outset, moreso in real-time Chat, will guide students toward greater input and permit higher cognitive functioning. This approach correlates with assisted or mediated learning as students are given more structure from the start by means of scaffolding and gradual responsibility until they can operate on their own (Slavin 236-7).

Vygotsky’s conviction that “all learning was first accomplished through the language that flows between individuals” (Wink and Putney 28) is evident in this study’s collaborative Chat and Discussion Board interactions as the “interpersonal, personal, and cultural-institutional aspects of the event” (Rogoff 58) altogether constitute the invention activity. Such illustrations also reinforce the epistemological movement of the practice from cognitive theories that “emphasize [the] individual thinkers and their isolated minds” (Barab and Duffy 26) towards social constructivist theories that “emphasize the negotiation of meaning and construction of shared understanding through dialogue” (Paulus 1324). Moreover, LeFevre’s social paradigmatic approach to invention takes on a different path through the use of CMC and questions the isolationist view of the composing process.
Recent advances in computer technology have reformulated the realm of class discussion in composition classrooms and changed the role of the computer “from a tool used for individualization to one used for socialization” (Rickly 38). In this vein, both synchronous and asynchronous practices facilitate the formation of a community of writers as students share their perspectives and learn from each other, the instructor, and themselves (Rickly 38). The use of Chat and Discussion Board platforms as a whole stimulates student participation, affects their cognition, and sets value on collective, rather than individual, knowledge where concepts and points of view are confronted with those of others (Henri 148-49). When ideas are formulated into words online and are built upon through reactions and peer responses (Henri 158; Sigala 889), a more communal learning experience (Light, Light, Nesbitt, and Harnad 199) and knowledge construction take place. The successful transfer rate of essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement as well as the average transfer rate of main ideas and supporting details from Chat and Discussion Board invention forums to student rough drafts support the cognitive development of the participants. Even the need for more online interaction regarding source synthesis (due to its minimal transfer rate from both forums) and counterargument (due to its null transfer rate from Chat or very minimal transfer rate from the Discussion Board) values this social construction of knowledge. These data patterns and theoretical implications challenge the efficacy of stand-alone composing (Rickly 39) and enhance Bruffee’s works on collaborative learning and its importance in the composition classroom (Trupe 134). In effect, the necessity for more research on collaborative electronic environment and the writing process continues.

*Meaningful Conversation*

Because a critical feedback does not have the same impact for recipients in CMC as in face-to-face communication due to the mediating role of technology (Olaniran 149), direct
comments and responses to specific individuals affect the rate and quality of online conversations. Students have greater accountability online (Olaniran 149) and tend to ask questions or defend their positions more rigorously when confronted or corrected. For instance, the teacher and students who used the Discussion Board for invention in this study affirm its capacity to sustain more focused interactions that support the consistent rate of exchange on all categories from topic, purpose, and thesis statement to counterargument. These asynchronous dialogues tend to be more detailed and structured, so the levels of satisfaction and productivity are greater in this time-independent application.

However, the rhetorical limits of the electronic environment can also cause certain disadvantages. Because students are limited to conveying meaning only through text with limited body language, tone, and placement, they must not only become rhetorically-savvy (Corrigan and Gers 168) but also technologically-savvy in order to be heard especially in real-time settings such as the chat room. Students with faster typing speed can receive more attention and contribute more meaningfully to Chat dialogues than those with weaker computing skills. To complicate the matter further, the process of message transmission (posting) in Chat is not synchronous with message production so the pauses within a message-in-progress do not have the same effect in oral conversation (Garcia and Jacobs 339, 353). The presence of time constraints therefore most often results in disorganized and less verbose Chat conversations (Garcia and Jacobs 362; Windeatt, Hardisty, and Eastment 113), which directly supports the teacher-student accounts in this study regarding the lack of meaningful and reflective Chat exchange. This deficiency is also reflected in previous textual analysis that denotes the minimal and null effects of Chat activities on source and counterargument, respectively. Nevertheless, the teacher and students who used Chat agreed that interesting ideas could possibly germinate in
synchronous settings and cause higher retention of spontaneous and meaningful utterances. Such a perception is consistent with the successful transfer rate of topic, purpose, and thesis statement as well as the average transfer rate of main ideas and supporting details from Chat to student drafts. On the whole, the interactive component of CMC is a major factor of the learning process, and the possibilities for attaining meaningful conversations online always abound with proper supervision.

**Critical Reflection**

The storage of messages in CMC increases not only meaningful conversation (Henri 149) but also critical reflection (Henri 148) about the content that may extend beyond time and space. For example, the use of asynchronous Discussion Board gives students enough time to reflect on posted ideas during and after each collaborative invention activity through accessible discussion transcripts. Student drafts that indicate multiple modifications of main ideas and supporting details, sporadic traces of counterargument reflections, and positive language transformations of all essay categories in this study connote such critical reflection at varying degrees. Attesting to the feasibility of this application are the teacher and student interviews that relate how participants took the time to examine or analyze a particular comment either during or after class sessions. Though one student thought responses were frequently delayed in the Discussion Board, the teacher argued that everyone was actually more engaged in reading, responding, and reflecting on threaded posts, which is why she still preferred this asynchronous invention forum than other online tools.

