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# GIVING STUDENTS THE REINS: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SERVICE-LEARNING'S POTENTIAL AS A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING WRITING

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GIVING STUDENTS THE REINS:  
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SERVICE-LEARNING'S  
POTENTIAL AS A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING WRITING

by

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Degrees Earned

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A Dissertation  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the field of English

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

T. J. KRAMER, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in ENGLISH, presented on MARCH 28, 2012, at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

TITLE: GIVING STUDENTS THE REINS: TAKING ADVANTAGE OF SERVICE-LEARNING'S POTENTIAL AS A PEDAGOGY FOR TEACHING WRITING

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Lisa J. McClure

Service-learning helps students experience the practical applications of learning to write well; it also offers opportunities for students to develop a sense of civic responsibility. Although service-learning is growing in popularity, this pedagogy is not prevalent in English departments. Additionally, service-learning courses across all disciplines typically do not empower students to make their own project decisions. Given these tendencies, it is useful to consider whether service-learning is an effective pedagogy for writing, whether students should be designing their own projects, and what writing instructors could do to facilitate students' growth as writers while completing projects in the community.

This is a qualitative case study, incorporating quantitative data, of two technical writing courses. I reviewed the students' answers to surveys developed for this research, plus their course evaluations, individual reflective writing, and collaborative project documents, and then I compiled and collated the students' references to what they were learning and what they were struggling with. The references fall within the following themes: student decision-making; the role of the instructor; the rhetorical tenets of audience and purpose; service; collaboration with peers and community members; written expression; and professionalism and motivation.

Relying upon the students' comments in regard to these themes, I suggest that service-learning can help students become invested in the outcome of their written expression, motivating them to learn how to address audience and purpose through strong writing. Students learn to work collaboratively and develop their own individual voices as they discover, reflect

upon, and express their ideas and shared knowledge. Instructors should ask students to design their own projects, allowing them to engage with and learn how to contribute to the community: through self-directed experiential projects, students become more likely to understand the power of writing and to transfer their new knowledge to later situations. I conclude with a discussion of the need for targeted research and suggestions for teaching writing through community-based pedagogy to enhance civic engagement.

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I thank Mr. Paul Restivo, Ms. Tiffany Heil, and the rest of the staff at the SIUC Center for Environmental Health and Safety. I also thank those professionals of other nonprofit agencies who were receptive to working with college students. Through their collaborations, these hardworking and under-appreciated professionals taught me a great deal and impacted my students' learning in both tangible and intangible ways.

I also gratefully acknowledge the SIUC Graduate Office for providing me with a Graduate Dean's Fellowship for a year, as well as the SIUC English and Linguistics departments for providing me with four years of Graduate Teaching Assistantships, all of which gave me the opportunity to attend school and gain teaching experience.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This dissertation process began long before I knew it was beginning. I now can look back and appreciate the converging influences of my previous career, in journalism, my first awkward attempts at teaching, and my interest in creative writing, all of which led me to Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) and a graduate teaching assistantship. And I can see how all of the opportunities and the help of mentors after my arrival at SIUC led me gradually toward the decision to pursue dissertation research.

#### **Reporting on Social Issues**

Following my undergraduate studies in print journalism, I spent 16 years as a news reporter and editor in Mexico City, El Paso, Texas, and Evansville, Indiana. In terms of the work itself, the most fulfilling was during the last few years, when I was given the latitude to combine my public interests into a beat of my creation: social issues.

As a reporter interviewing social workers and spending time with their clients and at their sites, I felt profound appreciation and respect for the hard work of these professionals. The National Association of Social Workers' definition for "social justice" encapsulates the ideals and daily work of those I grew to know: "Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Social workers aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need" ("Social" 1). The well-educated directors and other staff members of local nonprofit agencies work day after day on front-line issues, averting crisis after crisis in the lives of individuals.

These agency staff members, in my view, are underpaid and under-acknowledged by the rest of the members of our society; worse yet, they often are misunderstood and mistrusted. Because their work is difficult to fully comprehend and also not well-publicized, potential donors hesitate to contribute.

Large nonprofit organizations, such as Goodwill Industries International and the American Cancer Society, rely heavily upon national grants, both public and private. Grants typically build in administrative funding as a percentage. Goodwill and the Cancer Society do important work,<sup>1</sup> and I am pleased that they receive funding for administrative costs, including publicity. Through their national web sites and ad campaigns, donors understand these agencies' good work and are likely to trust them and therefore give charitable donations; sufficient funding allows for sufficient planning and advertising to ensure a continuing stream of donations.

Local agencies, however, rely primarily on small, local grants and private donations. Individual donors generally are reluctant to contribute to any agency's administrative costs, preferring, rather, to donate only when assured their contributions will go directly to people in need. Often, this result in insufficient administrative budgets at small, local, front-line agencies. At a food pantry, for instance, most donors want to give food or money to purchase food; meanwhile, the pantry struggles to pay staff members who coordinate deliveries, stock the shelves, and connect the food with families who need it.

Small agencies cannot spend their limited staff time on writing higher quality brochures, effective web sites, or targeted press releases that could inform the public about their causes. The funding crunch causes these agencies to work in relative obscurity, which further hampers their ability to raise money. The right publicity could bring in more donations and increase awareness about serious, multilayered issues—such as homelessness, domestic violence, and the wide-

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<sup>1</sup> I make this statement based on my own investigative reporting.

ranging effects of poverty—issues that go largely unnoticed by most people as they live their everyday lives. This realization has influenced my professional life ever since.

### **Returning to School, as Student and Teacher**

While I enjoyed learning more about social issues and informing the public about them, I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with journalism. Reporting on difficult, often personal and always complex issues made even more apparent to me the tendency of the news industry to vilify one side and glorify the other, with little room for anything in between or for underlying truths. Additionally, writing in a journalistic style seemed more and more constraining.

I was writing poetry on the side and began to use my vacations to attend weeklong poetry workshops. During those weeks, immersed in the world of creative writing, I felt I had arrived home. Therefore, I decided to take advantage of The Evansville Courier's tuition benefit program and take poetry classes at the University of Southern Indiana (USI); I enrolled in USI's only master's program at the time, the Master of Liberal Studies, which allowed me to design a program of study largely around creative writing. I took one leisurely, enjoyable course at a time.

It was due to my master's work and my day job as a professional writer that USI hired me to teach an evening course: Strategies for Writers, a course for students who had not scored well enough on their college entrance exams to enroll in Composition. I was grateful for the opportunity to share with others the potentials of written expression. Because of my professional experience, I felt I understood the influence of purposeful writing on my sources, my readers, and me, as well as the lost opportunities of writing that does not live up to its purpose. I knew that to get to a place of power, writers need to trust their own wisdom and to have skills at hand for understanding and expressing that wisdom.



I was saddened, therefore, when students came and left my courses caring only about a mark in a grade book that would allow them to advance to the next course. I didn't want to help them merely exist in that apathetic space and miss opportunities. Even the students who professed to be attending college only because it is the expected step in life could enjoy, I believed, an opportunity to expand their horizons, learn and do something new, and become educated citizens who contribute to society.

During those three years as an adjunct instructor at USI, I learned quite a bit about teaching, about students, and about myself. I shared with English Professor Keith Lloyd my concerns that many students seemed to perceive no connection between what happened in my classroom and the so-called real world. Prof. Lloyd, whose doctorate is in rhetoric and composition, commiserated with me, gave me suggestions, and lent me his books about writing pedagogy; thanks to him, I was introduced to composition theory.

In Prof. Lloyd's books, I discovered scholarly debates over how to make classroom writing seem more relevant to students, as well as how to help students transfer writing skills from one course to the next. I was quite puzzled that either of these could be issues which needed to be addressed. I guess I was too idealistic. It had been a long time since my own undergraduate days, and even back then I was among those who foresaw themselves writing throughout their lives. I suppose it also could be argued that my professional background as a working, everyday writer had skewed my perceptions toward an idealized sense of the use and need for writing.

Nevertheless, I knew I had witnessed numerous people writing in many professions, not just mine, out in the post-college world. The more I thought about the pervasive disconnect between students' perceptions and the reality of writing's purpose and power, the more I became convinced of the imperative to help students shift their views. I came to believe that my work as

a professional writer in the public sphere had provided me with some life lessons that offered a unique perspective, though I did not know exactly how to put that perspective to use in the classroom.

At USI, I could not alter my teaching method because the syllabus was predetermined. But I was inspired to think about options for the future, in terms of both teaching and studying writing. There was no school in Evansville that offered a Master of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing. Eventually, however, changes in my personal life ended the necessity for me and my daughters to remain in Indiana.

### **Making the Move: Committing to Further Education**

I applied and, thankfully, was accepted into the SIUC Master of Fine Arts program for Creative Writing in the fall of 2000. I reasoned that the graduate teaching assistantship, combined with student loans, should be sufficient to support myself and my daughters for a few lean years.

Embarking on a new teaching adventure, I hoped I could approach this one differently. I felt encouraged by the approach of Writing Program Administrator and Professor Lisa J. McClure. During her Pre-Semester Workshop and throughout the academic year, Prof. McClure offered direction in the form of ideas, training, and a framework for English 101, and she guided rather than dictated the particulars of assignment design. I felt empowered to try to do my best for my writing students.

Coinciding with teaching my first two sections of first-year composition, I took English 502: Introduction to Graduate Study and Teaching College Composition, with Professor R. Gerald Nelms, who led our group of graduate assistants in discussions about how and why students learn to write, including ways to motivate students and help them transfer knowledge.

The information that Prof. Nelms presented helped me understand what I had experienced back in Indiana and also made me regret that I had known so little at the time. Prof. Nelms offered theoretical avenues to explore and did not offer pat answers but, rather, encouraged me to think about and try to apply the theories to my teaching.

Halfway through my first semester at SIUC, when it came time for my Composition I students to begin their research papers, I decided to attempt something practical: group projects aimed at teaching them how to research through both academic and current-life avenues. I asked them to brainstorm social issues of interest to them and then form groups according to their interests. They collected scholarly information about their chosen issue via Morris Library's resources, and they found a local agency that dealt with their issue. They went to the agency to collect information about the issue and the agency's services in Carbondale. The students wrote their findings in collaborative research papers, weaving in primary and secondary sources, and they presented their information as groups on the day of finals.

For this assignment, there was no element of volunteer hours, and I was not thinking that I was doing anything other than offering students a chance to write about something that would matter to them and that would illustrate the connection between "real life" and writing. Primarily, I viewed my students' research into social issues and nonprofit agencies as contexts for learning how to research and write.

### **Exploring Service-Learning**

Prof. McClure told me that what I was doing seemed somewhat like an approach called "service-learning." I subsequently discovered that service-learning is a pedagogy through which students do service that is integrated with their academic work. It is not just community volunteerism. And it is not just academic learning. Service-learning is used in many disciplines

but primarily in the fields of sociology and education, and it is not very prevalent within English Departments<sup>2</sup>. Service-learning scholars Robert A. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher offer the following definition<sup>3</sup>:

Unlike extracurricular voluntary service, service-learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course material through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations.  
 (“Implementing” 222)

Prof. McClure also suggested that if I was as interested in composition pedagogy as I appeared to be, I might consider the field of composition studies. Encouraged by her support, I decided to expand upon the use of service-learning. I felt that it could be appropriate for English 102: English Composition II, because of that course’s concentration on research.

Meanwhile, I discovered that one of the two instructional teaching assistants who were assigned to assist new GAs, John Wittman, a Ph.D. student in rhetoric and composition, was interested in trying service-learning himself. The two of us collaboratively developed a full-semester service-learning curriculum for English 102. We used the model of my English 101 research project, adding in the components of intentional reflection and volunteer hours, both of which, I had learned, are hallmarks of service-learning. We aligned the writing assignments with English 102 curricular requirements, which emphasized research writing. The students would produce research papers that incorporated their library research plus their firsthand observations while volunteering, their interviews on the site, and any primary research they collected, for example, agencies’ annual reports.

In the spring of 2001, I used this semester-long project approach to teach my two sections of English 102, and John used it to teach his single section. The students formed small groups—

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<sup>2</sup> The continued absence of service-learning in composition pedagogy is troublesome, but unfortunately understandable. I discuss this in Chapter 2.

<sup>3</sup> Bringle and Hatcher’s 1996 definition is cited frequently throughout the literature of service-learning.

ranging from two to five students, but usually three. Each student did 15 hours of volunteer work to help him/her understand the issues and to assist the nonprofit agency. The volunteer hours, depending upon the project, could include producing small professional documents, such as brochures that the agency requested. In addition to any such documents, the agency received a copy of the student group's research paper. Wittman and I both considered the experiment a success. Not only did we receive no complaints from the agencies, but some expressed their appreciation. Our students were generally enthusiastic throughout most of the semester, and their comments on course evaluations were overwhelmingly favorable.

Buoyed by my teaching experiences and the education I myself received during my first year at SIUC, my curiosity about service-learning was growing. I thought my students' comments on course evaluations indicated something worth investigating, so I developed my own set of additional questions about the impact of service projects on students' writing growth, and I gained the approval of the University's Human Subjects Committee to administer the survey as part of a study. I was not sure how I could use the stockpile of information, but I began collecting survey responses along with copies of my students' projects.

I continued to teach via service-learning throughout my time as a graduate assistant, thanks to the flexibility and support of my mentors in the English Department. Others helped along the way as well. Professor James Allen, Director of the University Core Curriculum, offered his advice and support. He took the time one semester to watch my students' final presentations. That was fairly early on, when I was allowing my students to choose any issue of their liking, regardless of whether it involved a nonprofit agency.

One group of students chose environmental issues and, for their final project, researched methods to improve ventilation in their favorite Illinois Avenue bar. Another group researched

financial issues and developed packets for students to learn about investing. It seemed to me that, in terms of the students' growth as writers, the practical application of their work was more important than whether the work helped a nonprofit or a for-profit entity<sup>4</sup>. I found it interesting that even though my students had unwittingly ended up in a service-learning section of English 102—the sections were not identified as “service-learning” in the catalog—most of the students chose to focus on charitable causes.

