An Historical Perspective on Collaborative Learning

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We may not always be able to claim that we see far because we stand on the shoulders of giants; we, do however, stand on the shoulders of thousands of good-willed teachers and writers surprisingly like us, who faced in 1870 or 1930 problems amazingly similar to those we confront each time we enter the classroom.

Robert J. Connors

Until recently, most composition teachers thought that collaborative learning/writing and peer-editing were relatively new teaching concepts created to solve problems brought about by the 1970s open-door college admission policies in this country. However, as a result of the growing importance of historical study in composition, we are now learning that many current teaching practices (including collaborative learning) have long and often politically inspired histories. In Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implication, Anne Ruggles Gere dispels the notion that group writing is a twentieth-century development by noting self-help writing groups and college literary societies in colonial America. She explains that the members of these earlier writing groups were often seeking social recognition and economic power, as were the nontraditional students entering college in the 1970s. Gere's work certainly expands the conception of collaborative learning in the United States. However, instructors in other countries and in other disciplines historically have adopted collaborative teaching practices to meet the needs of underprepared students, who in many cases have been disfranchised. To understand better the full implications of using collaborative learning in our own classrooms, we should study the contributions of our predecessors who faced educational climates similar to our own—regardless of the region or the era. Their work can teach us much about current American pedagogical practices.

Over two-hundred years ago, George Jardine, professor of logic and philosophy at the University of Glasgow from 1774 to 1826, designed a method of peer review to help prepare his students for full participation in British society. Jardine created an extensive practical plan for using modern concepts such as free writing, sequenced essay assignments, writing as discovery, writing across the curriculum, and peer review (although he did
not use our terminology), as well as traditional lectures, to teach philosophy to underprepared students and to train them for careers in business and science. Jardine assessed the needs and learning habits of his nontraditional students and tailored his teaching style accordingly. Jardine's classroom was comprised of all males; however, his conception of the role of the teacher and the pedagogical practices he created to help male students learn and succeed in British society parallels twentieth-century portraits of female teachers and descriptions of how female students learn.

Based on intensive interviews with women, Mary Belenky and her coauthors examine in *Women's Ways of Knowing* both the ways women learn and the kind of learning women value. The authors take this study one step further by suggesting which pedagogical strategies are effective in teaching women. They argue that current educators can help women learn and develop their own voices by

emphasizing connection over separation, understanding and acceptance over assessment, and collaboration over debate; if they accord respect to and allow time for the knowledge of imposing their own expectations and arbitrary requirements, they encourage students to evolve their own patterns of work based on the problems they are pursuing. (229)

An examination of Jardine's conduct in his all-male nineteenth-century class will reveal how he fits this twentieth-century description of a successful teacher of women. Current feminist methodology has application for educational studies involving class and race, as well as gender; historically, the struggle for power and validity marks all groups of oppressed students. Successful teaching practices for these students, male and female alike, are deeply political and must lead to empowerment for students and changes in the existing social order. In *Making the Difference*, an ethnographic study, R.W. Connell and collaborators examine schools as social sites. They explain that

both class and gender are historical systems, riddled with tension and contradiction, and always subject to change. Indeed it may be better to think of them as structuring processes rather than "systems," that is, ways in which social life is constantly being organized (and ruptured and disorganized) through time. What is most important to grasp about them is their dynamics, the ways in which they exert pressures, produce reactions, intensify contradictions and generate change. (180)

Jardine was teaching communicative skills to his students to enable them to break class bonds and become competitive in British society. Jardine was attempting to improve the quality of education for his students in the larger interest of creating a more just, radically democratic society. In many ways, Jardine's teaching theories and practices prefigure our own because they were created in answer to cultural and political developments characteristic of our time.
During the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Scotland's educational climate was analogous to the one in late twentieth-century America. Harvey Wiener attributes the twentieth-century revolution in composition instruction in American colleges to "the growth in the number of nontraditional learners in the collegiate body, the alienating nature of learning in large classrooms with too many students, and the acknowledged decline of freshman entry-level skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking" (52). This educational scenario existed in Scotland during Jardine's time as well because of a similar democratic philosophy of education for the many rather than for a select few. At both of these points in history, enlightened teachers realized that they needed a practical way to handle instructing and evaluating the increased number of students in their classes if these nontraditional students were to succeed in school and ultimately in society; and students with diverse educational, social and cultural backgrounds needed a way to achieve a sense of community in the classroom. Peer review and collaborative learning strategies answered some of these challenges.