Critical reflection during synchronous Chat activity is limited due to its time-dependent application, but instances of reflective practices are evident outside the chat room. The textual analysis of online transcripts and rough drafts reveal that students who used Chat added main
ideas and supporting details as well as sources after each online dialogue. Positive language transformations on topic, purpose, and thesis statement and main ideas and supporting details also indicate such traces of critical reflection that extends beyond real-time exchange. Because Chat transcripts are archived just as Discussion Board forums, students can easily go back to the chat room and access dialogues at anytime in spite of the fact that some ideas are easily retained synchronously (cf. transfer rate of topic, purpose, and thesis statement from Chat). Students are also able to retain, add, or modify their thoughts further (cf. multiple modifications of main ideas and supporting details from the Discussion Board) as they have the opportunity to compare and contrast information online before making an informed judgment in print (Olaniran 152).

Overall, the use of CMC for collaborative invention fosters reflective learning in this respect.

*Equality of Interaction*

An advantage of using CMC is the equality of interaction afforded to everyone as each member has “the same chance to initiate a topic and/or to respond to another’s turn” (Pennington 413). All online participants have equal opportunities to be heard in this egalitarian environment, where “they cannot be physically singled out, no one can be interrupted, everyone is ensured a voice on the network, and a transcript of the discussion can be made available for future reference and reflection” (Rickly 40). Although referring primarily to synchronous Chat, the same principles apply to asynchronous Discussion Board and moreso because of its time-independent application where participants do not have to rely on their computing speed to gain attention. The teacher and student interviews in this study indicate the absence of competition and the presence of equity in each collaborative Discussion Board invention activity; as the teacher observed, “Students [who used the Discussion Board] took a little bit of ownership of keeping things going to a certain extent.”
Since those with advanced cognitive and computing skills claim more online space and therefore power in the chat room, I argue that there has always been a huge disparity between the opportunities offered in synchronous and asynchronous settings. Both the teacher and students shared that meaningful and reflective interactions in Chat are deficient due to its fluidity and immediacy. There may be no competition for the right to be the next person to construct or post a message in the chat room, but there is always “the potential to compete over specific turn spaces (positions on the posting board)” (Garcia and Jacobs 347). And the person who can post his/her ideas faster in the chat room obviously gets the chance to be read and responded to first.

However, even though Chat dialogues can be confusing at times partly because of the multiple roles of participants as “constructor, waiter, reader” (Garcia and Jacobs 348), the nonlinear nature of Chat actually “helps subvert the traditional heirarchy of the traditional classroom, allowing for more student-to-student interaction” (Rickly 40). And because of this, inequality or oppression in the classroom that negatively affects student participation during invention is easily quelled in cyberspace.

**Implications for Practice**

Short-term investigations of CMC and first-year writing on a small population within naturalistic settings may not yield generalizable results but can definitely contribute to understanding how technology is used in particular situations as it impacts teaching and learning. The fact that theoretical consistencies appear in the data patterns of this study – from online transcripts, student rough drafts, to teacher-student interviews – suggests there are some grounds to propose that synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board forums should be used as collaborative tools for invention of distinct research-based essay categories as they enable knowledge construction. Admittedly, incorporating technologies in the composition classroom
may be fraught with complexities, but the idea is to learn how and when to use these tools effectively for the benefit of the students. Teachers must move learners from passive learning to active learning and help them take ownership of their intellectual development or, in this case, writing process. Assessing the best online practice most suitable in diverse classroom settings to generate class participation and increase writing competencies is a movement towards achieving this goal.

To address the instructional shortcomings identified in this study, the theoretical underpinnings described earlier are translated in the following implications for practice:

1. Highlighting the value of meaningful conversations prevalent in online interaction, synchronous Chat seems to work better when generating possible essay topic, purpose, and thesis statement because of its capacity to produce interesting ideas in real-time/immediate settings that are often easily retained by recipients. The advanced quality and quantity of transfer rate of the first essay category from Chat to student drafts in this study prove that synchronous dialogues have more potential for purposes of decision-making (Paulus 1335-6) and thought development (Armitt, Slack, Green, and Beer; Henri 149; Mercer 26, 144). Initial thoughts, questions, and clarifications are often responded to within a more conversational forum at the right moment that positively leads to strong retention of information. Thus, using Chat to simulate the “messiness” of invention yet sustain memorable exchange on general ideas must be considered an alternative tool for small-group activities.

2. On the other hand, asynchronous Discussion Board seems to attain more detailed online interactions when generating ideas for all essay categories. The multiple modifications of main ideas and supporting details and linguistic patterns in this study prove that the use of asynchronous Discussion Board indicates more possibilities for critical reflection. The time-
independent feature (Henri 148-49; Kitade 10; Mercer 144) and organized information structure (Henri 149) of this platform allow students to become more fully engaged in reading, reflecting, and responding to threaded posts, making it one of the best online tools for reflective group interactions.