Several of the student groups wrote about and for the Humane Society of Southern Illinois; they volunteered by walking the animals or cleaning, and they created brochures, website materials, and other documents the Society needed. Other than that, my students chose what impressed me as a wide variety of causes and organizations. One group researched sexual violence and wanted to get involved with the rape crisis line. After the three students discovered that kind of volunteer work involves in-depth, six-month training, they did not give up but inquired as to what other kinds of volunteer work they could do with the same agency, The Women's Center. They ended up going quite beyond the parameters of my course, which required 15 volunteer hours—they each did a 64-hour training to become Women's Center volunteer speakers and wrote about what they learned through this training.

I witnessed my students, group after group, work hard and seem to care about what they were researching and writing: they felt they were making an impact. One group researched nutrition in the child-care industry; these students volunteered in a nonprofit child care agency and wrote a report recommending how and why that agency should alter its menus; the group also disagreed with some of the agency's policies and ended up writing a complaint to the State of Illinois. Another group researched religious issues on campus and volunteered at the Inter-

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<sup>4</sup> I was looking at the activity as a writing instructor; service-learning theorists would, naturally, consider the aid to the organization of greater importance.

Faith Center; the students found out that most of their peers knew little about this organization, so they created a binder of informational materials and a video for students about the Inter-Faith Center.

The Inter-Faith Center director contacted me afterward to ask to see the students' final work. I was surprised and disappointed that the students had not shown it to him, and I was grateful he had contacted me. I shared with him their final research paper, binder, and video, all of which he appreciated and put to use: he put the binder in the lobby for visitors to read, and he posted the video to his program's web site<sup>5</sup>.

My students at SIUC seemed more engaged in their academic pursuits; they seemed to not be plagued by the same disconnect between writing and the so-called real world that I had been puzzled by at USI. While a graduate teaching assistant in Carbondale, I was curious to try teaching courses other than composition, as well, and fortunately was assigned a section of English 119: Introduction to Creative Writing. I had recently enjoyed Professor Allison Joseph's pedagogy course English 581: Problems in Teaching English: The Teaching of Creative Writing. Prof. Joseph encouraged us to create and share ideas for assignments and course design. At the end of the semester, she gifted everyone in the class with a bound copy of the assignments we had created. I was eager to use some of these in my own section of English 119.

Consequently, after three years of teaching semester-long service-learning projects, I interrupted the pattern and used service-learning for only a third of my English 119 course: nonfiction. I asked my students to spend a day volunteering at agencies of their choice, then write narratives about their experiences, and then workshop and revise those narratives according to the stylistic parameters for creative nonfiction in our texts. During the poetry and fiction

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<sup>5</sup> From that experience, I learned that I needed to require more accountability in the projects. I built in requirements for the students to gather signatures from site directors at various times during the process and at the end.

segments, however, I used the binder of resources from Joseph's pedagogy class to guide my students' writing and workshopping. This experiment represented the most minimal use of service-learning in any of my courses. It involved the three key elements of service-learning pedagogy: service (albeit only one day); the academic learning of creative nonfiction style; and reflection (because the narrative was inherently reflective). I believe this illustrates that service-learning could be incorporated in some way in almost any writing course. I also came away thinking that it might be possible, and interesting, to design a creative-writing course as a semester-long service-learning project.

By that point in my graduate work, I also was studying English as a Second Language, so my assistantship was divided between the departments of English and Linguistics. I therefore taught sections of Linguistics 101; because that syllabus was predetermined, I did not incorporate service-learning. However, linguistics led me to the Writing Center, where I ended up serving half of my assistantship for several semesters. While the center was not a classroom and I certainly could not ask tutees to go do volunteer work as part of our sessions, over time I came to see parallels between center work and service-learning. Writing Center Director and Professor Jane Cogie, who has been a mentor to me, steered me toward scholarly conversations regarding the community-engagement and self-empowerment dimensions of writing-center work. These theories inspired me and, ultimately, enriched my research for this dissertation.

### **Shifting Focus**

By my third year at SIUC, my interest in what others had to say about service-learning had evolved from curiosity into serious consideration of doing in-depth research. I was nearing the end of the fulfilling creative writing program and wondering what to do next. I enjoyed teaching and knew I would rather learn more about pedagogy than go back to newspaper work,



just yet anyway. And according to my understanding of the job market, an MFA degree without a well-published book or two might help me secure only temporary teaching positions, unlikely to support a family sufficiently or dependably. Continuing to study and research—specifically, to learn more about writing pedagogy and service-learning—was appealing for its potential stability and for the pure pleasure it offered. Further aided by the advice and wisdom of mentors, I decided to apply for SIUC’s doctoral program in rhetoric and composition.

Along the way, mentors suggested that I start participating in conferences, something I would not have thought to try on my own. Going through the proposal process and then presenting turned out to be invaluable because I was forced to research the fields of service-learning and composition studies more seriously, and with more urgency. I began to understand the foundations of each field and to see where they might connect. I learned that both fields rely upon theories of the social construction of knowledge, and that the reflective element of service-learning ties it in to writing studies. During these investigations I first realized, as well, that most service-learning instruction described in the literature does not allow students to design their own projects.

Proposing and presenting papers, in addition to increasing my theoretical understanding, forced me to start analyzing the materials I was collecting from my composition students. I considered the fact that while their projects culminated in research essays which fulfilled the main goals of English 102, the students also often produced brochures and other small professional documents as part of their service hours. I therefore wondered whether service-learning, while adaptable to many courses, might be particularly ideal for English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing, which is often taught with heavy emphases on problem-solving, collaboration, real-world situations, and the practical use of language. Not only might the fit

work well for writing students, but it also could result in more writing products that directly benefit funding-strapped nonprofit agencies: student writers, rather than spending most of their efforts on an academic research report, could concentrate on professional reports, brochures, web-sites, and other technical-writing documents that agencies would use.

Fortunately, I was assigned a section of English 291 during each of two subsequent semesters, which turned out to be my final semesters of teaching at SIUC. These two sections became the basis for the data collection and analysis that I report in this dissertation. I guided the 291 students toward forming small groups based on their interest areas, and then each group negotiated a technical-writing project with an agency. The results included web-site materials, fund-raising brochures, and binders full of research material for particular agency projects. The students used their 15 volunteer hours as an opportunity to do firsthand research; this volunteer work also ensured that the agency would get something in return for its employees' time and consideration even if the students' written documents turned out to be less than useful.

The English 291 curriculum calls for professional reports, which worked well in the context of my students' community-based projects because the reports helped ensure accountability and keep everyone informed about the progress of each project. Each group of students wrote an initial, report-style Proposal, based on the students' interviews, initial volunteering, and negotiations with the agency regarding the types of professional documents the agency needed. The Proposal served as a guide for the group's project throughout the semester; it included the students' promises of volunteer work and professional documents, with timelines. The students also wrote short status reports to the agency at crucial points of the semester. Each group ended the term with a Closing Memo, detailing the students' completed project and offering the students' thoughts about the work and the process. They also wrote professional

letters of appreciation to agency personnel and others in the community who had collaborated with them.

Reflective, observational logs and a final Reflection Essay helped the students realize how much they had both contributed and grown personally throughout the semester. In their essays, some talked about what they had learned about writing professional documents. Some discussed the complexities of teamwork. Others talked about working with community partners. And some students reflected on social concerns. I appreciate the emphasis that service-learning scholars of all disciplines place on reflection—an emphasis shared by theorists of composition studies.

The following academic year (2004-2005), I benefited greatly from a Graduate Dean's Fellowship. And the year after that, with my graduate coursework completed and debt catching up with me, I took a job in Washington. At Central Washington University, my responsibility was in the writing center. I taught occasional other courses, including three composition courses altogether: one section of English 100T: Transitional English, and two sections of English 102: Rhetoric and Research Writing. I used the service-learning curricula that I had developed for English 101 and 102 at SIUC and adapted it to Central's quarter system.

In February 2011, I moved to Saint Mary's College of California, with the charge of establishing a writing center and writing across the curriculum program. I have yet to teach a writing course here, but will. In my training of writing tutors, at Central and Saint Mary's, I have and do incorporate service-learning theories which I learned thanks to this dissertation work. The tutors and I frame our everyday work as community-building, and we emphasize our own learning to keep us from viewing ourselves as writing experts helping lowly, fumbling peer

students. We are reminded of service-learning theorists' warnings regarding the "server-served dichotomy."

Because I began my research before actually committing to completing a PhD, I have not approached this project in the usual academic manner. The story of my research begins with a desire to provide small, frontline agencies with the exposure they need to continue their work while, at the same time, providing students with a learning experience that could help them experience the power of writing. From this beginning evolved an exploration of service-learning as a viable pedagogy for writing instruction. In the vein of Ken Macrorie's "I-Search," I present herein my journey to a greater understanding of service-learning pedagogy in writing instruction, including how I might justify this approach to others through a formal and rigorous research process. It is important for me to tell both stories: how I developed the project and what I learned from the research. Fortunately, qualitative research lends itself to a hybrid approach, blending the presentation of data with a narrative of the experience itself.

Six chapters comprise this dissertation:

- Chapter 1 provides the context for the journey and a brief summary of how it began.
- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature of service-learning and composition studies, with emphases on where they coincide and where I think they could help each other.
- Chapter 3 explains the not-straight path I travelled while collecting, organizing, and analyzing my students' writing. The process of creating databases and then devising two levels of categorization helped me notice themes which warranted analysis.

- Chapter 4 presents the data, both quantitative and qualitative, and analyzes what it reveals.
- Chapter 5 brings together my data and previously published research in order to show how and what students learn as they produce service-learning writing projects, discussing the implications of this research.
- Chapter 6 concludes with recommendations for service-learning writing instruction.

## CHAPTER 2

### SERVICE-LEARNING AND COMPOSITION STUDIES IN CONTEXT

My initial curiosity about the scholarship of service-learning grew out of classroom observations and beginning awarenesses of pedagogical theory. As a graduate assistant at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, I was receiving instruction and training in the theory and practice of writing pedagogy, introducing me to ideas such as expressivism, social construction, and the rhetorical concepts of audience and purpose. In my composition classrooms, I was witnessing my students learning the concepts of rhetoric through their work with community partners, and this realization that caused my curiosity to deepen. I found myself turning toward composition theory to understand more about what helps students learn and employ concepts of writing. As noted earlier, SIUC mentors informed me about a field called “service-learning,” and my investigations into the theories of service-learning were begun.

While researching the two fields—composition studies and service-learning—I discovered that each has its own emphases and peculiarities. I found some but not much research that combines the two fields, and I learned that most service-learning instruction happens in classrooms that do not involve composition; projects tend to occur within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, and education. As I researched the scholarship of composition studies and the multidisciplinary field of service-learning, I was struck by how clearly the two fields agree in a few key areas, as well as the many places where they could mutually benefit from more intentional intersection.

The theory and practice of both writing and civic engagement are interwoven throughout both fields, though to different degrees. Service-learning philosophers discuss reflection,

including journals and other reflective writing, as the bridge between service and academic learning; that bridge makes writing a necessary element in service-learning projects across all disciplines. Composition studies is concerned with helping students engage with society through writing, thereby growing as global citizens; this rhetorical thread has been present, sometimes obvious and other times residing quietly in the background, throughout the history of writing instruction. I do not pretend to offer a comprehensive review of either field but rather to discuss both of their evolutions in terms of how they interconnect with each another.

### **Historical Overview of Composition Studies and Service-Learning**

Current scholars of service-learning trace the beginnings of their field to two eras, first, the ancient glory of Greek and Roman political society. Rhetoric as manifested in today's Western societies began forming in Greece and then Rome, as philosophers created rhetoric handbooks to shape the public speech of civic society, literature, and government. The discussions that Isocrates (400 BCE) and Cicero (100 BCE) led with students were aimed at mentoring civic and ecclesiastical leaders (Herzberg "Service" 398). Both composition and service-learning scholars also cite the philosophies of Quintilian (95 CE), Plato (400 BCE), and Aristotle (350 BCE).

Civic engagement and the need for effective expression have always been connected. Aristotle, a student of Plato's, taught rhetoric by emphasizing the logical development of oral arguments for particular, public influence. Aristotle codified a system of civic communication that has served as a basis for argument and for rhetorical pedagogy in the West. In his discourse on rhetoric, Aristotle explains the methods which speakers might employ to try to persuade audiences. According to translator George A. Kennedy, Aristotle opens his definition of rhetoric in this way: "Let rhetoric be [defined as] an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available

means of persuasion” [translator’s additions in brackets] (36). Aristotle’s definition of rhetoric has been widely accepted and can be found, quoted and paraphrased, throughout today’s composition textbooks and scholarly discussions of rhetoric.

Isocrates has been noted for his allegiance to *kairos*: “To Isocrates, all general principles must fail because they screen out the particulars of a given situation, which must be considered in all truly good moral and rhetorical decisions. ‘Fitness for the occasion’—*kairos*—is all” (Bizzell and Herzberg 69). Jeffrey C. Davis (2000) adapts from Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* notions of “connected” writing instruction. Davis argues that pedagogy should connect language arts with interpersonal ties, in the interest of stimulating personal development:

In the spirit of Cicero, Quintilian advocates a comprehensive education that encourages *person formation*, a kind of transformative learning that prepares students to participate fully in society as ethics-grounded, civic-minded people who know how to use words well for all sorts of purposes and occasions. (Davis 15)

Concerns for civic understanding have always been central to writing instruction. And the use of verbal expression for particular aims has always been central to civic life.

The other sources for current service-learning occurred during the first 150 years of the young and progressive nation of the United States. Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin promoted connections between education, service, and problem-solving—grounding academics in the study of ethics and in experiential learning (Deans 10). Jefferson and Franklin’s interests lie in promoting democracy as a way of being in the world. Their ideas, along with the theories of pragmatism that rose to prominence in the United States during the final quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, are cited by many service-learning scholars as foundational beliefs.

Another important progenitor of service-learning was John Dewey. Around the turn of the century, Dewey and other Progressivists transformed education by advocating experiential



learning and arguing that knowledge is derived from a problem-solving process of inquiry—a process that counters dualistic notions dividing theory and practice. Progressivists coined the term “pragmatism,” through which inquiry “cannot proceed effectively unless we experiment—that is, manipulate or change reality in certain ways. Since knowledge thus grows through our attempts to push the world around . . . , it follows that knowers as such must be agents”

(McDermid 1). For Dewey, knowledge does not emerge out of passive perception but rather out of “active manipulation of the environment” (Field 2). Dewey stressed an open-ended, flexible, and experimental approach which he coined “method of intelligence” (10).

