

# When We Write Together

The Bridge Between Comparative Rhetorics  
and Collaborative Authorship  
in First Year Writing

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Curricular Context

Theoretical Grounding

Pedagogical Practice

Brief discussion  
of MSU's  
"Writing As  
Inquiry"  
curriculum

Comparative  
rhetorics and  
LuMing Mao's *art of  
recontextualization*

Rhetorical  
negotiation  
and  
collaborative  
storytelling

# MSU's Writing As Inquiry Curriculum

<http://wrac.msu.edu/firstyearwriting>

## Learning Narrative

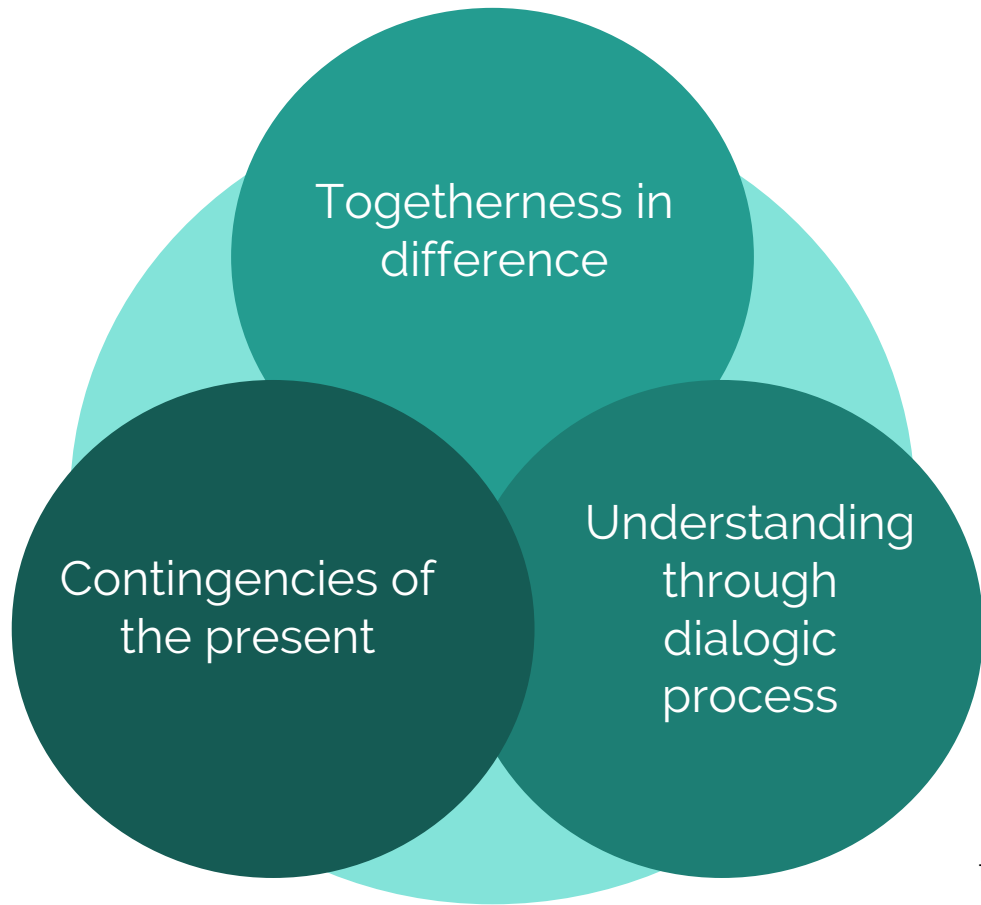
Write a story that attempts to answer our thematic question: Why am I here? The "here" of your story could mean many things. In telling this story, you'll have the opportunity to reflect on what that experience has taught you about yourself and the world around you.

## Cultural Object

Choose an object that has significance to who you are, the community and culture you come from, and where you think you might be going. Write a story that illuminates for the reader all of the significance this object has for you, has in your culture, and/or might play in your future.