3. Finally, the use of synchronous Chat and asynchronous Discussion Board when generating possible sources and counterarguments must be prolonged or executed in separate class sessions to offer more opportunities for students to interact exclusively on each essay category. The students in this study worked on creating and disseminating possible topics, purpose, and thesis statement; main ideas and supporting details; source synthesis; and counterarguments simultaneously online and as a result, the last two categories suffered. Both forums show minimal effects on sources, while varying results for counterarguments are evident with null effect from Chat and very minimal effect from the Discussion Board, owing to the mental demands of these categories as opposed to simple topic explorations. Though the Discussion Board hints at much promise, separate or longer invention sessions in each forum (Olaniran 158) are still necessary so students can learn to express themselves and write purposefully (Comeaux 252). Nevertheless, the need for time in this communal space to bring out the desired effect in print values the capabilities of socialization and equality of interaction associated with the use of CMC forums in hybrid classrooms.

Having enumerated the benefits of using collaborative synchronous and asynchronous CMC invention in relation to specific research-based essay components, the following suggestions should also be considered for future applications in the composition classroom. It is important to note that the context and purpose of each online practice, the comfort level of its
users, and the access to technology must all be considered requisite for the success of any collaborative endeavors in cyberspace:

1. Instead of using exclusively one online tool for each writing phase, teachers might want to combine both synchronous and asynchronous CMC forums to overcome the limitations of a single tool (Paulus 1339) and ensure more meaningful virtual communities comparable to their face-to-face counterparts (Blythe 122-25). After all, creating more options for electronic discussion provides more opportunities for each individual to participate without reservations. The promotion of interdependence is a crucial element in an online learning community (Palloff and Pratt, Building Learning 126), so everything must be planned and purposefully facilitated for the benefit of student-participants (Palloff and Pratt, Building Learning 127).

2. Other open source software or web 2.0 applications may also be explored to supplement the needs not fully met by the online practices used in this study. Some of these tools are blogs, wikis, and podcasts; web conferencing softwares; Facebook, MySpace, and YouTube; and SecondLife that further enhance the act of sharing ideas and knowledge construction (Blair 42). In her article “Course Management Tools and Other ‘Gated Communities’: Expanding the Potential of Distance Learning Spaces through Multimodal Tools,” Kristine Blair argues that relevant questions must be considered when designing principles for online teaching, such as: “How do you present material?,” “How do students communicate with one another?,” “How do you assess students?,” “How do students learn?,” “What tools best facilitate students’ learning styles?” (49-50). In terms of professional development, several issues must also be raised for planning: “types of tools to be learned and integrated, pedagogical reasons for doing so, assessment of the impact of technology on student success,” and so forth (Blair 51). Choosing an
interface that caters to these concerns and one that values freedom, peer review, and knowledge sharing will surely make the learning task central (Cole and Foster 4-5).

3. Teachers can also implement strategies to create a virtual environment where “honesty, responsiveness, relevance, respect, openness, and empowerment” (Palloff and Pratt, Building Online 22) thrive so group members can feel safe in expressing themselves and facilitate productive interaction. Setting directives or parameters for the fair use of exchanges or outlining expectations for students to follow (Blythe 127; Yancey 112) are some techniques that can maintain order and sustain healthy conversations apart from the mere presence of the teacher. Hopefully, these will guide online members to achieve virtual utopia and get something out of an enriching experience.

4. More opportunities for student reflection after each online activity may be provided in order to support the learner (Barab and Duffy 32-33; Palloff and Pratt, Building Learning 129). “Transformative learning” or learning based on the interpretation of experiences, ideas, and assumptions is a direct result of self-reflection as learners take part in the meaning-making process and re-enact the online classroom (Palloff and Pratt, Building Learning 129). One way to facilitate self-reflection is to have the class review archived conversations and develop a summary at the end of the virtual meeting (Mercer 131). Another is to engage them in face-to-face dialogues or whole-class discussion after each online activity to address comments, questions, or concerns they may have about the exercise.

5. Most of all, teachers might want to combine face-to-face and online activities to accommodate a variety of learning styles (Olaniran 158). Not everyone is comfortable with digital or face-to-face communicative situations, so a combination of both will allow more opportunities for student engagement. Also, exercises designed specifically for natural settings
will arm teachers with alternative options in the event of unforeseen technical glitches and avoid classroom paralysis. The key here is to be sensitive and flexible with the task, student performance, and logistics to ensure productivity and success.

Since these pedagogical implications are derived from the present descriptive study, I hope that readers will further extend these suggestions to examples they know will work best in their own classroom contexts. Nevertheless, these principles primarily require composition teachers to embrace the role of a facilitator in a computer-mediated classroom (Olaniran 157; Palloff and Pratt, *Building Online* 22) and structure challenging conversations among a community of learners (Hiltz; Littleton 255). Teachers should work on becoming partners with students in an online learning community because it is the students themselves “who are experts when it comes to their own learning” (Palloff and Pratt, *Building Online* 23). The moment knowledge is freely constructed between and among the teacher and the students, the capacity of online practices in the composition classroom is truly maximized.

On the whole, computer technology offers new and unique possibilities for collaboration not available in other contexts and illuminates our human capabilities as collaborative learners (Light and Littleton 8). However, this notion is accompanied with challenges for teaching and learning (Littleton 255), so it is incumbent upon us to make informed decisions (Rickly 41). After all, it is not technologies themselves that create these unique learning environments but how we choose to implement these online tools (Cooney 285; Simonson 29).