In this discussion I will suggest why the work of Jardine has been omitted from the history of writing instruction, show how the changing educational climate of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries motivated the modifications Jardine made in teaching logic and philosophy at the University of Glasgow, and, finally, outline Jardine's plan for using collaborative learning and peer editing in the classroom.

The Historical Void
Robert Connors explains that "traditional rhetorical histories end abruptly with Whately [1828], and the rest of the nineteenth century is an echoing tomb" ("Writing" 50). One reason why the nineteenth century is often omitted from the history of writing instruction is that primary sources of this period are difficult to find. We have abundant scholarship concerning eighteenth-century rhetoricians' interpretations of historical rhetoric and their influence on English literature, criticism, and composition because of the availability of their published lectures. Hugh Blair's lectures alone enjoyed twenty-six editions in Great Britain, thirty-seven editions in the United States, fifty-two abridged editions, and thirteen translations into French, Italian, Russian, and Spanish in the first one-hundred years following their initial publication in 1783 (Golden and Corbett 25). Unfortunately, the practice of publishing professors' lectures decreased by the end of the eighteenth century; therefore, many nineteenth-century professors' lectures and thoughts are preserved only in student notes, letters, and other materials in manuscript libraries. However, when they can be found, the student lecture notes from this period offer highly reliable accounts of the professors' ideas for two reasons. First, it was the custom (at least in Scotland) to award prizes for the best sets of student notes, a practice which encouraged highly
organized and legible note taking. Second, the professors often dictated their lectures verbatim year after year, resulting in student notes which over a period of years vary little and serve as accurate accounts of the lectures. In the case of George Jardine, we have, in addition to two preserved sets of students’ notes, his published work, *Outlines of Philosophical Education* (1818, 1825), which details both his theory and practical plan for teaching liberal arts classes. Jardine describes this work as follows:

*Outlines* has been found by experience to answer at least some of the most important purposes of a first philosophical education. It is conducted upon principles, too, which, combining elementary instruction with active habits on the part of the student, seem to be strongly recommended by the most intelligent philosophers, both of ancient and modern times. (42)

Jardine specified his audience for *Outlines* to include other instructors, “young men entering upon the studies of a first philosophy class,” and “those who have not enjoyed the benefit of a public education, but who are desirous to compensate that deficiency by private reading and regular enquiry” (43). The work straightforwardly addresses many topical teaching issues that are as important today as they were during Jardine’s time: adapting teaching methods to the way students learn, moving from teacher-centered to student-centered pedagogy, and preparing students for full participation in society. *Outlines* fits the description of many modern treatises concerning education; it “breaks new ground by linking theory to practice and in developing a critical pedagogy for empowerment” (Giroux and Freire xiv).

Another unexpected source for studying Jardine’s contributions to writing instruction lies in the published correspondence of Baron William Mure, a wealthy and influential man of letters. From 1771 to 1773, Jardine supervised the education of Mure’s two sons in France and regularly sent back detailed reports justifying his expenses and teaching practices. Embedded within these letters are Jardine’s early theories of education developed from his aversion to French educational practices and his own tutorial experiments with the Mure boys. Jardine complained to Mure that the French academies offered students “no spirit of enquiry—no habits of industry—nothing but the memory of a few facts and principles lying dead in their minds” (“Correspondence” 289). Jardine saw it as his duty to remediate the deficiencies of the Mure boys’ instruction by supplementing their studies with active learning experiences. The origin of many pedagogical concepts (such as daily free writing, student conferencing, journal keeping, revising, and writing along with his students) which Jardine later develops at the University of Glasgow is found in these reports to Mure. In addition to the correspondence with Mure, we have another one-hundred and thirty-six unpublished letters, spanning forty-five years, from Jardine to Robert Hunter, a college classmate (Glasgow Manuscript Library, MS Gen 507). From the published work, students’ notes, and two collections of letters, we learn that
Jardine was intensely concerned about the integrity of language, the separation of writing and speaking from communication, and methodologies that concentrated simply on correctness rather than on the social nature of writing. He envisioned a comprehensive rhetoric and stressed that the abilities to reason, investigate, judge, write, and speak are crucial components of a liberal arts education designed to prepare students to function in and contribute to society.¹