## Remix

You will be paired with two other students. Together, you will use the papers you wrote for Project 1 and Project 2 to create a new, cohesive narrative that ties your stories together. *The catch?* The final product must be something other than a traditional paper.



# The Art of Recontextualization

LuMing Mao

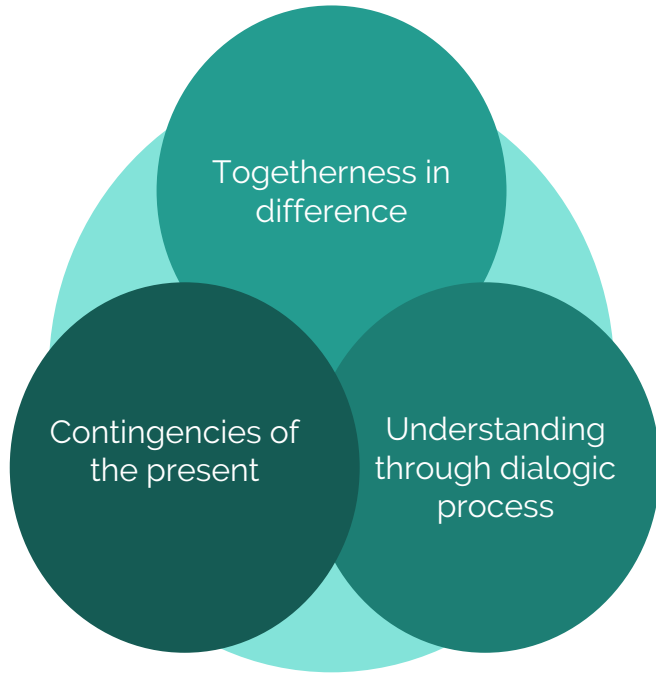
from "Writing the Other into Histories of Rhetoric" 2013

“Practicing the art of recontextualization constitutes a processual model that productively troubles our own modes of thinking and that seeks to privilege **experiences** over facts and **relations of interdependence** over structures of sameness or difference.” -Mao , from Octolog III

**Rhetorical negotiation** as “anchoring a way of meaning-making that promotes dialogism, thick description, and consciousness of one’s own claims and their limitations” that point to “our own historically privileged dispositions or predilections throughout the entire process of representation.”

(Mao “Manifesting a Future for Comparative Rhetoric” 2015, 242)

# What it looks like in the classroom



## Projects Completed

Podcast  
Video, interviews  
Video, skit  
Poster series  
Spotify playlist with  
cover art  
Prezi "presentation"

## Themes Explored

Family  
Home/placeness  
Transition  
Key values  
Mental health  
Similarity/difference

# Learning outcomes and student experiences

Troubling modes of  
thinking and knowing

Relationality replaces  
binaries

Dialog and negotiation as  
meaning making, story  
forming



Troubling  
modes of  
thinking and  
knowing  
(disorientation)

“When we first met as a group we were all confused on what we exactly had to do. This lead to us just talking about ourselves...to get a better understanding of each other. For the first few classes we kept doing this until we realized that the majority of our conversations kept leading back to our family. This was the spark that lead us to our topic....we realized that once we get talking we are more likely to dig deeper into a conversation or open up doors to other conversations that we might not even have had.”

Student Reflection

Relationality  
replaces  
binaries

“We all saw commonalities between our ‘subjects.’ Which included, family and friends, or someone who was close to us that we miss. We agreed on the idea of sharing to the class how we’re all different - come from different backgrounds - yet, we are different together, in that some ways we kind of are the same.”

Student Reflection

Dialog and  
negotiation  
as meaning  
making, story  
forming

“Communication was definitely key for this project...Each song we chose had a backstory or a reason as to why it was significant to us at some point in our life. Obviously we had to have explanations to the music selections or it would not make sense....We learned as much as we could about each other before really beginning the project. Figuring out our similarities and differences gave us our ideas.”

Student Reflection

Bridging the theoretical and  
historiographical approaches to  
comparative rhetorics so that students  
see their experiences as cultural,  
rhetorical, relational, and negotiated.

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