**Recommendations for Further Research**

In his discussion of research methods in composition, Beach notes the importance for researchers to adopt a self-reflexive mode and question the underlying assumptions guiding the research that easily govern their understanding of writing (239). Because several areas
concerning the powers, skills, conditions, and pedagogies that need attention in composition classrooms have not been met by the present study, more qualitative research such as longitudinal ethnographic or case studies should be explored to attain in-depth understanding of a writing phenomenon. There is also great demand for formal descriptive studies that move observations into coding and quantifying (Lauer and Asher 19) to gain a more holistic view of the various effects of computer-mediated and digital technologies on the writing processes and products of our students. On the other hand, Patricia Rose Webb insists that more studies with mixed-mode approaches, in which quantitative data are used to triangulate qualitative data (471), will open up new areas for research and expand the kinds of answers and results we can achieve (473). This influx of both parametric and non-parametric studies in varying contexts will also attempt to remediate the application of the limited scope of this study towards larger populations for further generalization.

To articulate the possibilities of computer networks in the composition classroom, more investigations on collaborative electronic environments must be considered (Trupe 134). Heide McKee and Danielle Nicole DeVoss argue that the contexts for writing research has evolved with the expansion of digital writing spaces (5), yet “many questions [still need] to be asked about researching in and with digital technologies” (24). It is therefore imperative that our research approaches, methodologies, and ethical understandings should address these changes in communication technologies (McKee and DeVoss 11). In line with this, I recommend the following research projects for further investigation to develop this pilot study to a larger scale:

1. One limitation of this study is the use of Blackboard despite the availability of various Web 2.0 tools and other software applications that are more prevalent in the lives of our students. Exploring the functionality of Web 2.0 tools such as Wikis or other collaborative writing tools
(Paulus 1341) in the composition classroom would provide new perspectives on the way digital technologies have changed the processes, products, and contexts of writing and the teaching of writing. The use of newer electronic technologies in the classroom justifies the need for more research and training in teaching writing with computers.

2. Another possibility is to look closer at what learners actually do when collaborating in CMC environments by examining only their interactions in cyberspace. In other words, the focus of such investigation should be on the “how” of composing (the process) than the “what” of composing (the product) (Barritt and Kroll 50-51). This kind of inquiry may adapt the method of discourse or conversation analysis of comment types and/or conflict to determine how students negotiate and make connections among their ideas and those of their peers online. Because these factors were deliberately excluded in the present study, the influence of age, gender, and personality types and/or learning styles with respect to preference for different types of online communication modes – synchronous or asynchronous – may also be considered to enrich the analysis of student communicative practices.

3. On the other hand, the examination of both online dialogic artifacts and written products as evidence of knowledge construction (Paulus 3124) remains valuable in the field of computers and writing, composition studies, and cognitive-developmental psychology. The purpose of the present study is admittedly aligned within the parameters of this inquiry, but a few limitations may have affected its results. Since the student-participants were made aware of the research objectives prior to their online activities, some online posts might have been influenced by this information. Thus, subject recruitment for the next project involving a larger population across semesters should be done preferably after the collaborative online activities to control the variables and avoid contamination in the process. As regards methodology, there should be a
more holistic approach towards the detection of ideas from online transcripts to the written product in order to illuminate the phenomenon under study. Hence, an idea traceable online should be attributed to the participant who used it in print regardless of whether it came from the dialogue of the participant him/herself or somebody else.

The use of computer-mediated tools in the teaching of writing is here to stay, so our research and pedagogy should continue to accommodate these online practices. Some of these tools may have limited capacities in certain contexts that temporarily affect student involvement and cognition, but the rapid advancement of computer technology permits more experimentation in the composition classroom that would suppress these limitations. As we aim to find the best online practice that suits the performance and comfort levels of our students, the traditional sense of maintaining a learner-centered environment through critical and reflective interactions for the creation of new knowledge must still be valued.
WORKS CITED


January 8, 2007

Dear English 112 teacher,

My name is Florence Elizabeth Bacabac, a third-year doctoral student in the Rhetoric and Writing Program at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working on a research project that re-examines the effects of collaborative online invention on freshman academic writing. The term “collaborative online invention” is viewed in this study as a prewriting activity students engage in where they are linked with each other online to generate and discuss topics before drafting the essays. With this letter, I would like to request your permission to conduct a study in your class as your students write one of the required academic essays for this course. Specifically, I would like to ask you to use the Chat room/Synchronous mode of communication as invention strategy. By using an online invention practice to generate/discuss topics, I would like to analyze your students’ online postings, their written essays for that activity, and their final draft essay grades to better assess the correlation between the online dialogic activity and the quality of student writing. I would also like to invite you for a post-process interview, which will take place right after the online invention activity in class to ensure that it is still fresh in your memory. You are not required to participate in this project and you can change your mind and withdraw from the project at any time.

The study period will be between January 29, 2007 (4th week of class) and April 27, 2007 (last day of class). For data analysis, I need your permission to access your Course Blackboard’s archived online discussions in the Chat room/Synchronous Communication and your students’ rough draft electronic files written after the online invention activity. The data analysis will start right after the rough drafts are submitted until the final draft grades are given back to the students. To ensure that the students’ final draft grades will not be affected, my data analysis will be kept solely confidential. I need to be informed of the final draft grade of those students who agreed to participate in the study, though, to better assess the correlation between their online dialogic activity and the quality of their academic writing. I can only request for and analyze the activity of those students who have indicated their consent to be part of the study. I plan to interview 15-18 participants (including you) in your class to get deeper insights about the process of using collaborative online invention in academic writing. Finally, I assure you that there are no risks associated with this study greater than those you would encounter in your daily life.