The Educational Climate of Scottish Universities
To put Jardine's contributions to rhetorical theory and practice into perspective, it is necessary first to understand the history of the Scottish universities in general and the educational climate of the University of Glasgow during Jardine's time in particular. During the seventeenth century, the Scottish universities began to question the scholastic method of teaching based on Aristotelian philosophy. In 1647, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, who believed they had the right to supervise the universities, formed a committee to investigate education. They found that both Aristotelian logic and the scholastic teaching practices no longer suited the "spirit of the times." This report included the following statement:

The dyting [dictating] of long notes has, in time past, proved not only a hinderance to the necessary studies, but also to the knowledge of the text itself, and to the examination of such things as are taught; it is therefore sincerely recommended by the commissioners to the dean and faculty of arts, that the REGENTS [the professors who had the charge of educating the youth] spend not so much time in dyting of their notes; that no new lesson be taught till the former be examined. (qtd. in Outlines 17-18)

The committee went on to propose that all Scottish universities adopt a uniform system of instruction. However, upon investigation this suggestion was found to be impractical and was abandoned.

Not until the eighteenth century were real changes brought about in instructional practices at the Scottish universities. In 1727, the King commissioned the Royal Visitation Committee to investigate the state of the Universities of Scotland. The commissioners collected testimony from university administrators and professors, and then later presented their findings to both houses of parliament. The evidence and the final reports on the status of education at each of the universities were published and made available to the public. This committee introduced radical reform in the method of teaching at Scottish universities by abolishing the regenting system of education, whereby one professor taught a group of students all courses during their entire program. Regenting ended at Edinburgh in 1708, at Glasgow in 1727, at St. Andrews in 1747, and at King's College in Aberdeen in 1798. The regents, who were responsible for teaching a range of classes including Greek, Latin, Logic, Moral and Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Rhetoric, were gradually replaced by specialist professors.
As a result, the quality of education and instruction was strengthened (Horner, "Writing Instruction" 330).

The Scots supported a philosophical belief in a democratic education with few religious restrictions and open to talented students who were interested in pursuing higher education. This educational attitude derives from earlier educational practices in the region. Before the major universities were established in Scotland in the fifteenth century, college students attended universities on the continent—particularly in Paris and Bologna (Hunter 209); therefore, the model for the founding of the Scottish schools was the broadly democratic institutions of the continent rather than the traditionally elitist English schools. The philosophical differences between the English and Scottish universities became important in the eighteenth century. Winifred Bryan Horner explains:

Fashioned after the Italian and French models, the Scottish universities were quite different from the English institutions. . . . The Scots were dedicated to providing their people—not only aspiring clergy but also the new upwardly mobile business and merchant class—with a philosophical based education. . . . In the English universities, on the other hand, only the best prepared and brightest students were admitted. . . . While Oxford and Cambridge were concentrating on the classics, the Scottish universities were embracing the new learning. It is within this atmosphere that the study of English literature and critical theory and the new psychological rhetoric emerge. (Nineteenth-Century Scottish Rhetoric 3-5)

The lasting contributions to liberal arts education made by the Scottish universities are directly attributable to eighteenth-and nineteenth-century changes in their philosophical approach to education. In an effort to serve their students better, the Scottish universities during this period were (1) shifting from regenting systems of instruction to a “more specialized professoriat,” (2) replacing “deductive reasonings from classical authorities with inductive inquiries into social and physical experience,” and (3) generally moving “toward more concerted studies of the language, logic, and social relations of contemporary life” (Miller 61).²

Interestingly, before becoming professors at the major Scottish universities, many of the most noted figures of the eighteenth century, such as Adam Smith and Hugh Blair, delivered series of public lectures on English language and literature, which were later integrated into the curricula at the Scottish universities. Interest in English language studies spread because these lecturers were often hired to teach at universities in regions other than the ones where they delivered their public lectures. The Scottish professors were not paid set salaries. Instead their income derived from fees paid by students in their classes, giving rise to the need to appeal to popular interests by addressing topical subjects. The students were attracted to lectures delivered in English on the subject of English language and composition because many of them did not have an educational background in the classics. These provincial students were trying to raise their station in life by improving their understanding and usage of English.
The University of Glasgow