Among Dewey’s friends was Jane Addams. Both Addams and Dewey understood the benefits of combining learning with experiential opportunities, and Dewey credits Addams as among his influences, both for her theories of progress and social reform and for the Hull House settlement that she created with these theories in mind (Longo “Recognizing”). The building was a large, former mansion that had been abandoned as the neighborhood transitioned into an impoverished community of mostly immigrants. Addams invited educators to stay in her settlement for lengthy periods of time and invited members of the community to gather, to live if they wished, and to share their largely practical knowledge with and learn from the academically educated visitors. “Addams called for communities to be the center of education” (5). Everyone was a learner and a teacher. “Addams allows us a glimpse into the origins of service-learning as a practice, as opposed to a theory. A history of service-learning that takes account of Addams also locates the origins of service-learning not in the schools, but in the community” (6). As Longo quotes philosopher Maurice Hamington: “Addams held that, in the interest of progress, democracy should be a framework for ‘socially engaged living’ ” (2).

Coinciding with turn-of-the-century interest in pragmatism was a change in the demographics of college students—as children from middle-class families began attending in greater numbers—a change which caused college curricula to shift from an emphasis on the classics to a more practical emphasis: preparing students to progress in the world. With this shift came the first distinct courses on writing instruction, beginning in 1884 with Harvard College’s English A, “a course that grew out of a particular historical moment in response to the perceived ineptitude or failure of Harvard applicants to adhere to standards of correctness” (Hawhee 506).

This marked the beginnings of what evolved into the field of composition studies. Over the next couple of decades, many English teachers became uncomfortable with what they viewed as the rigidity of the Harvard Model, as well as the new requirements for college-preparatory English education in high school and the entrance exams put in place by Harvard and other colleges. Motivated by these concerns, the English Round Table of the Secondary Division of the National Education Association formed an investigative committee, which ended up recommending a national organization for English teachers—the National Council of Teachers of English was chartered in 1911 (D’Angelo; National Council).

Some of the leaders of the young NCTE were influenced by Dewey’s ideas, just as leaders of other disciplines were. Yet it would be decades before writing instruction saw the substantive changes that moved it into a more practical sphere and distanced it from literary criticism and over-reliance on error analysis. This shift occurred thanks to wartime exigencies: World War II drained college campuses of traditional students; and the Armed Forces needed officers to be trained quickly. In 1942, the Army Specialized Training Program, or ASTP, and the Navy V-12 programs began at colleges across the nation. Through a collaborative agreement with the Armed Forces, instructors of English composition and instructors of public speaking

worked together “in the delivery of combined instruction in speaking, writing, reading, and listening” (Crowley 93). Although the military training programs lasted only two years, the collaborative method developed for these programs profoundly influenced the evolving field of composition.

Although some colleges continued teaching freshman composition via literature and grammar, many adopted the new “communication skills pedagogy”:

Communication skills . . . relied on social science research and Deweyan progressivism; it engaged students in reading, writing, listening and speaking; it asked them to read as well as compose, in both print and broadcast media, speeches and papers investigating current issues. (Crowley 95)

Nevertheless, there was wide dissatisfaction with the way first-year composition was being taught, and a group of college compositionists petitioned the NCTE for a meeting on the topic at the annual NCTE gathering; this led to the formation of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1949. A year later, the NCTE published its first issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

Following the Second World War, ideological shifts due to the Cold War caused education to focus more on science and other practical aims of education and less on the humanities and civic engagement. This trend, however, turned out to be short-lived.

The 1960s and 1970s were dominated by the peace, civil rights, and feminist movements. Additionally, college demographics shifted again, toward a greater number of middle-class students. Along with these societal waves came a revised pedagogical theory of engagement: by the late 1960s, the Southern Regional Education Board had coined a new term: “service-learning,” defined as “the integration of accomplishment of a needed task with educational growth” (Sigmon 3).

A smaller organization, the National Society for Experiential Education, started coordinating nationwide efforts to encourage service-learning, which it defined more specifically as the combination of community service work and academic study of social concerns. The society, founded in 1971 by “educators, businesses, and community leaders,” calls itself a resource center for experiential education and community service (“About Us” 1): “NSEE supports the use of learning through experience for intellectual development, cross-cultural and global awareness, civic and social responsibility.”

It was also during the 1960s and 1970s that composition studies became firmly grounded as a discipline. Theorists, spurred by the social movements and the changing profile of a typical college student, looked at academic writing through new or expanded lenses. The cognitive processes of writers were studied, and compositionists speculated that the writing process is rarely linear.

In 1966, educators from the United States and England met at Dartmouth College for the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English, out of which came “a new attention to the whole concept of process” (Villanueva 2). While some scholars attribute the process movement largely to the Dartmouth Seminar, others identify a more complex evolution, leading up to Dartmouth and including the influence of composition textbooks, Janet Emig’s research *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*, subsequent research influenced by Emig, and new adaptations of classical rhetoric (Nelms and Goggin). There was growing criticism of the dominant Harvard Model, seen as encouraging students to churn out dull, meaningless prose. The Dartmouth Model, which was developed as a sort of antidote to the Harvard Model, privileged self-expression and active learning, promoting the expressivist view that college courses should help students write reflectively in order to discover the knowledge within.

Freewriting became incorporated into instruction; by writing freely—not considering mechanics or preconceived notions of what to put on the page—writers gain access to their own knowledge. Peter Elbow was among the expressivists who had the audacity to say that students do not really need teachers. Other scholars, such as Lester Faigley, James Moffett, and Ann Berthoff theorized that authority lies within each writer and therefore the teacher’s job is to help draw out the writer within each student.

Moffett argued in 1968 against the teaching of composition via textbooks: “They kill spontaneity and the sense of adventure for both teacher and students. They make writing appear strange and technical. . . . Their dullness and arbitrariness alienate students from writing” (209).

Moffett, Berthoff, Faigley, Elbow, Donald Murray, Ken Macrorie, William Coles Jr., and others viewed writing as a process that involves pre-writing, writing, and revising. Although writing was portrayed as a series of stages, the stages were not widely viewed as linear but rather as “recursive,” a term first applied by Emig in the 1960s. Empirical studies by Sondra Perl and others supported Emig’s view of process as recursive. These realizations were changing how writing was taught at some universities. Yet at the same time, proponents of current traditionalism were re-emphasizing the logical structures of academic writing. Competing theories of process and product, therefore, played out in writing classrooms. Berthoff analyzed this dichotomy and feared that it did a disservice to composition studies; in her view, self-expression is critical but privileging expressivism over structure separates writing from practical ends. For language to realize its power, it needs to encompass both aspects, she argued in 1972:

Rhetoric reminds us that the function of language is not only to name but also to formulate and to transform—to give form to feeling, cogency to argument, shape to memory. Rhetoric leads us again and again to the discovery of that natural capacity for symbolic transformation, a capacity which is itself untaught, God-given, universal. The great teachers from Socrates to Montessori have always taught to it and we, I think, must learn why that is so. (“From” 647)

Berthoff was asking her peers to view students as change agents. She and other compositionists espoused the values of philosophers such as Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux. Compositions borrowed these social thinkers' viewpoints of education as a struggle for meaning and power, in the hopes that placing such lenses on composition studies could transform the writing classroom into a radical and liberatory space. The pursuit of literacy for its own simple sake was criticized as a means to regulate the less-fortunate by altering them to conform to the dominant literacy; Hairston, Berthoff, Faigley, and others wanted literacy to become instead a means of empowering the marginalized, helping them respect their own literacies and opening up room for their literacies to influence the dominant culture.

A common denominator for many of the theoretical forays was the desire to move away from current traditionalism. And a common source for justifying the new theories was research into writing development. Emig and James Britton each published empirical studies showing connections between writing and learning, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (1971) and *The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18)* (1975)<sup>6</sup>, respectively; their work helped legitimize the field of composition studies and lend support to those who called for writing across the curriculum programs.

Linda Flower and John R. Hayes used the cognitive process research methods of psychology to analyze what happens when people write and think about writing. In their study published in 1981, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," they found that better writers do more planning before and during writing; that is, successful writers create and revise goals and check periodically for global consistencies while writing. By contrast, less-prepared writers are

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<sup>6</sup> Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, and Harold Rosen were Britton's co-authors.

apt to write with little forethought, to be overly focused on the sentence level, and to forgo global revision. The first draft of the less-prepared writer is remarkably similar to the final draft, which is not typical of more successful student writers. Such research added fuel to calls for teaching the process of writing, not just the structure.

Discourse communities were studied. Methods such as writing to learn and writing across the curriculum were developed and applied. In 1982, James Berlin analyzed the various theories that had developed and concluded that the best one was what he termed social epistemic rhetoric, which he placed under the Transactional category, along with classical rhetoric, and which holds that knowledge is dynamic and dialectic, created through the process of creating it and accessed via transaction or negotiation (264). Epistemic rhetoric stands closely within social constructivism, the philosophy that knowledge is created not in isolation but through many influences—many building blocks of information and experience. Rhetoric/writing is one of the blocks and also helps connect and build all the other knowledge.

Social construction is often cited in persuasive pieces about service-learning because projects tend to rely upon transaction and negotiation; such projects are collaborative in nature—created through meaningful interactions among people who share a goal. The interdisciplinary field of service-learning did not become a recognizable national discipline until the 1980s (Battistoni, Deans, Longo). In 1985, four college presidents established Campus Compact with the stated goals of promoting community service and advising colleges and universities about how to implement and fund service opportunities for students. The compact's initial efforts focused on encouraging service, without links to coursework, but the organization has shifted toward emphasizing the integration of academic study (Battistoni 4).

Integration is a hallmark of service-learning. In 1996, Robert A. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher<sup>7</sup> felt the need to distinguish between non-course-related volunteer work and what happens when service is integrated into a course:

We view service learning as a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. Unlike extracurricular voluntary service, service learning is a course-based service experience that produces the best outcomes when meaningful service activities are related to course material through reflection activities such as directed writings, small group discussions, and class presentations. (“Implementing” 222)

Bringle and Hatcher argued that service-learning is a worthy endeavor for all concerned: students, faculty, administrators, nonprofit agency personnel, and the community at large.

The very same collaborative element that is heralded via service-learning can also be seen as threatening to individual identity, expression, and action (Faigley). Within composition’s social justice and consciousness raising movement of the 1980s and 1990s, some scholars viewed group work and reliance on discourse communities as platforms for the silencing of minority voices and the accompanying perpetuation of the status quo. This could be particularly problematic in a classroom, where a group of peers is trying to please an instructor. Some theorists argued that alternate discourse communities should be encouraged among marginalized groups in order to help those groups develop their own expression; in that vein, Hairston advocated “a low-risk environment that encourages students to take chances” because of the tendency for novice writers to freeze in the face of “high-risk situations” (189).

Hairston did not directly speak of service-learning. In fact, service-learning came later to composition studies than it did to other disciplines, most notably disciplines within the social

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<sup>7</sup> Bringle’s background is psychology, and Hatcher’s is education. They are leaders of the Center for Service and Learning at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and both have published extensively about the role of service-learning in higher education.



sciences. Scholarly articles on service-learning writing pedagogy did not appear until the 1990s. The first edited volume of service-learning in composition, *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition* (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters), was published in 1997. And the first full-length book by a single author, *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition* (Deans), was published in 2000.

Scholarly discussions about service-learning in composition studies reference a long list of foundational theories: process pedagogy, current traditionalism, expressivism, progressivism, pragmatism, praxis, and radical/liberatory theories. Terms used often include collaboration, discourse communities, authority/power, problem-solving, literacy, diversity, and kairos. The classical rhetoric term “kairos” is applied to highlight how service-learning provides students with opportunities to employ means of persuasion that fit the occasion (Cushman, Deans, Longo). This makes sense in the context of the most-common thread of service-learning scholarship, the one which hearkens back to Deweyan pragmatism—experiential problem-solving. But is it possible for service-learning to be supported theoretically by all of these sometimes contradictory schools of thought, particularly expressivism and current traditionalism? Expressivism comes into play because exploration into a self that is always changing is heralded as key to learning; however, expressivist opportunities occur only marginally in many service projects, such as through reflective journals. Current traditionalism is appropriate for service-learning because project-based writing often is highly rule-based and targeted to a specific audience with specific needs, which is in line with the concept of knowledge as an absolute, objectivist construct that can be accessed. The ability for one field—service learning in writing instruction—to claim the growth of knowledge in both expressivist and current traditional terms could be the embodiment of Freirean “praxis,” or action-reflection,

exemplifying “pragmatic concerns of politically involved teaching aimed at emancipating students” (Cushman “Public” 333). Perhaps the theoretical identity crisis shows service-learning writing pedagogy to have a multiplicity of uses and merits, as argued by Deans (10), or perhaps it illustrates the dynamics of a discipline still under construction.

The increasing, though still minimal, incorporation of service-learning into composition studies mirrors a steady increase in interest in service-learning across the United States, as illustrated by the increasing membership and activity of Campus Compact over the past two decades. The compact, which hosts regional and national conferences and publishes books and newsletters, states on its web site that “our coalition has grown to more than 1,100 college and university presidents—representing more than a quarter of all American higher education institutions” (Campus “Who” 1).

The launching of several service-learning publications in recent years shows that the field continues to attract an increased number of scholars. The first peer-reviewed journal—the multidisciplinary *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*—began publishing in 1994. Six years later, in 2000, began a peer-reviewed journal of service-learning and writing: *Reflections: A Journal of Writing, Service-Learning, and Community Literacy*. In 2003, the online *Journal for Civic Commitment* launched its interdisciplinary content aimed at both instructors and administrators. Another journal, this one for scholars of engineering—*International Journal for Service Learning in Engineering: Humanitarian Engineering and Social Entrepreneurship*—began in 2006.