The results of the study will help devise more effective technology-based practices in the teaching of writing. This information hopes to contribute to the growing literature of the pedagogical effects of technology, which would be extremely beneficial to composition teachers as they explore suitable collaborative online practices in the classroom as part of student invention strategy. It hopes to further highlight the cognitive effects of varied invention strategies (such as the impact of Computer-Mediated Communication) when composing academic texts.
based on the level of maturity of language use, content development, and overall structure of the finished product.

**Your Benefits.** Your participation counts because the ultimate objective of the project is to improve the invention process of composing academic essays. By allowing observation and analysis of your students’ online discussions and written essays, they will contribute to existing conversations on the role of collaborative online invention in the field of composition studies. Also, you and your students’ participation in the study will give you a chance to share your opinions with a researcher interested in your own points of view or preferences regarding online practices. In addition, you and your students will get to try/moderate different invention strategies that might help you choose the best one that would work for you in future composing/teaching activities.

**Your Participation.** As a researcher, I will interview you about your perceptions/attitudes toward the collaborative online invention process right after the activity. I will also be observing and analyzing the following: your students’ online interactions in the chat room, their rough drafts, and their grades for the final draft. If you agree to participate in this study, I will access and record the aforementioned data for coding and analysis.

The information you and your students provide will remain confidential and identities will not be revealed. When I quote from your postings or interview, I will assign you a pseudonym rather than use your name. In other cases, I will present the data in summary form. I will save the interview and other records in digital form on CD and audio cassette tape; the CDs and audio cassette tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions to me about the study. You can also request a summary or copy of the results of the study when the project is complete.

I ask you to respond that you agree or do not agree to participate in observation and interview by **January 22, 2007**. By signing the attached consent form, you are indicating your consent to participate in the project. *Please retain this invitation letter for your records at all times.*

After the online invention activity, I will contact you to be interviewed to discuss your perceptions and attitudes toward it. Your students who have agreed to be interviewed will also be contacted right after they have submitted their rough drafts to discuss their perceptions toward the online activity. The approximate time of conducting interviews is within the first six weeks of student participation in the collaborative online invention activity and submission of rough drafts; the maximum length of each interview is 45 minutes (or equivalent). You and your students will be interviewed face-to-face and you will be able to choose a convenient time for the conversation. The face-to-face interviews will be audio recorded.

For more information about the project and your role in it, please contact me at my email address florenb@bgsu.edu or office phone (419)372-8227. I will respond as soon as possible. You may also contact Kris Blair, the Chair of my dissertation research at (419)372-7543 or kblair@bgsu.edu. As Chair, Dr. Blair will supervise this study and will have access to all data.
sets. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419)372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and involvement.

Sincerely,

Florence Elizabeth Bacabac  
Department of English  
Bowling Green State University

CONSENT FORM

This document accompanies the invitation letter to be given during an appointed face-to-face meeting with the instructor by the second week of class (week of January 15th) this spring 2007.

This is _______________________________ (write your name). I am the instructor for English 112. I have read the information about your study and I agree to use the Chat room/Synchronous Communication as invention strategy for one of my students’ essays. I agree to subject my class’s online interactions, rough drafts, and final draft grades for observation and analysis provided the students give their consent to participate. I also agree to be interviewed about my perceptions and attitudes toward the online invention activity after it has been completed.

Date _________________________

Signature ______________________________

Email Address ______________________________
January 8, 2007

Dear English 112 teacher,

My name is Florence Elizabeth Bacabac, a third-year doctoral student in the Rhetoric and Writing Program at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working on a research project that re-examines the effects of collaborative online invention on freshman academic writing. The term “collaborative online invention” is viewed in this study as a prewriting activity students engage in where they are linked with each other online to generate and discuss topics before drafting the essays. With this letter, I would like to request your permission to conduct a study in your class as your students write one of the required academic essays for this course. Specifically, I would like to ask you to use the Discussion Board/Asynchronous mode of communication as invention strategy. By using an online invention practice to generate/discuss topics, I would like to analyze your students’ online postings, their written essays for that activity, and their final draft essay grades to better assess the correlation between the online dialogic activity and the quality of student writing. I would also like to invite you for a post-process interview, which will take place right after the online invention activity in class to ensure that it is still fresh in your memory. You are not required to participate in this project and you can change your mind and withdraw from the project at any time.

The study period will be between January 29, 2007 (4th week of class) and April 27, 2007 (last day of class). For data analysis, I need your permission to access your Course Blackboard’s archived online discussions in the Discussion Board/Asynchronous Communication and your students’ rough draft electronic files written after the online invention activity. The data analysis will start right after the rough drafts are submitted until the final draft grades are given back to the students. To ensure that the students’ final draft grades will not be affected, my data analysis will be kept solely confidential. I need to be informed of the final draft grade of those students who agreed to participate in the study, though, to better assess the correlation between their online dialogic activity and the quality of their academic writing. I can only request for and analyze the activity of those students who have indicated their consent to be part of the study. I plan to interview 15-18 participants (including you) in your class to get deeper insights about the process of using collaborative online invention in academic writing. Finally, I assure you that there are no risks associated with this study greater than those you would encounter in your daily life.