According to the University of Glasgow Calendar, the number of students at the institution increased from approximately one-hundred and fifty in the early seventeenth century to approximately four-hundred by 1702 (xx). Enrollment continued to increase steadily for the next two centuries as the industrial city of Glasgow grew and expanded. As enrollment increased, Glasgow gradually became a non-residential university with only forty students “living in” by 1704 (xx). The strength of the university increased in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for a variety of reasons: its prominent professors, among whom the most influential and well-know were Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith in the eighteenth century; its sensitivity to topical issues and historical changes; generous support from its benefactors; and its ability to keep abreast of new academic developments. The University’s adaptability and strength are evidenced in the number of professorships restored or founded during this period; seven new professorships were created or reinstated by 1732, and at least eighteen new professorships were founded in the nineteenth century (xx).

Perhaps the greatest change at Glasgow University during this period, however, was in the demographic make-up of the students. Jardine specifically states that his primary motivation for making theoretical and practical changes in the logic and philosophy class was the realization that the class no longer met the specific needs of his students:

> Every day more and more convinced me that something was wrong in the system of instruction, pursued in this class;—that the subjects on which I lectured were not adapted to the age, the capacity, and the previous attainments of my pupils. . . . Impressed with this conviction, which the experience of every day tended to confirm, I found myself reduced to the alternative of prelecting, all my life, on subjects which no effort of mine could render useful to my pupils, or of making a thorough and radical change, in the subject matter of my lectures. (Outlines 27-28)

Jardine radically changed the content of the logic and philosophy class to meet the needs of working-class students who were sent to college at a much younger age than had previously been the custom (28). The Scottish university students were often as young as thirteen or fourteen in the late eighteenth century and were graduated at age seventeen or eighteen (Hunter 211; Findlay 9-10). By the nineteenth century, the University of Glasgow was attracting a diversified range of students, consisting of many different "ages, classes, and occupations" (Horner, "Nineteenth-Century Rhetoric" 174). Because these students were younger than their predecessors, they were often educationally unprepared for the lectures in ontology, metaphysics, and Greek which characterized the logic and philosophy class. In addition, they were lured away from college at an earlier age than students of the past because of increased employment opportunities both in Scotland and abroad, opportunities which children of the working classes could not easily afford to
ignore. Jardine explains that because of the shortened time spent at college, the students' education became "less systematic and considerably more abridged. Thus, the changes which were taking place in society required a more miscellaneous and practical kind of instruction in the first philosophy class" (28-29).

**Jardine's Conduct of the First Class of Philosophy**

From the time of the Royal Visitation in 1727 to 1774, when Jardine was elected professor of logic, the philosophy class adhered to the subject matter and sequencing prescribed by the royal commissioners (Outlines 23). Lectures were delivered early in the morning and were followed by an oral one-hour examination in the afternoon. At intervals throughout the term, two or three compositions loosely connected to the subjects discussed in the class were assigned (23-24). From his experience as both a student in the philosophy class at Glasgow and later as professor of that class, Jardine says that this teaching plan failed because it rendered the class both boring and useless. The philosophy class did not offer any knowledge which prepared the student "to adorn conversation, or to qualify the student for the concerns of active life"; in fact, the class was routinely known as "the drowsy shop of logic and metaphysics" among the students (26, 24).

Citizens of Glasgow, a growing commercial city, echoed Jardine's thoughts on the unsuitableness of the class of philosophy. Because the University of Glasgow was governed in part by the town council, public opinion concerning the University held great influence. In an undocumented reference, Jardine quotes a published opinion of education at this time:

> Some of the classes in universities bear evident marks of their original design; being either totally, or in part, intended for the disputes and wranglings of divines, and of little use to the lawyer or physician, and still less to the merchant and the gentleman. Of this sort we reckon logic and metaphysics. These arts or sciences (for it is not agreed yet which of them they are) to the greatest part of students, are quite unintelligible; and, if they could be understood, we cannot for our life discover their use.  

(qtd. in Outlines 26-27)

The ancient curriculum no longer suited the needs of the thriving industrial city of Glasgow by the late eighteenth century. The successful merchants, who financially supported the University, called for a liberal arts education tempered with classes suitable for students going into business. Jardine agreed with them.