Despite its growth, service-learning resides in only the margins of composition studies because, Ellen Cushman argues in 2002, of service-learning’s unpredictability and the ways it alters the instructor’s role. Service-learning initiatives “fly in the face of so many traditional

social values and dispositions of English studies scholars” because service-learning is self-conscious and self-reflexive, serves both students and communities, and encourages attention to cultural and economic values:

Scholars maintaining community literacy projects are involved in the common lives of community members; they’re simultaneously researchers, teachers, and servants who work across disciplines. Even in the brightest manifestos for the reform of English studies, few imagine the kinds of radical shifts in knowledge-making practices encompassed in community literacy projects. (“Service” 216)

The application of service-learning to writing courses is still evolving. In 2011, the Council of Writing Program Administrators, NCTE, and the National Writing Project did not mention service-learning in their *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*. However, service-learning could be viewed as helping fulfill the framework’s call for developing “rhetorical knowledge” and “critical thinking writing processes” (Council 1). Community-service writing by its very nature involves the kinds of “genuine purposes and audiences” recommended by the framework:

At its essence, the Framework suggests that writing activities and assignments should be designed with genuine purposes and audiences in mind (from teachers and other students to community groups, local or national officials, commercial interests, students’ friends and relatives, and other potential readers) in order to foster flexibility and rhetorical versatility. Standardized writing curricula or assessment instruments that emphasize formulaic writing for nonauthentic audiences will not reinforce the habits of mind and the experiences necessary for success as students encounter the writing demands of postsecondary education.

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### **Composition Studies/Writing Instruction**

How best to teach writing is a complex and controversial subject; in fact, many composition specialists undoubtedly would disagree on various points. This dissertation discussion deals with specific elements—writing process, voice, expressivism, audience and

purpose, knowledge transfer, and how writing is learned—which are most pertinent to today’s service-learning writing pedagogy.

Widely accepted today is the theory of process: writers plan, write, and revise, and they do so recursively, by reviewing, recasting, and forecasting throughout an interplay of thinking and writing which builds and projects, and builds and projects again and again. Process theory nudges writing instruction toward helping students develop ways to approach writing; it pulls the classroom away from stressing the end product. “By placing emphasis on the inventive power of the writer, who is able to explore ideas, to develop, act on, test, and regenerate his or her own goals, we are putting an important part of creativity where it belongs—in the hands of the working, thinking writer” (Flower and Hayes 386).

Tied in closely with process pedagogy are notions of expressivist pedagogy, which operates under the assumption that writing is “an art, a creative act in which the process—the discovery of the true self—is as important as the product—the self discovered and expressed” (Berlin 726). The focus on truth privileges the development of the self in social contexts, which reveals “the truth of the situation which evoked the writing, a situation that, needless to say, must always be compatible with the development of the self, and this leads to the ideological dimensions of the scheme” (726). When students are encouraged to express themselves openly and creatively, they are more likely to learn and also to intermix new knowledge with their own background knowledge and create something new, expressing their unique contributions.

Expressivism takes on various forms in the writing classroom:

Expressivist pedagogy employs freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small-group dialogic collaborative responses to foster a writer’s aesthetic, cognitive, and moral development. Expressivist pedagogy encourages, even insists upon, a sense of writer presence even in research-based writing. (Burnham 19)

Through freewriting, students are asked to reflect briefly upon a notion, and then put pen to paper and write freely for a determined amount of time, nonstop, uninhibited by concerns for grammar or assessment or anything other than the desire to record thoughts as they emerge. Elbow, in arguing for freewriting as private writing, says instructors should help students realize not only what an audience needs but also when to forget about concern for audience. Freewriting must be perceived as truly free and creative.

As this kind of freewriting actually works, it often *leads* to writing we look at. That is, we freewrite along to no one, following discourse in hopes of getting somewhere, and then at a certain point we often sense that we have *gotten* somewhere: we can tell (but not because we stop and read) that what we are now writing seems new or intriguing or important. [author's italics] (Elbow "Closing" 348)

Asking students to write about and through their ideas privileges their self-expression and helps them develop a writerly presence, which Christopher Burnham calls " 'voice' or *ethos*" (19). The term "voice" could be defined in various ways. Linguist Paul Kei Matsuda defines voice as "a distinct quality in written discourse that can be discerned by readers but is not readily identifiable in terms of a single linguistic or rhetorical feature" (37). Reflective writing is not the only home for voice but is a good place for students to find and develop their voices.

Britton outlines kinds of audiences: self, teacher, wider audience known, writer to readers unknown, and others ("Composing"). What students need to do, what all writers need to do, is define and address their audience and purpose. In order to help students pay attention to these rhetorical tenets across situations, instructors sometimes bring in the descriptions that Aristotle uses, dividing types of speech according to type of audience. According to Aristotle, "A speech [situation] consists of three things: a speaker and a subject on which he speaks and someone addressed, and the objective [*telos*] of the speech relates to the last (I mean the hearer)" (Kennedy 47) [translator's additions in brackets].

Clearly, Aristotle's emphasis on the "someone addressed" or "the hearer" is indicative of his paramount concern with audience. Also clearly, concerns with audience drive Aristotle's considerations of what today is termed "purpose." James L. Kinneavy says all writing is shaped by purpose—by whether the situation calls for arguing a point, for instance, or sharing information. He calls this consideration the "aim of discourse":

By aim of discourse is meant the effect that the discourse is oriented to achieve in the average listener or reader for whom it is intended. It is the intent as embodied in the discourse, the intent of the work, as traditional philosophy called it. Is the work intended to delight or to persuade or to inform or to demonstrate the logical proof of a position? These would be typical aims. (129-30)

Aim, or objective, or purpose is privileged in U.S. writing courses. To help students understand and consider audience and purpose, instructors lead discussions about particular, imaginary audiences and considerations of how much an audience would already know about a student's writing topic. Likewise, teachers often lead students in discussing the purposes of their essays—do they intend to inform, persuade, or entertain?

As Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford write, "One of the factors that makes writing so difficult, as we know, is that we have no recipes: each rhetorical situation is unique and thus requires the writer, catalyzed and guided by a strong sense of purpose, to reanalyze and reinvent solutions" ("Audience" 87). Communication should be colored by a perception of audience needs and of whether the audience might be predisposed for or against the ideas presented. Walter Ong argues that writers construct audiences, which are imagined in particular roles. Ede and Lunsford describe how writers conceive of audience by considering readers' attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. "Writers who wish to be read must often adapt their discourse to meet the needs and expectations of an addressed audience" (89).

Twenty-five years after publishing their seminal discussion “Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy,” Lunsford and Ede continue to see the need to emphasize this consciousness: “We continue to believe, then, that the concept of audience provides a helpful theoretical and practical grounding for efforts to understand how texts (and writers and readers) work in today’s world” (“Among” 47). Lunsford and Ede base this conclusion on their discussions with students, who “have alerted us to new understandings and enactments of textual production and ownership” because of the widening platforms for writing offered via digital media (43). Audiences are more varied than ever before, necessitating a more practical, straightforward approach to addressing audience.

There seems to be widespread misunderstanding among students about the function of writing instruction. As Linda S. Bergmann and Janet Zepernick found in their recent study, students are convinced “that the purpose of school writing is to get a grade, that the audience is the teacher.” Furthermore, the writing process strategies which students report learning seem to be only a series of “shoulds” which students ignore when actually writing (133). Classroom writing does not always lead to metacognitive realization of connections among writing in various situations, note Gerald Nelms and Ronda Leathers Dively, who surmise that the problem does not lie with the skills which are taught—since the skills themselves are useful—but with the ways in which the skills are taught. Instructors struggle against the “widespread belief” among students “that writing will be of little value to them as they advance into their technical fields beyond the academy” (223).

How to teach so that students transfer their skills to the next situation—during and beyond college—is an important goal of writing courses. “Transfer” is defined as “the ability to carry and use knowledge from one situation to another” (Wardle 66). Instructors of other

disciplines who assign writing can be heard complaining that students “cannot write ... even though they’ve had English comp!” These instructors report that students are not doing the very things the students supposedly had learned in composition classes: creating thesis statements that govern the essay, for instance, or providing support for main ideas, or citing sources. This predicament has been documented in qualitative studies (Wardle, Nelms and Dively, and Bergmann and Zepernick).

Students sometimes view writing tasks as distinct from one course to another even when the tasks are quite similar (Nelms and Dively 223). In interviews with Bergmann and Zepernick, students from various disciplinary backgrounds distinguished between the context-rich writing they do in their majors and the kinds of writing they do for English classes, both composition and literature, which the students deemed not “disciplinary” or “professional” (129). The demands of English instructors seem idiosyncratic to these students, who “failed to see any connection between what they have learned about writing in English classes and what they see as the objective, fact-based, information-telling writing demanded elsewhere in their academic and professional lives” (131).

Nelms and Dively argue for facilitating the kind of reflection about choices and decisions which is achieved through metacognition, defined as the “active reviewing of one’s own progress in accomplishing a task in order to determine strategies, resources, and processes needed” (225). Metacognition, aided by motivation, is key to facilitating “far transfer”: “the application of skills and knowledge to a context remote from the originating one” (217). Writing instructors should encourage far transfer by helping students understand “points of overlap or similarity between writing in the composition course and writing in non-composition courses” (224).



Wardle proposes that instructors teach students to contextualize and recontextualize the knowledge they are gaining by developing a “meta-awareness about writing: the ability to analyze assignments, see similarities and differences across assignments, discern what was being required of them, and determine exactly what they needed to do in response” (77). Additionally, Bergmann and Zepernick’s research confirms these ideas:

[T]he students in our study used models successfully because they were aware, at some level, that any given text is a product of both situation-specific content and genre-based conventions that are both context-sensitive and transferable from one situation to another. (140)

Teaching to transfer, then, involves reflecting on learning and the ways people write in different situations.

Learning to write occurs developmentally and is integrated over time. James Moffett defines writing growth as largely “a movement from the center of the self outward.” Through this movement, “the self enlarges, assimilating the world to itself and accommodating itself to the world” (59). Emig analyzes writing in connection with other theorists’ barometers of learning and finds that, in all aspects, writing enhances learning. Ann E. Berthoff defines a “pedagogy of knowing” as the use of language to name the world: “holding the images by whose means we human beings recognize the forms of our experience; of reflecting on those images, as we do on other words.” Instructors should help students learn to define and abstract, through writing:

They will thus be able to ‘think abstractly’ because they will be learning how meanings make further meanings possible, how form finds further form. And we will, in our pedagogy of knowing, be giving our students back their language so that they can reclaim it as an instrument for controlling their becoming. (“Is” 755)

Despite its emphasis on using writing to further learning, composition studies is sometimes perceived as removed from practical applications. Service-learning can counter that

perception by offering opportunities for writing outside of campus, fostering a fundamental trust in writing as a way to engage with the world.

### **Service-Learning/Writing Instruction**

Joining writing courses with community service can turn the process of writing into a significant act. Students learn writing skills that are immediately useful beyond the classroom. And by studying social issues and volunteering at a nonprofit agency, students learn the imperative of doing research in order to give themselves something to explore and then communicate. Service-learning projects demand layers of connections that increase the odds of deep, contextual learning, which is essential if students are to broaden their views of the world rather than narrow them. At the same time, asking students to do service and to study social issues can be problematic because of the potential for political and social doctrine to be attached to such discussions. Service-learning can be politically charged, and the students' levels of civic engagement can be increased or decreased, depending upon the approach.

A central goal of service-learning pedagogy, in any discipline, is to increase civic engagement. Thomas Ehrlich, in the introduction to his edited volume *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, offers this definition:

Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. (vi)

Theorists seem to be in agreement that the most important factor in whether students become more engaged in their communities via doing service is the successful integration of learning, which distinguishes service-learning pedagogy from mere volunteer work. When service is woven into a college course, students realize they need to learn course-based knowledge in order to solve real problems. “A great body of evidence confirms that when accompanied by proper

preparation and adequate academic reflection, service-learning can be a potent civic educator” (Battistoni 6).

Sociologist Rachel Parker-Gwin argues that learning in the context of service offers “a way to push students beyond what they know situationally” (101). The effects of this pushing include increases in academic achievement, life skills, responsibility, and civic engagement, according to studies reviewed by the Corporation for National Service’s Learn to Serve America, Higher Education (Dorman and Fox Dorman). Scholars identify several barometers of engagement: participating in service or community groups; politicized community organizing; staying current about civic affairs; participating in public dialogue; voting, campaigning, or related political action; and creating works that benefit the public.

Researchers at California State University-Fresno surveyed seniors in 2009 and found that those who had taken a service-learning course reported higher levels of satisfaction in their relationships with others and “were more likely to report a greater contribution to the welfare of the community and better understanding of people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds” (Leimer, Yue, and Rogulkin 9-10).

It is possible to argue that a service-learning course per se is not a necessary precursor to civic engagement. A university by its very nature represents a certain kind of civic engagement: its research and creative activity impact the wider community; it draws students and staff members from the surrounding area; it interacts with local businesses; and its graduates often become active members of the community. David Watson, an education-policy historian, argues, “Together these features add resonance to the university as a social institution in its own right: at its best a model of continuity and a focus of aspiration for a better and more fulfilled life; at its worst a source of envy and resentment” (132-3). But a university should be a proactive agent of

social change, argues Longo, who is associate professor of Public and Community Service Studies at Providence College. He sees it as problematic that many college courses which incorporate scholarship about the broader community “have no connection to education in the community”; he cites, for example, classroom-based studies of social issues and assignments to write letters to public officials, critiquing these as lacking “learning in the context of the broader community,” and holds that, by comparison, service-learning courses offer a more explicit, though not guaranteed, means for promoting civic engagement (14).

There are many ways in which composition scholars view their work as important to the construction a civil society. Compositionist Thomas N. Huckin argues in favor of service-learning by saying that “inasmuch as it has always been one of the goals of a university education to prepare students for a life of active citizenship, I think it is important also to take full advantage of this opportunity to raise civic awareness” (“Technical” 58). Writing students can contribute service, in the form of written texts and front-line volunteering, while learning about writing and social issues. Bruce Herzberg holds that writing courses should not only teach rhetoric but guide students toward “social transformation” and the rhetoric of citizenship:

The effort to reach into the composition class with a curriculum aimed at democracy and social justice is an attempt to make schools function . . . as radically democratic institutions, with the goal not only of making individual students more successful, but of making better citizens, citizens in the strongest sense of those who take responsibility for communal welfare. (“Community” 317)

Students in the service-learning composition courses of Wade Dorman and Susan Fox Dorman “increased their investments in the arguments . . . [and] had a greater awareness of audience, awareness more grounded in the realities of the situation they were writing about” (125-6). And Phyllis Mentzell Ryder speaks of increasing “rhetorical exigency” via service-learning writing pedagogy:

Public writing is always a site of struggle, a push and pull that highlights differing views of who can act, what kinds of actions create change, and what ideals we should act toward. If we wish to help students invoke public audiences, we need to create the space where they can investigate these rhetorical components of public-building, and we need to create opportunities for them to practice this important work. Well-designed service-learning courses can provide students with this rich intellectual, powerful work. (226)

Longo, in his book *Why Community Matters: Connecting Education with Civic Life*, notes not every type of community service will increase students' civic engagement (18). His caution is echoed by other scholars. Cushman tries not to send her writing students into the community with too little preparation. David Berle, after implementing service-learning in a series of his horticulture courses, shares that although the student evaluations of his courses were high, he is unsure whether the students' approval came because they enjoyed the hands-on work or because they were becoming more civically engaged. He is particularly concerned by some of the derogatory comments that students made about clients toward the end of his courses. "In some instances students' attitudes have hardened, especially when judgments are made based on common misconceptions. . . . It helps to realize that not every project will turn out wonderfully, not every student will share in the good feeling that comes from helping others, and not everyone helped will view the benefits of the project in the same light as the students" (47).