The results of the study will help devise more effective technology-based practices in the teaching of writing. This information hopes to contribute to the growing literature of the pedagogical effects of technology, which would be extremely beneficial to composition teachers as they explore suitable collaborative online practices in the classroom as part of student invention strategy. It hopes to further highlight the cognitive effects of varied invention strategies (such as the impact of Computer-Mediated Communication) when composing academic texts.
based on the level of maturity of language use, content development, and overall structure of the finished product.

**Your Benefits.** Your participation counts because the ultimate objective of the project is to improve the invention process of composing academic essays. By allowing observation and analysis of your students’ online discussions and written essays, they will contribute to existing conversations on the role of collaborative online invention in the field of composition studies. Also, you and your students’ participation in the study will give you a chance to share your opinions with a researcher interested in your own points of view or preferences regarding online practices. In addition, you and your students will get to try/moderate different invention strategies that might help you choose the best one that would work for you in future composing/teaching activities.

**Your Participation.** As a researcher, I will interview you about your perceptions/attitudes toward the collaborative online invention process right after the activity. I will also be observing and analyzing the following: your students’ online interactions in the discussion board, their rough drafts, and their grades for the final draft. If you agree to participate in this study, I will access and record the aforementioned data for coding and analysis.

The information you and your students provide will remain confidential and identities will not be revealed. When I quote from your postings or interview, I will assign you a pseudonym rather than use your name. In other cases, I will present the data in summary form. I will save the interview and other records in digital form on CD and audio cassette tape; the CDs and audio cassette tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions to me about the study. You can also request a summary or copy of the results of the study when the project is complete.

I ask you to respond that you agree or do not agree to participate in observation and interview by **January 22, 2007**. By signing the attached consent form, you are indicating your consent to participate in the project. *Please retain this invitation letter for your records at all times.*

After the online invention activity, I will contact you to be interviewed to discuss your perceptions and attitudes toward it. Your students who have agreed to be interviewed will also be contacted right after they have submitted their rough drafts to discuss their perceptions toward the online activity. The approximate time of conducting interviews is within the first six weeks of student participation in the collaborative online invention activity and submission of rough drafts; the maximum length of each interview is 45 minutes (or equivalent). You and your students will be interviewed face-to-face and you will be able to choose a convenient time for the conversation. The face-to-face interviews will be audio recorded.

For more information about the project and your role in it, please contact me at my email address florenb@bgsu.edu or office phone (419)372-8227. I will respond as soon as possible. You may also contact Kris Blair, the Chair of my dissertation research at (419)372-7543 or kblair@bgsu.edu. As Chair, Dr. Blair will supervise this study and will have access to all data
sets. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419)372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and involvement.

Sincerely,

Florence Elizabeth Bacabac
Department of English
Bowling Green State University

CONSENT FORM

This document accompanies the invitation letter to be given during an appointed face-to-face meeting with the instructor by the second week of class (week of January 15th) this spring 2007.

This is __________________________ (write your name). I am the instructor for English 112. I have read the information about your study and I agree to use the Discussion Board/Asynchronous Communication as invention strategy for one of my students’ essays. I agree to subject my class’s online interactions, rough drafts, and final draft grades for observation and analysis provided the students give their consent to participate. I also agree to be interviewed about my perceptions and attitudes toward the online invention activity after it has been completed.

Date ____________________

Signature __________________________

Email Address __________________________
APPENDIX C: INVITATION LETTER AND CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENTS OF BOTH CLASSES

January 22, 2007

Dear English 112 student,

My name is Florence Elizabeth Bacabac, a third-year doctoral student in the Rhetoric and Writing Program at Bowling Green State University. I am currently working on a research project that re-examines the effects of collaborative online invention on freshman academic writing. The term “collaborative online invention” is viewed in this study as a prewriting activity students engage in where they are linked with each other online to generate and discuss topics before drafting the essays. With this letter, I would like to request your permission to analyze one of your online collaborative invention postings, your written essay for that activity, and your final draft essay grade to better assess the relationship between the online activity and the quality of academic writing. I would also like to invite you for a post-process interview, which will take place right after you submit your rough draft to ensure that it is still fresh in your memory. Note that your decision to participate in this study or not will not influence your grades, class standing, or relationship to this institution in any way. You are not required to participate in this project to successfully complete this course and you can change your mind and withdraw from the project at any time during the semester.

The study period will be between January 29, 2007 (4th week of class) and April 27, 2007 (last day of class). For data analysis, I will observe your archived online discussions as invention for one of your required essays and your rough draft electronic files written after the online invention activity. The data analysis will start right after the rough drafts are submitted until the final draft grades are given back to you. To ensure that your final draft grades will not be affected, my data analysis will be kept confidential and will not be accessed by your teacher. I will be informed of your final draft grade if you agree to participate in the study to better assess the correlation between your online dialogic activity and the quality of your academic writing. I can only request for and analyze the activity of those students who have indicated their consent to be part of the study. I plan to interview 15-18 participants in your class to get deeper insights about the process of using collaborative online invention in academic writing. Finally, I assure you that there are no risks associated with this study greater than those you would encounter in your daily life.