For several sessions following his appointment in 1774, Jardine maintained the former practices of the class (Outlines 27). However, as a result of his own dissatisfaction with the established curriculum and the public outcry against the suitability of the class for contemporary students, Jardine slowly began to change both the content and his method of instructing the logic and philosophy class. He found the old method to be not only boring and ill-
suited to his students' needs but also detrimental to the development of academic discipline:

To require the regular attendance of very young men, two hours every day, during a session of six or seven months, on lectures which they could not understand, and in which, of course, they could take no interest, had a direct tendency to produce habits of negligence, indifference, and inattention; which, it is well known, frequently terminated in a positive aversion to study of every description. (29)

His new plan for the course aimed at expanding the curriculum to include subjects useful for science and business, taught in a method that appealed to "all the powers of intellect" in a variety of applications (31). Jardine explains:

It ought therefore to be the great object of a first philosophy class to supply the means of cultivation, not to one faculty only, but, to a certain extent at least, to all the powers of intellect and taste; to call them severally into action; to present appropriate subjects for their exercise; to watch over their movements, and to direct their expanding energies; so as to maintain them in that just relation to each other, and to secure that reciprocal aid, in their progressive improvement, which seems pointed out to us by the order of nature. To secure a suitable education for young men destined to fill various and very different situations in life, the course of instruction ought not certainly to be limited to the narrow range of logic and metaphysics; but, on the contrary, should be made to comprehend the elements of those other branches of knowledge, upon which the investigation of science, and the successful despatch [sic] of business, are found chiefly to depend. (31)

Jardine believed that the role of the teacher must change for a new teaching plan to succeed. No longer could instructors simply convey information in a teacher-centered lecture. Rather, the responsibility of learning should be shared by both the teacher and students. The teacher's role must shift from that of authoritarian to "companion or friend of the student," stimulating and cultivating the student's natural abilities "when his difficulties are most formidable" (Outlines 315). Jardine also suggests that teachers address students' "failings with a gentle hand, in the spirit of parental kindness and forbearance" in order to "give young minds a favourable direction." By providing a nurturing atmosphere for student-centered learning, the teacher can "do more good than could be done either by ingenious lectures, or by severe remonstrances" (365). Jardine's view of the teacher resembles the description of "the teacher as midwife" found in Women's Ways of Knowing; the authors describe this kind of teacher as one who supports students' thinking without doing their thinking for them, who assists in the emergence of consciousness and encourages students to speak in their own voices, who focuses on students' knowledge rather than her own (217-18). The authors list the primary concerns of the "maternal thinking" teacher as: (1) preserving the student's fragile newborn thoughts, (2) fostering the child's growth by supporting the evolution of the student's thinking, (3) helping the student make private works public by connecting them with the culture, (4) helping the student see that the baby (writing) is not the
Jardine's primary objective in teaching his students was twofold: (1) to cultivate in students the ability to examine their own minds and reactions to outside information as the primary method of acquiring new knowledge and (2) to encourage them to communicate that knowledge through oral and written language (Outlines 65). To foster these objectives, Jardine assigned frequent and sequenced writing assignments—a practice characteristic of modern writing instruction. One modern proponent of sequencing assignments is William Coles. The bulk of his texts The Plural I, Composing, and Composing II consists of a series of writing assignments. Coles explains the value of sequencing assignments to the users of his texts:

The assignments are contrived to direct a general movement ... throughout the term and ... [they] have a chronology. As you move from assignment to assignment you will be making increasingly complicated statements about yourself as a writer, a composer, a language user. ... Do not expect [your teacher] to make a given issue relevant or meaningful in terms of your own life. ... The best a teacher can do, a course can do, an education can do, is to put you in a position to improve yourself for yourself—and be ready to acknowledge your effort. (Composing 3-5)

Likewise, Jardine sequences writing assignments so that the writing process is adapted to the students' progress. He divides assignments into four levels moving from a level of basic comprehension up through a hierarchy that ends in analytical reasoning and inference. Jardine's reason for sequencing assignments parallels Coles': "to improve the powers of attention, discrimi-
nation, and investigation . . . to produce habits of reasoning which may be easily applied to other subjects,” and ultimately to encourage students to become their own best teachers (Outlines 328).