Several scholars express fear that asking students to do service might decrease rather than increase students' empathy. The danger is that brief, ill-conceived projects might deepen the dichotomy between the haves and the have-nots, between the server and the served. What happens is that students view themselves as helping others and do not understand how they themselves are benefited by and could learn from others. Service-learning scholars call this the "server-served dichotomy." Studies have shown that for real empathy and social change to occur, there must be significant interaction with community members. Battistoni noted this in 2002:

We would expect that the more than 12,000 service-learning courses that Campus Compact tells us exist on college campuses should be having a countervailing positive civic effect. Instead, we continue to hear anecdotal reports from faculty and other educators that community service not only fails to connect students to public life, but it may tend to reinforce student stereotypes . . . , hardening previously held views. (5)

The length and complexity of a project can be important. Lisa Mastrangelo and Victoria Tischia, for instance, report that their writing students did not understand the reciprocal benefit of service-learning until well into the second semester of their year-long project (33). Battistoni also has noted that ill-conceived, short projects often decrease rather than increase students' understanding of others (5).

Story-telling and intentional dialogue helped Ann E. Green's service-learning writing students soften their preconceived ideological views (297). Likewise, for Nancy Welch's students, discussing and contextualizing social issues, not just produce texts, led to a "collapse of difference" (246); her students were able to "recognize others as subjects whose lives both overlap and exceed one's own" (248).

Herzberg points to the ideal example of Addams and her 19<sup>th</sup> century Hull House, where community members and highly educated visitors all were learning and serving. He identifies the root of the server-served dichotomy as U.S. society's over-emphasis on individual responsibility. Students today lack "social imagination," causing them to think in terms of how much they are helping the less-fortunate, not in terms of how much they are learning by being placed in situations of mutual benefit. "Immersed in a culture of individualism, convinced of their merit in a meritocracy, students . . . need to see that there is a social basis for most of the conditions they take to be matters of individual choice or individual ability" ("Community" 317).

Such concerns are reminiscent of those raised by Ivan Illich, a philosopher who denounced education as oppressive. He established a language school in Mexico associated with

the Alliance for Progress. In an infamous speech to a group of new foreign volunteers at his school, Illich decries as “profoundly damaging” the tendency to consider one’s self as doing good, sacrificing, or helping; he argues, rather, for a stance of curiosity, of exploring and learning. “I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the ‘good’ which you intended to do” (8).

Unlike the willing volunteers to whom Illich was speaking, some college students might be resistant to service-learning. There are a myriad of reasons for students to resist. Resistance can occur because students have full lives—including sports or jobs—and fear service-learning projects would be too time-consuming. Other students might associate “service” with the community service that courts dole out in lieu of jail time. And others might be jaded by the service they did as a requirement of high school graduation.

Community service . . . is based on apolitical notions of volunteerism wherein too few efforts are made to link involvement in community with notions of power. Students therefore tend to believe that engagement with the political process is unimportant and irrelevant for change and that community service is a more effective way to solve public problems. (Longo 18)

Community service too often entails only volunteer work, with little learning involved and no decision-making required of the student. Through such situations, students might not realize that service-learning fits in with their ambitions for a college education.

Perhaps another reason for resistance is political. Teaching the issues that surround service can become a vehicle for the social liberation articulated by philosophers like Freire, whose Revolutionary philosophy describes uniting what a person does and thinks about what s/he is doing with the potential for that person’s reaction to conditions of existence in order to, ultimately, transform society (Gadotti 166). Giroux calls on schools to be active agents in this

transformation. Federal education policy and money should promote schools as sites of the kind of deeply analytical, critical thinking that leads to “human emancipation”:

Within this theoretical context can be developed policy recommendations that encourage forms of research and education that view teachers as intellectuals and moral leaders rather than mere technicians; students as critical thinkers and active citizens rather than simply future participants in the industrial-military order; and schools as centers of critical literacy and civic courage. (194)

Among theorists who would agree with Giroux’s goal of critical analysis, there is disagreement over how to get there.

Some writing instructors assign readings themed by political and social issues. Others view the use of volatile classroom topics as doing more harm than good. Maxine Hairston delivered a convention address and then published “Required Courses Should Not Focus on Charged Issues” in 1991 in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Hairston disagrees with politicizing the freshman composition classroom by requiring instructor-driven readings in diversity, environmentalism, or social issues:

When we use required freshman courses to force young students to grapple with complex and troubling issues on which they are uninformed and with which they may not be mature enough to cope honestly, we stifle rather than foster the very critical abilities that we profess to value. (1)

By encouraging or mandating students to write about hegemony and oppression—Hairston further argues in a follow-up article—the liberals in English Departments impose their personal critical-studies agendas onto freshman composition students (“Diversity”).

Hairston’s complaints sparked debate. Among those defending cultural studies were Diana George, John Trimbur, Robert G. Wood, Ron Strickland, William H. Thelin, William J. Rouster, and Toni Mester. The swift and multiple responses to Hairston assured the continued popularity of cultural studies as a means to teach writing and to discuss diversity (George and Trimbur). None of these scholars’ discussions explicitly included the place of service-learning;



nevertheless, the debate is pertinent to service-learning pedagogy because issues of oppression and diversity run through many service sites, and students are impacted by these issues, whether they realize the impact or not.

The question for instructors is whether to guide students in exploratory discussion and research on issues the students might confront while doing front-line service, and, if so, how to do so without promoting particular cultural perspectives. Many service-learning theorists believe it is critical to introduce information about social issues that are relevant to the service projects. Taking Hairston's concerns into account could help ensure that course readings are driven by student interest, as sparked by the service, and not by the instructor's preconceived agenda. In "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," Hairston argues that to truly help students learn and write about hegemony, oppression, and diversity, students must be encouraged to form groups and select their own writing topics:

Real diversity emerges from the students themselves and flourishes in a collaborative classroom in which they work together to develop their ideas and test them out on each other. They can discuss and examine their experiences, their assumptions, their values, and their questions. They can tell their stories to each other in a nurturant writing community. (191)

Examining their own experiences allows issues of diversity to emerge, or not. This is different from imposing a study of culture or a particular lens through which to study culture.

Hairston and others do not discuss community service or whether requiring students to serve the community in and of itself—separate from the issue of paired readings and discussions—could be detrimental. Some instructors are reluctant to require students to do volunteering and therefore eschew service-learning as a pedagogy. Their reasons include the felt duplicity of not doing volunteer work themselves, the view that assigning service is a political imposition, the opinion that schools should be concerned with education, not community service,

and the perspective, like Hairston's, that instructors need to be cautious about ideology. Resistance might arise among students who not want to do service as part of their college education. And still others might prefer to do good out of their own volition rather than as part of a class. Nevertheless, as Donna M. Bickford and Nedra Reynolds (232) point out, most writing students who grow to eagerly appreciate their service-learning projects had begun those projects under the constraints of a requirement. Students can be convinced that service-learning is an asset rather than a burden, and they can shift from resisting to engaging.

Green talks about her struggle as a white instructor guiding service-learning courses that were complicated by notions of not only service but also race and socioeconomics. Her college students tended to be of white, upper- or middle-class backgrounds, while the children being tutored lived in minority, low-income areas. What Green found to work best was to lead her students in class discussions of service and of race and, within those discussions, to encourage all her students' voices. Her goal was to "make power relationships visible" by bringing up subjects such as the server-served dichotomy, by asking students to talk about their own perspectives on service and on race, and by encouraging students to develop relationships with the children at their sites of service (296).

Without enhancing her service-learning pedagogy through intentional dialogue and storytelling, Green found, her college students would have hardened their ideological views.

Stories have helped create spaces where all of us can listen and hear one another—students, teachers, and learners at the service site. . . . [W]e can create space in service-learning classes for imagining a different and more hopeful world. What I hope is that through service-learning courses, students in positions of privilege become committed to an idea of social justice that translates into lifelong work for social change. (297)

Service-learning courses can be constructed in ways that help address the dilemmas of political imposition and the server-served dichotomy. Hairston calls for drawing out the wisdom inherent

and shared among students themselves. She sees students' self-analysis and self-reflective writing as leading to their broader understanding of society: students should "learn to write in order to learn, to explore, to communicate, to gain control over their lives" ("Diversity" 186).

### **Reflection**

Reflection is an elemental thread of composition pedagogy. And reflection is essential to service-learning pedagogy: Battistoni proposes that "accompanied by proper preparation and adequate academic reflection, service-learning can be a potent civic educator" (6). Both pedagogies maintain that students learn through reflective writing, making this the strongest link between the two pedagogies.

Reflection's function as a bridge between learning and service is so important that it is afforded a visual representation. "The hyphen in the phrase symbolizes the central role of reflection in the process of learning through community experience," write education researchers Janet Eyler and Dwight E. Giles Jr. in their seminal book *Where's the Learning in Service-learning?* (4). The National Society for Experiential Education calls reflection "the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience." NSSE identifies reflection as one of its eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities:

For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. ("About Us" 2)

Many scholars across the multidisciplinary field of service-learning write about the importance of reflection to connect service and learning. Sociologist Parker-Gwin, for instance, says it is through reflection that academic knowledge begins to make sense and to take shape into something new: "Academic concepts are analyzed, expanded, and refined in light of the

students' experiential learning" (101). Education scholar Edward Zlotkowski calls reflection the "key to making service yield to learning." Through a "multi-layered understanding of reflection," students ponder course content, new appreciations for social contexts, and their own personal responsibilities as citizens. It is reflection which separates service-learning from simple volunteer work or purely practical problem-solving sites such as internships ("Pedagogy" 100).

Through praxis—the practice of acting and using writing to reflect upon action—student writers develop their voices and their ability to effect social change (Huckin). Inherent in praxis is a kind of dialogue that is not always neat and tidy, not always between intellectual peers. Within a composition course there may be many kinds of dialogue—between instructor and students, among students, and between students and research subjects, for instance.

Praxis, voice, and expressivism all are concepts within composition studies that involve reflective writing and critical thinking. Kathleen Blake Yancey notes that process pedagogy by its very nature is reflective. Nevertheless, reflection itself—as thinking or writing—is not often the main subject of composition research; in Yancey's 1998 book *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*, she laments being able to cite only one scholarly article that directly links reflection and the composing process, Sharon Pianko's 1979 "Reflection: A Critical Component of the Composing Process."

Pianko studied the behaviors of "remedial" and "traditional" freshman writers (275) and discovered that the most significant difference in the writing processes of the students in these two groups was their manner of pausing. Traditional writers paused frequently and briefly, and they used their pauses to rescan what they had written in order to reflect upon what was missing and how to progress. Remedial writers paused less frequently and longer each time, and they

tended to spend their breaks thinking about something other than writing. Frequent reflective pausing, therefore, is a tool for critical thinking, Pianko concludes:

It is reflection which stimulates the growth of consciousness in students about the numerous mental and linguistic strategies they command and about the many lexical, syntactical, organizational choices they make . . . during the act of composing. (277)

This coincides with Perl's discussion, a year later, of a recursive composing process that includes reflection as a "felt sense" which guides a writer who pauses when something is unclear. "They are looking to their felt experience, and waiting for an image, a word, or a phrase to emerge that captures the sense they embody" (101).

Yancey offers a wider view of reflection, looking not only at how individual writers behave as they write but also at the methods, procedures, and outcomes of reflective writing (8-11). She credits Dewey and Lev S. Vygotsky—two thinkers whose ideas are fundamental to service-learning theories—for establishing that reflection is a social process which works on many levels, helping writers understand, theorize, and expand knowledge into new ways of thinking:

To reflect, as to learn, we set a problem for ourselves, we try to conceptualize that problem from diverse perspectives—the scientific and spontaneous—for it is in seeing something from divergent perspectives that we see it more fully. Along the way, we check and confirm, as we seek to reach goals that we have set for ourselves. Reflection becomes a habit of mind, one that transforms. (12)

She further deconstructs reflection as three discrete but related phenomena: "reflection-in-action," which occurs while writing and is similar to the behavior-related reflection that Pianko discovered; "constructive reflection," which is cumulative and involves generalizing and identity-formation through learning and writing over time; and "reflection-in-presentation," which is the articulation of learning in a particular rhetorical context (13-14).

Because reflective writing is widely viewed as advancing the learning process, writing instructors strive to offer students many rhetorical contexts for reflection through various specific practices. Essays can be entirely reflective or include reflective elements. Journal-type notes can be both observational and reflective. Overarching, reflective statements can accompany portfolios; it is not unusual for writing courses to include a reflective essay about the term's work or some portion of it. Freewriting can be used for brainstorming as an element of all of these practices or for working through seemingly stuck moments in the middle of a project, and it can be encouraged for its own sake. These genres are standard fare for service-learning projects in any discipline. When a service-learning course falls within the discipline of English, other, nonreflective types of writing tend to be involved; in such cases, regardless of whether the main project is a technical report, a research essay, or a work of creative writing, the project includes reflective writing along the way.

Self-expression and self-analysis help add depth to any type of writing, regardless of whether the reflection makes it onto the final page, and a desire to reflect can lead writers to begin writing and to discover ideas and teach themselves: "the value of coupling personal with academic learning should not be overlooked; self-knowledge provides the motivation for whatever other knowledge an individual seeks. . . . In the end, all knowledge is related; the journal helps clarify that relationship" (Fulwiler 30).