The results of the study will help devise more effective technology-based practices in the teaching of writing. This information hopes to contribute to the growing literature of the pedagogical effects of technology, which would be extremely beneficial to composition teachers as they explore suitable collaborative online practices in the classroom as part of student invention strategy. It hopes to further highlight the cognitive effects of varied invention strategies (such as the impact of Computer-Mediated Communication) when composing academic texts.
based on the level of maturity of language use, content development, and overall structure of the finished product.

**Your Benefits.** Your participation counts because the ultimate objective of the project is to improve the invention process of composing academic essays. By allowing observation and analysis of your online discussions and written essays, you will contribute to existing conversations on the role of collaborative online invention in the field of composition studies. Also, your participation in the study will give you a chance to share your opinions with a researcher interested in your own points of view or preferences regarding online practices. In addition, you will get to try/moderate different invention strategies that might help you choose the best one that would work for you in future composing activities.

**Your Participation.** As a researcher, I will interview you about your perceptions/attitudes toward the collaborative online invention process right after you submit your rough draft. I will also be observing and analyzing the following: your online interactions, your rough drafts, and your grades for the final draft. If you agree to participate in this study, I will access and record the aforementioned data for coding and analysis.

The information you provide will remain confidential and identities will not be revealed. When I quote from your postings or interview, I will not use your name and assign you a pseudonym instead. In other cases, I will present the data in summary form. I will save the interview and other records in digital form on CD and audio cassette tape; the CDs and audio cassette tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet.

As a participant, you have the right to ask questions to me about the study. You can also request a summary or copy of the results of the study when the project is complete.

I ask you to respond that you agree or do not agree to participate in observation and/or interview by **February 2, 2007** (end of the second week when you first received this information sheet) by signing the attached consent form and handing it to me personally during my classroom visit or by putting it in my mailbox at 210 East Hall (my campus mailbox is right above my name/Bacabac). Please retain this invitation letter for your records at all times. You could also send me an email of your response from your personal email account by the same aforementioned date. Please follow the instructions below:

If you agree to be a part of the project yet choose **not to participate in an interview**, please e-mail me (Florence Elizabeth Bacabac, florenb@bgsu.edu) the following message:

This is __________________ (put your name). I am at least 18 years old. I have read the information about your study. I agree to allow observation and analysis of my online interaction, rough draft, and final draft grade in English 112. I have chosen not to be interviewed.

If you **also agree to be interviewed**, please email me (Florence Elizabeth Bacabac, florenb@bgsu.edu) the following message:
This is __________________________ (put your name). I am at least 18 years old. I have read the information about your study. I agree to allow observation and analysis of my online interaction, rough draft, and final draft grade in English 112. I agree to be interviewed, too.

By sending either of the above messages, you are indicating your consent to participate in the project.

After submitting your rough drafts, I will contact you to be interviewed about your perceptions and attitudes toward the online invention activity and your writing process if you have agreed to be interviewed. The approximate time of conducting interviews is within the first six weeks of student participation in the collaborative online invention activity and submission of rough drafts; the maximum length of each interview is 45 minutes (or equivalent). You will be interviewed face-to-face and you will be able to choose a convenient time for the conversation. The face-to-face interviews will be audio recorded.

For more information about the project and your role in it, please contact me at my email address florenb@bgsu.edu or office phone (419)372-8227. I will respond as soon as possible. You may also contact Kris Blair, the Chair of my dissertation research at (419)372-7543 or kblair@bgsu.edu. As Chair, Dr. Blair will supervise this study and will have access to all data sets. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419)372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Thank you very much. I appreciate your time and involvement.

Sincerely,

Florence Elizabeth Bacabac
Department of English
Bowling Green State University

CONSENT FORM

This document accompanies the invitation letter to be given during my initial classroom visit this spring 2007 before students start generating topics for one of their essays.

This is ________________________________ (put your name). I am at least 18 years old. I have read the information about your study. I agree to allow observation and analysis of my online interaction, rough draft, and final draft grade in English 112. I have chosen not to be interviewed.
This is _______________________________ (put your name). I am at least 18 years old. I have read the information about your study. I agree to allow observation and analysis of my online interaction, rough draft, and final draft grade in English 112. I agree to be interviewed, too.

Date __________________________

Signature __________________________

Email Address _____________________________
APPENDIX D: ASSIGNMENT SHEET FOR RESEARCH-BASED OR MULTIPLE SOURCE ESSAY

English 112

Multiple Source Essay (MSE)

We have you complete the Critique so that you can gain a basic understanding of sources. Hopefully, through this essay, you understand how to closely examine a source and determine its credibility. This skill becomes incredibly important as you begin using sources to support your opinions. This takes us to the main reason you’re taking ENG 112—argumentative synthesis.

The remaining essays for the class all follow the same basic guidelines. They will each be argumentative and each will require that you synthesize multiple sources to make your opinions credible. While each essay will have to deal with a different issue, and have different length and source requirements, the argumentative synthesis structure stays the same throughout.

