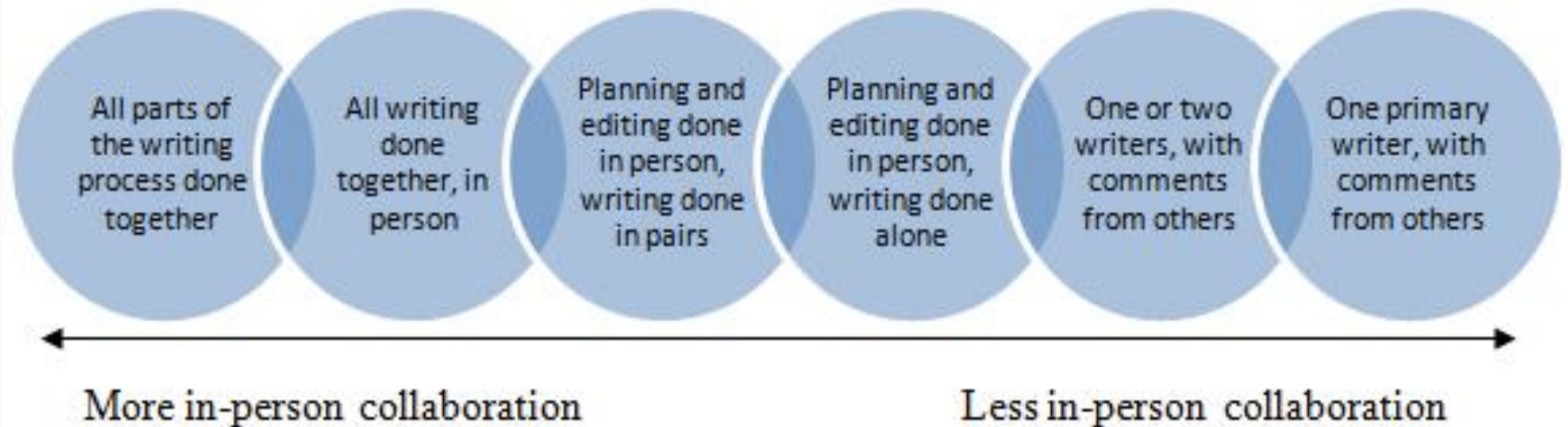


# COLLABORATIVE (OR GROUP) WRITING



# BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING

## Pre-writing Stage:

- As a group, work on understanding what the assignment is asking for. Make sure everyone is clear about what the assignment *is supposed to look like*.
- Brainstorm together. Agree on **central ideas**.
- Formulate or draft a **thesis statement** together.

## Planning Stage:

- Plan the sections together by breaking down the requirements of the paper. Decide as a group which parts of the project will be written by whom.
- Arrange frequent meetings—once a week is best for semester-long papers—even if just for check-in.
- Set mini-deadlines for the group. Leave time for group revision and editing.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING, CONT'D.

## Research Stage

- Decide as a group where you will get appropriate sources. Decide on the parameters and scope of each member's research.
  - *Who will read and process the information? Group? Individually?*
- Think critically about your evidence & what they contribute to your topic.
  - *What do you need to exclude? What do you need to include?*
- Analyze the data.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING CONT'D.

## Drafting/Writing Stage:

- **If writing separately:**
  - Make sure each writer is clear on central ideas and everyone understands their section.
  - Meet consistently to make sure the paper reads coherently.
  - Make sure everyone knows the rhetorical expectations of the paper (how formal it needs to be, etc.)
- **If writing as a group (which is best):**
  - Identify goals for the writing session *before* you start writing
  - Draft ideas on paper first, *before* addressing exact phrasing
  - Clarity over style. Though everyone has a different writing style and voice, make sure all your sentences are clear to your reader first.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING, CONT'D.

## Revision Stage:

- Combine all your documents in one file, first.
- Prioritize looking for a logical progression of ideas. Address the flow of information first before anything else.
- Focus on structure and ideas of the paper first before turning to stylistic issues.
- For stylistic issues, address the most obvious shifts in tone and register (formality) first and make sure they all relatively match.

# **BEST PRACTICES FOR COLLABORATIVE WRITING, CONT'D.**

## **Editing and Proofreading Stage:**

- Divide and conquer. Every member could be tasked to look for certain issues (ex. APA formatting, commas, sentence structure, typos).
- Be patient and schedule time for this stage.

# THINGS TO REMEMBER

## DO'S

**Start early and allow time for revisions**

**Plan a reasonable schedule**

**Find a way to share docs (Google docs, Dropbox, OneDrive, etc.)**

**Be constructive**

## DON'TS

**Procrastinate**

**Immediately divide sections to individual members**

**Leave the work to one person**

**Give entirely negative critiques.**

# **WORKS CONSULTED**

**Swales, John M. and Christine B. Feak.  
*Academic Writing for Graduate Students.*  
3rd ed., University of Michigan Press, 2012.**

**The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill.**

**“Group Writing.”**

**<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/group-writing/>**