For some practitioners, reflection is more than an individual experience. Huckin recommends that students reflect both individually and as a class upon their writing experiences and the social realities they are writing within. Whole-class reflective discussions should precede writing because "the contextualizing move" in discussions is valuable as a precursor to intentional written reflection ("Technical" 58). Thus, a reflective practitioner thinks and writes in

ways that illustrate a growing awareness of the world, on social and political levels as well as levels of interpersonal human interaction. Via reflection, there are moments of discovery and of consciousness-raising, which can be liberatory, for the individual as well as society.

Having gained a better understanding of pedagogies and their manifestations in writing instruction, it is important to anticipate potential sites of noteworthy impact when combining service-learning and writing instruction. Due to the kinds of collaboration necessary for service-learning, students and community members create learning and meaning together; therefore, theories of collaboration need to be considered. Clearly, the nature of community-based projects alters the roles of the instructor and the students, and studying this aspect could help elucidate why and how the roles are affected. Additionally, the combination of writing projects and service work impacts students' understanding of their need for professional-level writing and their sense of the importance of their work, which can increase their motivation. These places of intersection require discussion to provide a context for the data derived from the research of this dissertation.

### **Collaboration**

Service-learning always occurs within a collaborative dynamic because students work with nonprofit agency directors. Students might additionally work with other agency personnel, with clients, and with people in the community who are connected to the agency. When service-learning is wedded to a writing course, the possibilities for collaboration broaden from not only volunteer work and teamed research to, additionally, collaborative writing through which students connect their ideas, learn from each other, and engage with the larger community.

Many compositionists, including Emig, Kenneth A. Bruffee, and Burnham, view all writing as inherently "collaborative" because the writing process itself relies upon negotiation with previous discourses in the shaping of new discourse. "Expressivism depends on a social

constructive view to discover and activate the self it theorizes” (Burnham 33). The practice of expressing through writing can be a powerful tool for knowledge-building through social construction.<sup>8</sup> As Glenn Hutchinson points out, such theories trace their roots largely to Vygotsky, a Russian thinker whose works were published posthumously, from the 1960s forward, in the United States. Vygotsky’s theory of social development maintains that knowledge is socially constructed; his “zone of proximal development” notes the difference between what an individual knows and what s/he could learn with the collaboration of others (*Mind* 87).

Collaborative learning offers students a particular kind of conversation and a particular social context for conversation: a community of peers. While extolling collaboration, Bruffee warns that it must occur as part of a “demanding academic environment” if it is to reach its fullest potential as “social engagement in intellectual pursuits”:

It involves demonstrating to students that they know something only when they can explain it in writing to the satisfaction of the community of their knowledgeable peers. To teach this way, in turn, seems to require us to engage students in collaborative work that does not just reinforce the values and skills they begin with, but that promotes a sort of reacculturation. (434)

Such reacculturation can manifest during students’ interactions with the community as well as with each other, as they learn about and form discourse communities.

Composition instructors sometimes ask students to explore discourse communities, including subcultures, by writing about their own families, neighborhoods, religious institutions, clubs, athletic teams, or workplaces—any community for which discourse is produced for consumption within that same community. Instructors also sometimes ask students to consider their classroom peers as participating in a discourse community during that semester. This can appear to be an artificial construct, in the sense that the instructor asks students to imagine an

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<sup>8</sup> Briefly introduced on Page 26, social construction often manifests in collaboration.



audience but the students know whom the real audience is: the grade-issuing instructor.

Nevertheless, these efforts are important, as compositionists try to help students grow as people who write to interact with society. Bergmann and Zepernick advocate for pedagogy “based on knowledge about the discourse community and rhetorical situation in which they are working” (142).

Some instructors encourage students to develop discourse communities among peers by working in semester-long groups or by partially intersecting individual projects with teamwork, such as sharing research. Such efforts could appear on the surface to be identical in writing courses that do and do not incorporate service-learning. However, the utilization of service-learning adds another dimension, as students collaborate for the sake of an outside purpose, not only for a grade. At the same time, ever-present in service-learning projects is another type of discourse community, the one that puts students in conversation with people in the nonprofit agency. Therefore, through service-learning, students’ collaborative work challenges them to form discourse communities both within their classrooms and within the community. Social construction provides the theoretical foundation for service-learning scholars to portray the pedagogy as a means of building knowledge within social contexts—scaffolding intellectual concepts and community-based activities.

As students write about, for, or with personnel or clients at a social agency, the students join in discourse communities that can transcend difference. Albert DeCiccio describes this potential from the point of view of his Merrimack College writing center. His tutors took their work into Lawrence, Mass., elementary schools, putting into practice the collaborative theories that the college students had been studying. They fleshed out a “critical consciousness” and an understanding of egalitarian process, discovering that “collaborative learning was a viable

practice even when it crossed boundaries the tutors had not yet encountered and when it involved negotiating differences in age, sex, culture, race” (3).

Negotiating issues of equality and diversity through peer collaboration can be a valuable learning experience, but it also can be fraught with problems. Some theorists worry that quieter student voices are marginalized: a dominant writer in a group could ensure, for instance, that the final product reflects only his/her ideas; this could be done inadvertently—as innocently as one student putting the final touches on a project. Warning that “consensus often brings oppression,” Faigley notes that “Giroux finds discourse communities are often more concerned with ways of excluding new members than with ways of admitting them” (537-8).

Other scholars, such as Trimbur, acknowledge that a path toward consensus has the potential of silencing radical voices yet deem more important, ultimately, the potential for collaboration to help students engage more fully in the intellectual process. And there are methods for not only minimizing the restraint of personal expression but even using collaboration to further individual exploration and expression. Hairston suggests drawing upon each student’s own experiences:

Real diversity emerges from the students themselves and flourishes in a collaborative classroom in which they work together to develop their ideas and test them out on each other. They can discuss and examine their experiences, their assumptions, their values, and their questions. They can tell their stories to each other in a nurturant writing community. (“Diversity” 191)

Creating a discourse community that is sustainable requires a strong dose of what Linda Flower and Shirley Brice Heath call a “thoroughgoing respect for the knowledge of others—embodied in the social and literate practices that actively seek alternative ways of reading the world” (53).

And David Bleich recommends “a pedagogy of discourse,” or collaborative conversations, including the telling of personal histories in order to foster “learning grounded in mutual

understanding and a sense of mutual implication.” For Bleich, self-disclosure “can help us to teach ourselves and our students what the juices, feelings, meanings, and struggles of working seriously and professionally with others really are” (308).

Among the struggles particular to classroom collaboration are practical ones that arise out of concerns over workload and grades. Not all members of a student group are always equally diligent—some might just want to make it through, while others might be intrinsically motivated to perform to the best of their abilities. Disagreements and distrust can diminish group cohesiveness. Partly because of fears of workload imbalance and related concerns over grades, students can be resistant to collaboration.

Interestingly, however, the same student writers, like other writers, routinely collaborate outside the classroom. “[M]ost of the innovative work that gets done in the world today gets done in collaborative groups . . . including, increasingly, teams that work primarily online” (Lunsford and Ede “Among” 58). Universities should do more to prepare students for collaborative work: “we need to craft collaborative projects that will engage every member of the group and guide the group in analyzing their work together from beginning to end” (58). In agreement with Lunsford and Ede is Zlotkowski, who views academia as operating too relentlessly in an “objective, analytical, experimental mode,” separate from “any shared public reality.” This failed connection fosters a lack of cohesiveness in society in general, creating “a community fragmented and exploitable by the very mode of knowing we profess” (“Social” 5-6). His remedy for this fracture in society: combine service, analysis, and collaboration.

A well-functioning group is more likely to produce an end product that does not disappoint the nonprofit agency, which leads to another risk of collaboration when the community is involved: the possibility of a dysfunctional group producing a mediocre project, or

none at all. At the same time, this very risk, even when heavily veiled, might be the impetus for quarreling peers to overcome their differences, moving from resistance to negotiated learning. Out of struggle can come progress; for this to happen, collaborators need to be open to the unknown. The instructor, too, needs to allow for unpredictability.

We have to make ourselves brave enough to risk the dissent that inevitably comes when democracy is in action. Once teachers do that, we'll see the work of the small groups in our classes become the real work of the class, with students negotiating their own ideas against and around the ideas they're offered. When students find a real voice, their own and not some mimicked institutional voice, both students and teachers acknowledge the possibility of the real change that might ensue. As they find that groups can transform and be transformed, teachers and students learn not only to risk that change but welcome it. (Roskelly 128)

Allowing students to determine and transform their own experience of collaboration is risky, yet potentially powerful. When students make their own group decisions, service-learning projects provide "a site for students to exercise autonomy as writers" (Dorman and Fox Dorman 131). Writing and service-learning are both collaborative by nature, and within service-learning writing projects, the way students collaborate with nonprofit agencies can affect the dynamic between instructor and students.

### **The Role of the Instructor and Student Decision-Making**

Some theorists perceive a lack of student autonomy as a generalized problem of classroom structures. Battistoni bemoans the dynamics of traditional education, which he identifies as knowledge transmission and recall that culminates in the conferring of grades by adult authority figures. Such a system encourages students "to be consumers rather than producers of knowledge" (3). A process of passive learning and accompanying clear-cut delineation of instructor and student roles can be interrupted by the introduction of projects which extend beyond the classroom as well as grant students some autonomy.

Instructors of all disciplines sometimes give students detailed criteria, with course packs that include all the necessary material in a neat package. This can be considered effective pedagogy, but some theorists believe too much scaffolding can be counterproductive. “Alienated, our students are sightseers rather than explorers; instead of discovering for themselves, they follow the path laid out in text and lecture, taking notes on what the tour guide/teacher points out” (Dorman and Fox Dorman 125). Steve Sherwood blames the “well-intentioned efforts of composition instructors,” which can backfire. “Too often, the prefabricated, generic lessons of the composition classroom give students the impression that writing is a neat, well-structured activity” (21-22). Prefabricated lessons can teach students to surrender their autonomy and distrust their own instincts.

As an antidote, instructors can let go of the need to be in command and, rather, allow themselves the liberty of revealing their own doubts, ambivalences, and biases; although instructors cannot be true peers with students, instructors should be engaged in learning alongside their students (Elbow “Embracing” 59). An instructor should not be a transmitter of knowledge but rather “a midwife, an agent for change” whose role is “to nurture change and growth as students encounter individual differences” (Hairston 192). In Berlin’s liberatory classroom, both instructor and students shape content and select the reading material and media, and students feel empowered to be agents of social change. “This is contrasted with the unequal power relations in the authoritarian classroom, a place where the teacher holds all power and knowledge and the student is the receptacle into which information is poured” (734).

Berlin, Hairston, and Elbow do not mention service-learning. However, combining service-learning and writing instruction in and of itself could begin to soften the barriers between instructor and students. In the classroom an instructor cannot deny his/her authority, but at a

service site an instructor could choose to function largely as a facilitator, helping students and nonprofit agency personnel work together. Cushman, a service-learning compositionist, suggests that the potential for engagement within successful service-learning can alter how everyone involved gains and uses knowledge.

Stepping back while students determine their own steps can result in projects that seem chaotic and untidy along the way, leading to results which are unpredictable. Cushman surmises that it is largely because of this unpredictability and the ways in which service-learning can alter the instructor's role that the pedagogy survives only in the margins of composition studies.

Despite the hopes of service-learning proponents that they will offer students a new way of learning, the reality is that few service projects are fundamentally different from other classroom assignments: the subject matter is different because it involves service in the community, but the manners in which the subject is taught and the classroom managed tend to look the same as in other courses. A simple insertion of service into a traditional classroom dynamic can backfire, according to a small number of scholars.

In his 1997 study of eight service-learning courses across various disciplines, Jerry Miller found that the way a course is managed makes a difference. He surveyed the 327 students before their projects and afterward, looking for comments that indicate a sense of their own power to make a difference in the world. Disappointingly, most students scored significantly lower in their end-of-project surveys than in their pre-project surveys. Miller found that students in the same course tended to score similarly, but his study model did not provide for a way to determine what made some courses more successful than others (20).

However, a study published in 2003 by social scientists William Morgan and Matthew J. Streb points directly to the benefits of particular courses—those with high degrees of student

decision-making built into the community projects. Morgan and Streb analyzed 19 projects in 10 middle schools for “student voice,” a term the researchers employ to describe student agency, or how much power the students had to determine their own projects. The students answered these questions at the end of the course: “1) I had real responsibilities; 2) I had challenging tasks; 3) I helped plan the project; and 4) I made important decisions.” A project with a low level of student voice, for instance, was one for which instructors arranged the details and asked students to carry out assigned work. In a project with a high level of student voice, instructors asked students to take control by, for instance, designing a project, working with a nonprofit agency to plan the project, arranging for funding, and then carrying out the project (42).

Additionally, before and after the service-learning projects, Morgan and Streb asked each of the 220 students a series of questions that fell within these categories of civic engagement: likelihood to discuss school topics outside of class; personal competence; political knowledge; and school attendance (42). Morgan and Streb considered the civic-engagement results in two ways: with and without factoring for student voice. Without regard for voice, the results were flat, showing no impact or insignificant impact of service-learning. However, when the civic-engagement results were separated according to respondents who reported high or low levels of voice in their projects, the differences were striking: students reporting a high voice index increased their level of engagement, while students reporting a low voice index decreased their level of engagement, across all categories; “some of these difference were quite large” (45).

Morgan and Streb conclude that allowing students to plan and conduct their own projects increases their civic and educational engagement. Likewise, restricting student decision-making actually has a negative impact on engagement. “[I]t is only when students have input in their projects that the pedagogical approach will have a positive effect on participants; otherwise,

service-learning is likely to do harm” (39). Morgan and Streb speculate as to why a lack of student voice might decrease both civic and educational growth:

Participation in service-learning projects that limit student input may create resentment, making the project unlikely to change students’ civic values and certainly not making them more excited and active in the classroom. Students need to have real responsibilities, have challenging tasks, to help plan the project, and to make important decisions in order for the project to have a positive influence. (44)

Morgan and Streb recommend further research into the issue of student decision-making within service-learning.