Jardine was aware of the increased workload his new plan created for the teachers of large classes and admitted that “this system of practical instruction is much more difficult than the composition of lectures” (293). However, Jardine saw the positive effect of his student-centered approach to education, particularly for students who in many cases “were not qualified, either in respect of age or of previous acquirements” for traditional university education (427). In an effort to shorten the time needed to evaluate essays and to shift responsibility for learning back to the student, Jardine encourages teachers to abandon the practice of “exposing” every error on a paper and instead to direct the student “to those parts of his theme which require farther attention, and to the general nature of the defects which have been noted” (364). He explains that not only does this method of correcting themes decrease grading time but it also encourages students to improve and revise. In addition, students gain confidence in their ability to write:

Young persons may be readily excused for thinking too highly of their own performances, and they are apt to be disappointed and discouraged upon discovering imperfections, where they were not expected. In such circumstances, the professor must touch their failings with a gentle hand. . . . The earliest buds of spring are easily affected by the inclemency of the atmosphere, and harsh remarks, particularly when delivered in a forbidding and authoritative manner, might prevent altogether the farther effects of such useful exercises. (365)

Although he admits that teachers “cannot possibly accomplish the examination of all the themes” (Outlines 367), Jardine stresses the fact that students can learn by writing only if all of their papers are closely examined. He warns that the “attention of those students whose exercises are overlooked will soon become relaxed, their spirits depressed, and their feelings irritated. If our essays pass without notice, they naturally ask, why need we give ourselves so much trouble in composing them?” (367). So to ensure that all student writing is not only evaluated but also written for a specific audience, Jardine developed a method of peer review, which he asserts brings about “incalculable advantages which cannot be obtained in any other way” (367). He explains that peer review allows all students to receive individual attention, weaker students to learn from stronger ones, and all students to improve their own writing by increasing their powers of criticism (366, 371). In Outlines, Jardine carefully explains each fact of his peer review plan, stipulating: (1) the advantages of such a system of examination; (2) the rules to be followed by peer editors, whom he labels “examinators”; (3) the method of reporting criticism to the author and the other class members; (4) the ways to solve differences of opinion between critic and author; and (5) the role of the teacher in the peer-review process.
Jardine's Rationale and Plan for Peer Review

Jardine's method of conducting student-assisted learning began with the appointment of ten or twelve of the best writers in the class as "examinators," a term he chose over critic or censor because it was "less assuming" (367). The examinators were responsible for closely analyzing a certain number of themes (according to Jardine's specific instructions) and giving a detailed written report attached to the theme back to the author (367). Because this plan was successful not only in decreasing his own grading load but also in improving the work of the examinators, Jardine decided to extend the privilege of being an examinator to everyone in the class so that each student could be given "an opportunity for exercising his powers of criticism" (371). Jardine found that

Thus, opposed to each other, with as much equality as can be expected, each student is furnished with the strongest motives to exert his attention and his ingenuity. It becomes a sort of single combat, in the presence of many spectators, and it has been found to produce attention and diligence in many when other motives had failed. (372)

Jardine's peer review plan illustrates two of the most prominent theories of modern collaborative learning: (1) that both weak and strong students can benefit from a peer-editing system, and (2) that learning is a social act.

In a 1973 article entitled "The Uses of Immaturity," educational theorist Jerome Bruner calls for a "system of student-assisted learning from the start in our schools" (50). He cites case studies of peer-assisted learning and points out that the findings from these research projects support the claim that the tutored students exhibit "a considerable increase in scholastic performance" and that those doing the tutoring demonstrate "a very considerable increase" (50). Furthermore, he claims that by encouraging students to assume responsibility for the academic progress of each other, teachers will also foster a notable increase in self-worth and group pride of the students. Jardine argues that his method of peer-review is successful for similar reasons:

The method of conducting the themes and criticisms of the first philosophy class, is highly beneficial, both to the authors and examinators; and has been found, from experience, an excellent expedient for calling forth the intellectual energies of the student. There are few situations in which young men can be placed more favourable to application and industry. (Outlines 374)

Jardine encourages students to assume responsibility for one another in preparation for responsible participation in society. In critiquing each other's writing, Jardine insists that students write clear analyses that are thorough and detailed, as well as tactful, helpful and truthful:

There is one rule absolutely indispensable, and which is never allowed to be violated with impunity, viz, the criticisms, however just, must be expressed in liberal and becoming terms, with that diffidence and candour which are due from those who must be conscious of many defects and imperfections in their own performances. (370)
In fact, the students' respect for one another is the cornerstone of Jardine's plan for peer review. He stresses the importance of mutual respect among students as he outlines each part of his peer-learning plan and states repeatedly that "young persons will always prove docile and reasonable, when they feel that they are treated with candour, with kindness, and without any undue partialities" (373).