Required Length: 4-5 full pages

Format: must adhere to all MLA guidelines—See your handbook for full details

Required Sources: at least 4 sources from WARAC Chapter 9
(additional sources may be used if you like, but at least 4 MUST be from WARAC chapter 9)

Purpose: convincingly present your opinion on a debatable issue using and synthesizing information from at least 4 sources from WARAC Chapter 9 to support and illustrate your own thesis.

It’s all about creating effective argumentative synthesis.

How do I write this paper?
Well, there are several things you need to keep in mind. First of all, the MSE needs to be an argument that gains support and credibility from the articles found in WARAC chapter 9, all of which have something to do with the way people react under group pressure and/or under pressure from an authority. Synthesizing these articles to support your argument is what leads to an effective MSE.

Ideas to consider:

All of the articles in this chapter seem to focus on some theory(s) of why people do the things they do. While some folks attest that their actions reflect their own internal drive, the authors here offer several other ideas. One theory is that people do things based on the GROUP they’re in. Several of our articles provide evidence that a person’s actions can be attributed to the pressures the person feels from the people around them.
A second theory is that people can be swayed into doing things they ordinarily wouldn’t (like hurting someone) simply by being told to do so by an “authority.” The authority can be any number of people/things, but the idea is that humans are innately obedient.

A third idea is that people do things not because of necessarily who they are, but because of where they are at a certain time. This sort of obedience to a situation is tested in several of our articles as well.

In conceiving this essay, I encourage you to think of a scenario/situation where a person might do something that doesn’t seem to follow human nature. The argument could then be aided by your analysis and application of the theories presented in our readings.

Ideas that have been successful in the past include:

- Why people belong to organized religion.
- Why people go to college when they really don’t want to.
- Why people participate in hazing rituals.
- Why people host and attend Tupperware (and similar types of) parties.
- Why people drink/do drugs.

Formats to Consider:

Now, remember the types of arguments with which you are already familiar (i.e. taking a position, proposing a solution, and/or speculating about causes).

Suppose you like the "position" essay. In this example, you might decide to argue that your high school needs to take specific action to curtail drug use; the focus of the argument might be that groups can encourage or dissuade drug use and that the school needs to encourage positive peer pressure. The argument would then follow a logical progression to convince your audience that your position is valid. You might synthesize evidence from the articles that helps prove that we are group animals and that it's very hard to go against a group of your peers.

Suppose that you like the "solution" essay. In this example, you might focus on a specific problem that can be remedied if folks would learn when it is appropriate to disobey. Maybe you followed the Enron scandal and want to argue that there is a problem in corporate America with folks blindly following the orders of their bosses and that there is then a solution that can be backed up by synthesis of some of the information found in the WARAC articles.

Or, finally, if you like the "speculation" essay, you might identify a trend that fits our obedience/group focus. Perhaps you want to explore the rise of gang activity in your neighborhood. You could then speculate about various causes that might be supported by our WARAC articles. Ultimately, you will argue that one of the causes is the most probable, backed up by synthesis of some of the WARAC articles.

Hopefully, you get the idea that you can write about all sorts of different things in all sorts of different ways and still meet the argumentative synthesis requirements of this essay.
Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Let me start by asking you some questions about your background and general experiences with this class.

1. Did you have any experience using collaborative online invention practices (chat rooms, discussion boards, blogs, etc.) for teaching any of your composition courses before? What courses were these?

2. What online practices have you used in class before aside from the current online invention activity just completed? For what purpose were these? Were these successful in terms of achieving the purpose? Why or why not?

3. Do you consider yourself proficient with computers? With teaching writing with computers?

4. What age group do you fall into?
   - 18-29
   - 30-40
   - 41-50
   - 50+

Research Question: What attitudes/perceptions does the teacher have toward collaborative online invention process?

1. What did you think of the process overall?

2. Would you prefer using the same invention strategy in your class for future essays? Why or why not?

3. How did you assess the nature of this strategy in terms of student participation?

4. Did you think the activity triggered fruitful class discussions (or otherwise)? Why or why not?

5. If you were to modify this collaborative online invention activity, how would you do it? Provide reasons for your choice.
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT
FOR STUDENTS OF BOTH CLASSES

Hello and thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Let me start by asking you some questions about your background and general experiences with this class.

1. Did you have any experience using collaborative online invention practices (chat rooms, discussion boards, blogs, etc.) for your composition courses before? What courses were these?

2. What online practices have you used in class before aside from the current online invention activity just completed? For what purpose were these? Were these successful in terms of achieving the purpose? Why or why not?

3. Do you consider yourself proficient with computers? With using online activities in the process of composing essays?

4. What age group do you fall into?
   - 18-29
   - 30-40
   - 41-50
   - 50+

Research Question: What attitudes/perceptions do students have toward collaborative online invention process?

1. What did you think of the process overall?

2. Would you prefer using the same invention strategy in future essays? Why or why not?

3. How many of the ideas discussed online did you think were tapped into your writing?

4. How many of your ideas in writing were actually sparked by the online dialogue?

5. How did you come up with ideas that were not discussed online?

6. Were there any technical terms/words, phrases, clauses that you’ve used/picked up online and also used in your essay?