Most published scholarship about service-learning implies, by omission, that this aspect is not important. Theorists typically do not discuss who makes project decisions, and practical recommendations tend to allow no room for student choice. Parker-Gwin, for instance, describes programs under development at Virginia Tech aimed at “enabling volunteers to tutor economically disadvantaged black and Hispanic students” and also “arranging for them to provide home repairs for low-income residents” (101); the instructor is doing the enabling and arranging. In the same vein, Cheryl Hofstetter Duffy’s 2007 conference workshop handout “Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom: Guiding Principles for Early Success” lists seven practical tips, beginning with “having everyone working with the same agency or type of agency.” Such recommendations of instructor management are put forth, time and again, without consideration that student choice or lack of choice might be a factor.

A few scholars, however, have keyed in on the importance of student agency. Robert L. Sigmon, who was among the 1960s pioneers of the modern movement in experiential education, advocates that students be challenged “to be their best, to listen, to explore, to learn, to share from their emerging capacities, and gain increased capacity for self-directed learning.” In his vision of service-learning, “all parties to the arrangement are seen as learners and teachers as



well as servers and served. In these programs, we are challenged to respect local situations for what they can teach” (4).

Compositionist Huckin describes how he learned to give students more control: he and the nonprofit agency had asked students merely to add information to agency brochures that had already been designed, leaving the students feeling frustrated because the project did not “turn out to be as challenging as it should be”; Huckin realized that giving his students more decision-making power would have yielded a more full experience for them (“Technical” 54). Battistoni similarly reports that his students were disappointed because they felt their service hours were not being fully taken advantage of; his students responded by meeting with the director of the nonprofit agency and designing their own service-learning plan, transforming their own project and turning their experience into a positive one. Battistoni concludes that by making their own decisions, his students more profoundly considered the impact of their work—leading to greater understanding and learning.

“In a democracy, citizens need to be able to listen to each other, to understand the places and interests of others in the community, and to achieve compromises and solve problems when conflict occurs” (33). Battistoni calls for the inclusion of “public problem-solving” not only in individual courses but also in campuswide service-learning curricula. Students should have “an active role in the design and structure of the school’s service-learning program itself” (34-5).

Psychologist Albert Bandura recommends that instructors offer students opportunities to run into obstacles. Instructors should not tell students what to do but provide them with reassurance and instruction in collaborative problem-solving. In this way, students can develop what psychologists term “self-efficacy.” “A resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort” (73).

Students taking initiative is a concept which would resonate with Hairston. She does not write specifically about service-learning. However, her statements about the constructs of higher education—the “real political truth is that the teacher has all the power” (188)—coincide with some of the issues raised here. Hairston argues that students should write “about something they care about and want to know more about. Only then will they be motivated to invest real effort in their work. . . . [T]he topic should be their choice, a careful and thoughtful choice, to be sure, but not what someone else thinks is good for them” (189). She and Bandura both suggest that students need avenues for small successes. Hairston talks about creating “a low-risk environment that encourages students to take chances” (189). Cushman, in explaining one model for service-learning courses, describes allowing students a degree of control:

[S]tudents write one project, usually handed in at the end of the term, that is based all or in part on the students’ participation at the sites they have chosen. . . . The main advantage of this model is that students are working for an organization and often on topics that interest them. Because of their intrinsic motivation, students are more likely to participate consistently and with commitment when on site. Students structure for themselves the bulk of the research and are more likely to see projects through to completion. (“Sustainable” 44)

She seems to be saying that students are motivated by the possibility of choosing their sites and structuring much of their own research. Yet for Cushman, this model is flawed because students would benefit more from working within a faculty mentor’s well-structured, long-term research inquiry because “wandering-in-the-dark” of student-led research “doesn’t represent the systematic, structured, theory-driven research that scholars do” (45). She ultimately argues against student-led projects, specifically citing those assigned by Dorman and Fox Dorman.

Cushman is not the only theorist who seems to argue both for and against student decision-making. Bickford and Reynolds devote an entire section of their article “Service-Learning Projects Are Difficult to Start, Manage, Sustain, and Make Reciprocal” to suggestions

for managing project details on behalf of students (234). Contrariwise, later in the same article, they discuss advantages to letting students design their own projects:

There are advantages to insisting that students design their own activist projects or to allowing them to do so. When we ask students to propose their own activism, we encourage them to connect course content to their own interests and philosophies—activities long valued in the educational process. Students must then take the initiative in selecting an issue to address and in determining what contributions they can make toward resolving it. (245)

For her dissertation, Heidi Ann Stevenson studied the service-learning course of another composition instructor. Afterward, he confessed to her that he viewed service-learning as a burden because “gaining mastery and keeping clear communication with a large list of sites is a huge workload in itself for the instructor” (140). Stevenson does not agree with him that this makes service-learning inappropriate for a composition course but, rather, concludes that students should be given more latitude in their own projects, which also would result in relieving some of the instructor’s burden. Herzberg also mentions that instructors do too much managing of projects, yet he does not recommend that this phenomenon change:

To be sure, service learning doesn’t always work well. It requires a great deal of mere managing and arranging, and things can go terribly wrong. Many service-learning writing courses and programs do seem undertheorized; however, I believe this is often a consequence of the effort to manage details of placements and travel and oversight. In more mature courses and programs, success is typical. Students do see possibilities for change, and they can see—and teach us to see—that publics can be addressed if we are truly willing to engage them. (“Service” 403).

Herzberg’s praise for “more mature courses” involves recognition that instructor management of details may be less prominent in more mature, more successful courses. His optimism is clear when he talks about students seeing possibilities for change and teaching both themselves and their instructors about engagement. What is not clear is Herzberg’s view regarding student

leadership of their own projects; this is more common than not among scholars who write about service-learning—it is as though the issue of student decision-making were not on the table.

At one important site of dynamic education that predates and is deemed a precursor for today's service-learning pedagogy, Addams' Hull House was essentially an experimental process of exchange among Addams, the neighborhood residents, and the social and educational leaders who visited or lived there. All were teachers. All were students. Based upon her experience with Hull House, Addams "generalized that education ought to be perceived as a mutual relationship between teacher and pupil under the conditions of life itself and not the transmission of knowledge, intact and untested by experience" (Shafer Lundblad 663).

Promise-filled research, learning, and writing involve uncertainties, test the traditional parameters of who is a teacher and who is a student, and invite practical grappling with "conditions of life itself." This can occur on a grand scale, such as Addams' educational site immersed completely in a community, and on smaller scales through service-learning projects of varying depth and length—all endeavoring to bring students into some level of immediate contact with the practical applications of education.

### **Professionalism and Motivation**

Problem-solving and other practice-based methods are attempts to help students transfer academic knowledge to future professional writing situations. In a traditional classroom, when instructors try, however diligently, to incorporate problem-solving and make the learning extend beyond the classroom walls, the connections can seem arbitrary. Service-learning students truly need to solve problems in order to carry out their professional, community-based projects; and in fulfilling their purpose, students are motivated to understand the needs of their audience.

“Active learning,” as promoted first by Addams, Dewey, and Jean Piaget, refers to pedagogy that employs “activities beyond simply listening—that is, through writing, problem solving, engaged discussion, group work, role playing, simulations, case studies, and any learning motivated by activity” (Nelms and Dively 233). Through such activities, students think critically, they analyze and synthesize, and they evaluate. The widely recognized manifestations of active learning are problem-based learning, project-based learning, and service-learning; the third incorporates the first two, which often occur in tandem.

In problem-based learning, students work toward solving practical problems. bell hooks views the movement of coursework into the everyday world as a shift toward democratizing education. “To bring a spirit of study to learning that takes place both in and beyond classroom settings, learning must be understood as an experience that enriches life in its entirety” (42). Cushman sees service-learning as a fitting technique for teaching in this way because “all knowledges play important roles” in this pedagogy:

Because service-learning works best when real social problems or issues have been targeted, service-learning demands an interdisciplinary, broad range of theories, texts, history and means of producing meaning. These initiatives cannot rely solely on highly specialized knowledge production because of the nature of the problem-solving tasks at hand. (213-214)

Project-based learning focuses on learning within the context of accomplishing a task or project. Nelms and Dively recommend developing assignments that mirror workplace projects, and they point out that recent research in workplace writing clearly shows the need for the kinds of writing skills that students learn in composition courses. The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges published a survey in 2004 of 120 major U.S. corporations, gauging the need for writing competency among employees. What the commission found confirms the arguments of compositionists regarding the relevance of their courses:

Writing is a ‘threshold skill’ for both employment and promotion, particularly for salaried employees. Half the responding companies report that they take writing into consideration when hiring professional employees. ‘In most cases, writing ability could be your ticket in . . . or it could be your ticket out,’ said one respondent. (National 3)

There is widespread consensus that universities would do well to help students improve upon and connect their skills in writing, project-based learning, and problem-solving, and to help students see the connections between academic and workplace writing.

Given the documented need for writing skills beyond college, it can be puzzling when students do not perceive instructors’ efforts as helping them improve for any purpose beyond earning a grade. Bergmann and Zepernick’s research found that students believe that rules of citation and style are the only things they learn about writing in composition courses. Another common perception among students—but one which Bergmann and Zepernick believe is accurate—is that “the rhetorical situation of ‘school writing’ [is] substantially different from any other rhetorical situation they are ever likely to encounter” (139-140).

To work against the perceived disjunct between school and professional situations, Sherwood suggests connecting students with professional internships or practical situations on campus such as directed studies and writing-center work. Via such “opportunities for self-directed learning,” students “can confront the ill-structured problems posed by a particular writing task under the experienced eyes and ears of a mentor” (21). Similarly, Nelms and Dively recommend that students “directly engage in approximations” of future writing situations, to increase the likelihood that they will generalize their current learning into the future (229). And Bruffee points to what he calls the “re-externalized conversation” of a certain type of discourse community—one which “approximates the one most students must eventually write for in everyday life, in business, government, and the professions” (423). Service-learning students

collaborate in the context of experiential learning. They do not need to approximate an external community, for they are already immersed in one. And they do not need a great amount of help generalizing how writing might be used in business or in government, for they are already using writing in these situations.

Two influences determine students' ability to generalize learning. First, "learners need to be supported to participate in an activity system that encourages collaboration, discussion, and some form of 'risk taking.'" Second, learners need to have opportunities to share and be inspired by a common motive for undertaking a specific learning task" (Guile and Young 74). Active and self-directed learning parallel discussions of student decision-making, all of which tend to increase the level of unpredictability, of Sherwood's ill-structured problems, and, therefore, of motivation and of risk.

A key element in knowledge transfer<sup>9</sup> is "boundary-crossing," or a bridging of learning and practice (Guile and Young). When skills are in fact transferred, it is due to favorable "conditions of transfer," according to education researcher David N. Perkins. Transfer occurs "when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials" (2). There are five conditions of transfer: extensive practice in a variety of contexts; explicit explanations of principles which underlie course goals and which remain unchanged course to course; active self-monitoring through which students consider their thoughts and strategies; mindfulness, or alertness, in observing what is happening; and the application of metaphors or analogies (4).

Perkins proposes particular strategies—"hugging and bridging"—to foster near and far transfer. The first, "hugging," encourages near transfer by engaging students in performances very close to the target performance. A study-skills course designed to teach students how to take

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<sup>9</sup> Knowledge transfer was introduced on Page 34 as it relates specifically to composition studies.

exams, for instance, could include asking students to take trial exams. His second strategy, “bridging,” encourages far transfer by engaging students in abstract analysis and planning through mindfulness, metacognition, and a search for connections (6).

Transfer is a “sociocultural process,” as defined by Robert E. Haskell:

If we adopt the view that learning is situated, contextually and culturally, that transfer is social in a fundamental way, then we understand also that learning occurs in the context of people engaging in social activities. . . . [C]onversations with others during activities that influence the attention given to ideas provide valuable learning cues of retrieval and relating of information. In short, the social situation creates a universe of meaning for us that shapes our learning, transfer, and even our memory. (137)

Both Perkins and Haskell’s perspective relies upon theories of social construction and the kind of constructive reflection that Yancey recommends. All of their ideas could have been used to build the section on “metacognition” in the new *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, which calls for reflection on the individual and collective level in order to deconstruct knowledge:

Metacognition is fostered when writers are encouraged to examine processes they use to think and write in a variety of disciplines and contexts; reflect on the texts that they have produced in a variety of contexts; connect choices they have made in texts to audiences and purposes for which texts are intended; and use what they learn from reflections on one writing project to improve writing on subsequent projects. (Council 5)

Instructors can engage students in meta-reflective discussions about how they are making choices while writing, while developing their rhetorical skills in the context of community. Service-learning projects offer situations that “force students to be more sensitive to the audience for which they are writing and to be more flexible, creative, and strategic as they respond to the rhetorical situation” (Huckin 57). Dorman and Fox Dorman found that their service-learning students “increased their investments in the arguments . . . [and] had a greater awareness of



audience, awareness more grounded in the realities of the situation they were writing about” (125-6).

Students sometimes write to satisfy not only an instructor but also an outside audience for whom the students must envision and define a role. Ede and Lunsford offer the example of a student who wrote a persuasive address to her neighbors: she had to account for demographic factors, as well as how much her neighbors understood of the topic, what their fears and expectations were, and what they most valued and respected; the student chose to assume the best of her neighbors and write to them from the perspective of their shared values. “One of the factors that makes writing so difficult, as we know, is that we have no recipes: each rhetorical situation is unique and thus requires the writer, catalyzed and guided by a strong sense of purpose, to reanalyze and reinvent solutions” (87).

Students carrying out service-learning projects are likely to have strong senses of the purpose of their written communications, and they need little prompting from instructors to realize that they must understand and satisfy particular readers. The students intentionally direct their documents in order to persuade agency directors, clients, local politicians, the general public, or potential donors. By combining service-learning and writing pedagogy, students work collaboratively and therefore learn skills for working effectively with others. They are motivated to understand the circumstances of professional audiences, in order to fulfill the purposes of their projects. They must write well in order to “confront real situations in which the writing they do has real consequences” (Huckin 57).

Studying the scholarship published in the fields of composition studies and service-learned, as well as paying attention to where the two fields do and do not intersect, helped me see

what kinds of learning can occur via service-learning writing projects and led me toward further curiosities. In the next chapter of this dissertation, I explain the method I used to analyze my own students' writing for signs of what they learned through their projects. I ended up travelling a circuitous path while collecting, organizing, and analyzing the data, much of which did relate back to the themes I had found in the literature of service-learning and composition studies.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

While the method I used to focus and analyze my research evolved over the course of my graduate studies, the core intent remained stable: to find out what students learn and do not learn about writing through service-learning projects. My interest in service-learning itself arose due to influences throughout my time teaching classes, studying rhetoric and composition, and working as a journalist before graduate school. Perhaps the circuitous and seemingly lengthy development of my research project was inevitable because the methodology represented a shift from the practices of daily newsgathering to the multilayered demands of academic research.