Jardine believes that the writing students find most useful in college is the kind that prepares them to enter business, industry, and government, and he argues that by participating in collaborative learning settings students develop interpersonal traits and skills "indispensable at once to the cultivation of science, and to the business of active life" (Outlines 394). Jardine claims that collaborative work should be an integral part of every classroom because it prepares students for normal discourse in business, government and the professions, which is both written within and addressed to status equals. Although never explicitly using terms such as "community" and "social context," Jardine fosters collaborative work among his students by creating a sense of community and responsibility in his classroom. In Jardine's plan, all students participate in the peer-learning procedures of the class, and all are responsible to each other under the rules of participation. Unless they adhere to the rules of the community and remain loyal and respectful to each other, the students will be banished from involvement within the community of their peers and denied any advantage associated with participation:

Such as are found to disobey these injunctions are considered as academical traitors, viewed with contempt and reproach, and, if the fact be proved against them, they are subjected to a forfeiture of their privilege ... and deprived of the honours which they themselves may have otherwise deserved. (390)

Jardine goes so far as to compare the rules governing the interaction of his students to public communities and suggests that "it would be well for the public if laws of higher authority were as regularly observed, and as seldom violated" as they were in his classroom (371).

Jardine insists that student-assisted learning depends primarily on the "experience and prudence of the teacher" in setting up conditions where collaborative learning can occur (Outlines 368), and he attributes the success of this pedagogical technique to the students' "interest and honor combined with the exhortations of the teacher" (374). Jardine's characterization of the role of the teacher in peer-editing parallels the description of the modern "connected teacher" found in Women's Ways of Knowing:

The connected teacher is not just another student; the role carries special responsibilities. It does not entail power over the students; however, it does carry authority, an authority based not on subordination but on cooperation. Connected teachers are believers. They trust their students' thinking and encourage them to expand it. (227)
Jardine advises the teacher to set up rules for conducting peer-evaluations so that “ignorance, conceit, partiality, and petulance, on the part of the juveniles . . . are altogether avoided” (368-69), and he clearly stipulates that the teacher's rules are to be strictly followed, “from which [the students] are made to understand that there must be no deviation whatever” (369). Once the rules are clearly outlined, however, Jardine advocates allowing the students freedom within these strictures to “exercise their powers of criticism” (371). By the end of the term, the students, without any intervention from the teacher, are trusted to judge which of their classmates' essays should be awarded prizes. Jardine suggests that “the professor take no immediate share in this business” (389), and he offers the following justification for entrusting the students with this responsibility:

I am inclined to give a decided preference to the exercise of this right as vested in the students.... Were the professor to take this duty upon himself, ... the charm of emulation would be dissolved at once, and every future effort among his pupils would be enfeebled. (385)

In regard to the students' ranking of the themes as compared to his own evaluation, Jardine says that “upon more minute attention, however, I have frequently found reason to prefer the judgment of the students to my own” (393). He believes that the teacher should move to the perimeter of the action of collaborative learning and allow the students freedom to exert their own opinions and to learn from one another. In fact, Jardine surmises that by the close of the session, “the character, the abilities, the diligence, and the progress of students, are as well known to one another as their faces” as a result of their intense interaction with each other (388).

Conclusion

Jardine's method of peer-review was enormously successful and continued by his successor, Reverend Robert Buchanan (Evidence 38). Unfortunately, the practical reforms Jardine made in educational practice were disregarded before the end of the nineteenth century. Horner offers one explanation:

The Scottish universities initiated a series of "reforms" that abandoned the nineteenth-century philosophic and democratic system and resulted in one which conformed to the English university model and which was dedicated to the education of the select few... The important records of the [nineteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians'] work were often lost or overlooked in the persistent call for educational "reform." (Nineteenth-Century Scottish Rhetoric 6)

The renunciation of nineteenth-century educational theories and practices in Scotland created a gap in the scholarship of the history of rhetoric, a gap which resulted in the loss of important contributions to educational practice. Robert Connors points out that we are particularly ignorant of the period from 1790 to 1850 (“Writing” 68), the period in which George
Jardine's important work occurred. Perhaps if we had been aware of Jardine's use of composition to teach philosophy and logic earlier, the story of American writing instruction would read a little differently. Both Jardine at the University of Glasgow and Alexander Bain at the University of Aberdeen adapted their teaching practices to accommodate poorly prepared students. In fact, in an inaugural address to his 1860 logic class, Bain applauds Jardine's contributions to education. He quotes from William Hamilton's *Lectures on Metaphysics*, in which Jardine is credited for doing

more for the intellectual improvement of his pupils than any other public instructor in this country [Scotland] within the memory of man . . . not by great erudition or great philosophical talent though he was both a learned and able thinker, but by the application of that primary principle of education which wherever employed has been employed with success. I mean the determination of the pupil to self activity, doing nothing for him which he is able to do for himself. (6)

Bain goes on to quote extensively from Jardine's *Outlines* concerning the practical education of students. Although Bain admittedly builds on Jardine's earlier theories of education, he specifically excludes essay writing from his classroom. Bain says that assigning essay assignments excuses the teacher from actively instructing the students and "ranks among the crude devices of the infancy of the educational art" (*On Teaching English* 24). In critiquing the practice of essay writing, Bain says that "under some of the most celebrated and successful teachers, as Jardine, of Glasgow, the pupils were kept incessantly at work in Composition" (*On Teaching English* 24). Ironically, Bain's critical reading text *English Composition and Rhetoric, a Manual* (1866) was widely adopted as a composition textbook in this country following the 1890s Harvard Report rather than Jardine's enlightened theories of using writing to teach both subject matter and social responsibility described in *Outlines*. Why?

First, Bain's work is accessible for classroom use. The text is written in an abbreviated form intended to be used by the students; Bain numbers and states his principles outright, and then adds brief explanations. He also includes excerpts from contemporary English authors upon which the students can apply the principles in the textbook. Jardine's *Outlines*, on the other hand, is a philosophical treatise written primarily for teachers.

Second, Bain's prescriptive delivery was convincing. Shelley Aley explains that Bain's authoritative tone in *English Composition* contributes to the success and acceptance of the work as "Truth" by the "keepers of the language," who found Bain engaging during that period, and later.3 Because of its format, the work was easily translated into a writing text, although Bain designed it as a critical reading text. Then as now, busy practitioners are drawn to clear-cut handbooks for teaching subject matter, not philosophical treatises. Jardine's theoretical discussion, although accessible and punctuated with practical teaching advice, was not as immediately employable as
Bain's *English Composition*. Unfortunately, Bain’s systematic, matter-of-fact manner probably encouraged the misappropriation of much of his work. His teaching approach is currently regarded as product-oriented and usage-obsessed, although a closer examination of his primary works rather than appropriations of it don’t fully support that opinion. As Andrea Lunsford explains, “Alexander Bain, the master of analytic and inferential thought, perhaps did the wrong thing in excluding essay writing from his classroom—but for the right reasons” (441).

Finally, Bain delivered many public addresses and published extensively, not primarily in the field of logic and rhetoric but in natural philosophy and psychology—popular subjects of his day. Jardinewas not self-promoting, nor did he publish a great deal. He developed his theories about how students learn out of their own experiences. We would currently label Jardine’s work “practitioner research,” a form of inquiry which historically has been undervalued.

John Gage suggests that in many cases “composition theory in the last half of the twentieth century is largely engaged in reinventing the late nineteenth century” (qtd. in Kitzhaber xii). I believe even this view is too limited. Enlightened teachers have always tried to meet their students’ changing needs, and by neglecting to study the past we are doomed to repeat the successes and failures of those who came before us. We must continue to search for the historical records of earlier practitioners in a variety of disciplines so that we can put into perspective our own contributions to education and map out where we need to go next.

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**Notes**

1 I am editing Jardine’s work for inclusion in Winifred Bryan Horner’s *Three Nineteenth-Century Scottish Rhetoricians: Bain, Aytoun, and Jardine*, forthcoming from Southern Illinois UP.

2 For works that piece together a coherent history of American writing instruction that relies on developments in the Scottish Dissenting academies and universities, see Parker; Miller, which builds upon information in Parker; Connors “The Rise”; Horner; Kitzhaber; Halloran; Sher and Smitten; and Berlin.

3 Shelley Aley is writing an important dissertation at Texas Christian University concerning the rhetoric of Alexander Bain and misinterpretations of his work.


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