When I left journalism and began teaching as a graduate assistant at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC), I asked for and received approval to send my composition students into the community for their research assignment. I wanted them to experience the power of expression that I personally knew writing afforded. My assumption that this would be a fulfilling learning experience proved to be true, in my estimation, as it seemed that the students grasped more easily the central concepts of coursework—such as the need to consider audience and purpose—than had students I had taught through more traditional composition coursework at a previous institution. After my first semester at SIUC, mentors helped me see that service-learning could be an interesting approach not only for instruction but also for research. I kept copies of my students' written artifacts, but I did not know in which direction the data might lead me.

Influencing my thinking were theories that I was learning about rhetoric and composition, including why people write the way they do, how people learn, and what helps students transfer

academic knowledge to professional settings. Information about best practices of writing pedagogy helped me understand my students and the data I was collecting. A parallel influence was the literature involving service-learning. I read pertinent discussions and studies, largely in disciplines outside of English; many scholars explained civic engagement and project-based learning, while a small number discussed the ramifications of student decision-making.

My experiences and readings made me want to find answers to two overarching questions: What do students learn about writing through doing service-learning? And how is their learning affected by their ability to make project decisions? Toward the end of my first year at SIUC, I began the Human Subjects process and developed questionnaires to give my students. At the time, I was not sure what I would do ultimately with the information; I did present my discoveries at conferences and also began to consider a dissertation.

Those questionnaires represented my first baby step toward a research methodology that evolved over the next few years. At the beginning, it would not be an exaggeration to say that I was guided by naïve optimism: I felt I could prove that service-learning is a powerful way to fulfill the learning outcomes of a writing course. Prove. My study would put to rest the doubts of instructors who believe that adding a service component does not further educational goals, robs valuable time from academic pursuits, and superimposes a moral dimension.

To change the minds of doubters, I thought I needed quantifiable proof, yet I was unsure how to collect materials in such a way as to allow for generalizable numerical data to be revealed. I also pictured using direct quotes from the students' work that would help the data-driven proof make sense. This vision reflects a journalistic perspective: I could collect facts that are newsworthy, then intersperse those facts with human-interest quotations that elicit empathy from readers and add context.

Both the results and the method turned out to be not so straightforward. As I learned about quantitative and qualitative research methods, I realized that my data would not yield conclusive proof. “One assumption of quantitative research is that in order for a concept to be studied it must be quantifiable. Quantification involves an operational definition and an instrument capable of measuring that definition reliably” (Filloy 191). Given those parameters, I saw a couple of problems. For one, I could find no published studies that offered instruments for measuring the progress of writing per se within service-learning projects. Furthermore, I could not create my own reliable measures because most of my data—the words and phrases in my students’ projects and reflections—was not unambiguous. My students’ comments required contextual analysis to reveal their significance. If I were to create and employ a strictly quantitative method, I would be able to use only a small portion of the data, dramatically limiting this study.

Qualitative research, on the other hand, seemed more appropriate for my project.

Qualitative research, in contrast, covers a wide range of approaches, but by definition, none of these approaches relies on numerical measurements. Such work has tended to focus on one or a small number of cases, to use intensive interviews or depth analysis of historical materials, to be discursive in method, and to be concerned with a rounded or comprehensive account of some event or unit. (King et al. 4)

My students’ materials required in-depth, comprehensive analysis, making this approach a good fit. Nevertheless, I feared that following a strictly qualitative method would necessitate disregarding the frequency of students’ references to certain themes; documenting these references revealed which themes the students were learning most about.

What I was attempting, therefore, seemed to fall more comfortably within qualitative research but also included quantitative methods. I wondered whether this overlapping would make my study stronger or weaker, but I found solace in the theories of Huckin, Gesa Kirsch,

and Cindy Johanek, who, each in their own way, advocate for a more flexible view of methodologies.

Researchers should be open to continually viewing their material through new lenses that are “context sensitive.” This might necessitate quantitative or qualitative frameworks, or both, and the methods might change along the way because, Huckin writes, “methodological triangulation . . . can produce converging results that support the plausibility of one’s argument” (90). He concedes that flexibility might dilute some rigor but argues that it is worth that risk in order to get closer to the truth of research situations. Huckin’s chapter, “Context-Sensitive Text Analysis,” appears in a book co-edited by Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan titled *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. In a later chapter, “Methodological Pluralism: Epistemological Issues,” Kirsch describes and advocates for the use of multiple, interactive methods (266).

Johanek, in her book *Composing Research: A Contextual Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition*, argues that it is limiting and harmful to fret over whether to privilege a quantitative or qualitative approach (87). We should focus on the questions that propel our research and, as we ask of students, critically examine all points of view and gather as much data as necessary. Her further point that “narrative and numbers” tend to coexist naturally (114) reinforced for me what I was discovering in my data.

Numbers alone won’t reveal everything we need to know. Stories alone can’t do it, either. But when researchers stop defining their work by method only—and focus more on the research question in a research context, applying a new contextualist paradigm, understanding that all research methods are, indeed, epistemic—then the full power of any data, be it story or number, will truly blossom into the knowledge our field seeks and the discipline we hope to become. (Johanek 209)

Emboldened by the idea of a contextual research paradigm, and with the preliminary support of my mentor, I started blending approaches. My data interpretation was not linear: throughout, analyzing the materials illuminated the need to expand my methodology and re-examine the artifacts I was collecting. As I learned more about research methodology and came to understand research design, I formalized my approach into a qualitative case study supported by quantitative elements. It is important to remember, however, that I had already collected large amounts of data from several courses, and, thus, my research questions came both before and after the formalizing of my research methods.

Prior to the formal dissertation work, my initial research was driven by a myriad of influences and reactions. While reading my first SIUC students' essays and course evaluations, I was impressed by their solid understanding of audience and purpose and the need to compose clearly. Also interesting was the current research on service-learning: I learned that the design of projects could impact whether students increase their empathy and understanding of community, and I learned that asking students to do service could backfire; students sometimes develop rigid views of themselves as serving an "other," a clientele with whom they share little in common. I found myself at many crossroads, including how to integrate theories of service when my main purpose was to explore writing.

Another pivotal insight came through the realization that nearly every service-learning project I studied had been arranged between an instructor and a nonprofit agency. In my classes, I had privileged student ownership: my students selected their issues, their peer work groups, and their nonprofit agencies; then, they negotiated projects with the agencies. Even though I sometimes would offer suggestions of agencies based on the students' expressed interest areas, I always was their guide more than their director. The realization that allowing for student

decision-making was unusual, and I guessed potentially powerful, made me interested in studying that theme.

### **Research Questions**

Unlike many who experience their research as they conduct it, I had collected data from previous courses and therefore had some expectations which helped guide my method. Armed with initial data collection and scholarly research, I developed these research questions:

- What do the students indicate they have learned?
- What language do they use to describe what they learned?
- How does their language compare to the language used to describe pedagogical goals?
- Do students come out of service-learning with a sense of the importance of audience and with the skills to adjust to audience?
- Do students come out of service-learning with a sense of the importance of purpose and the tools to adapt their writing accordingly?
- What learning is affected by the additional factor of a non-profit organization?
- What learning is affected by the volunteering aspect of the project?
- What learning arises out of places of confusion?
- What learning arises out of places of decision?

The remainder of this chapter details the study artifacts and my methodology, explaining how I made decisions about collecting, sorting, and categorizing materials.

### **Study Context: The University, the Course, the Students**

I collected student materials from courses I taught between 2000 and 2010: Composition I, Composition II, Transitional Composition, Creative Writing, and Technical Writing. In order



to narrow this dissertation study, I focused on English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing, for several reasons. I taught English 291 after having used service-learning for three years, refining the model to increase the amount of reflection and accountability. Plus, I taught only two sections of English 291, during back-to-back semesters, so that the assignment criteria were identical across both sections. There was a unique element to my English 291 courses, additionally, which I thought might further illuminate my research question regarding decision-making.

During all of my courses, students brainstormed issues of interest, selected groups accordingly, and designed their own projects. During all but my second section of English 291, the student groups additionally selected agencies to work with. For my second section of English 291, however, I predetermined the agency—aside from that element, the students made all the project decisions. Artifacts collected for my study, I hoped, should reflect this difference in decision-making between the two semesters.

My English 291 students in both semesters were second, third, and fourth-year students, majoring in a variety of disciplines, and they entered the course with a diverse understanding of writing. Technical Writing students tend to be more mature than English Composition students, both in age and in writing preparation, since students must have completed the first-year writing sequence before enrolling in English 291. Another difference is that, while Composition is required, Technical Writing is not required for students of all majors, and for others it is one of two options for fulfilling an upper-level writing requirement. SIUC is a public university with a student population of 20,000. While the Carbondale campus draws students from around the country and the world, most are residents of Illinois; the ethnic minority enrollment is 25 percent; and 46 percent of students are women (“About SIU”).

The English Department's course description for English 291 provides a clear conception of the kinds of writing students should be assigned:

This course provides students with a greater awareness of the demands of professional literacy. Students will assess rhetorical situations (context, purpose, audience and subject matter) that are typical of nonacademic settings, while fostering skills that are essential for academic literacy. Emphasis will be placed on writing as a process with particular focus on making the transition from academic to work world writing tasks: recursive writing, using group conflict for invention, synthesizing research and feedback, and confronting issues of authorship. (Department)

I used the departmental language in my course description and added to it the following context for service-learning:

Through service-learning, you apply your work to a real-life cultural/social setting. You and your small group of students will select a technical-writing project that suits your interests; the options are limitless. Your writing will draw upon your research and volunteer work. As you learn about the agency and issues and how to express your ideas through writing, the community as a whole will end up benefiting. (Appendix B)

Each group worked on several tasks which culminated in a Project Portfolio of their individual and collaborative work: they earned individual grades for Reflective Logs, Reflection Essays, research notes, 15 hours of service, and collaborative effort; they earned group grades for Proposals, Closing Memos, and Final Presentations (Appendices B and C). I developed this sequence of assignments to match the university's goals and requirements for the course, which call for five assignments, each involving invention, drafting, revising, and editing; in-class assignments, including assessing rhetorical situations and responding to readings; a collaborative project; and a final examination. The student work should reach toward the following pedagogical goals:

In English 291, students will:

- Continue with the development of strategies for assessing and integrating the demands of context, purpose, audience, and subject matter;
- Write documents that address a variety of audiences;

- Adapt form, style, and tone to enhance readability and credibility;
- Develop strategies for assertive and effective collaboration;
- Analyze and synthesize research from various sources and of different genres;
- Revise by synthesizing different levels and sources of feedback;
- Develop tools for organization and readability such as visual display;
- Reinforce usage of Edited American English. (Department)

### **Data Collection**

I collected two major kinds of data that provided evidence of my students' experiences with service-learning: the products of English 291, particularly the students' Proposals and Closing Memos, provided material through which students revealed their writing, and their reflections—through Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays, plus anonymous responses to surveys and course evaluations—offered perspectives about their engagement with writing, service, and collaborators.

The university's Human Subjects Office approved my application as a Category I research project, which is the one of least impact to participants. I drafted a procedure to explain my research to students and let them decide whether to participate, making sure they realized that the decision would not impact their grades. At the beginning of each course, each student received a consent form and cover letter:

This project is set up to explore how a service-learning curriculum affects or does not affect the way students' writing develops, with particular attention to aspects that make service-learning productive or unproductive from the perspective of student writers. Should you agree to participate, the researcher will collect copies of your work for this class and ask you to complete a questionnaire at the end of the quarter. (Appendix D)

The questionnaires contained six questions regarding the course design, the projects, working with community partners, and working with peer students (Appendix E). Although each question was created with a particular rationale in mind, all were open-ended and asked for written responses.

**Table 3.1: Survey Questions**

	<i>Survey question</i>	<i>Rationale for asking this question</i>
1	What was the most enjoyable or rewarding part of this project, and why?	By not restricting this question to any particular category, it allowed students to comment about all aspects of their projects, including their writing, decision-making, and collaborations with community partners and with each other.
2	What was the most frustrating or otherwise bad part, and why?	Like the first question, this question allowed students to comment on all aspects of their projects that were most important to them.
3	How did working with a community agency affect your writing or how you planned your writing?	This question was intended to draw out student comments regarding rhetoric and the writing process.
4	What, if anything, did you learn about technical writing, or writing in general, this semester?	This prompted students to reflect upon their writing, particularly in relation to the curricular goals of the course and how the students might transfer their learning to future situations.
5	In what ways did you expand upon writing skills you already had?	This asked students to consider what they learned about writing in a more general sense and how their writing skills progressed from beginning to end of term.
6	What should I change if I teach this again?	This question allowed for comments that did not fit any of the categories I had preconceived.

During the last week of the semester, I left the room while a proctor administered these anonymous surveys to the students who had agreed to participate; I learned later that all of them had, which made it possible for me to analyze all elements of their group projects for this research. There were 20 students in my spring 2003 section of English 291 course and 18 in the fall, providing 38 of each of the individually written artifacts: Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays. The students produced their projects in small groups, which ranged from two to five students and typically numbered three. There were six groups in the spring and five in the fall, providing 11 of each group artifact: Proposals and Closing Memos. Additionally, some but not all students wrote comments in course evaluations, and they all completed surveys.

**Table 3.2: Written Artifacts from Student Projects**

<i>Artifact</i>	<i>Individual or group</i>	<i>Description</i>
Proposal	group	The students negotiated this contract with the agency to explain what the students will do, why, how, and when, as well as what they request of the agency in order to help them fulfill their goals
Reflective Log	individual	Each student kept note of what s/he was doing and why, and what s/he and the rest of the student's small group planned to do next.
Project	group	Students created and gave the agency various types of professional documents, such as brochures, web site articles, and research summaries, as promised in the Proposals.
Closing Memo	group	The students explained to the agency what they did, why, and how, made recommendations for future projects, and expressed appreciation for the agency's contributions and assistance.
Reflection Essay	individual	Each student analyzed a particular aspect of the project, such as collaboration, service, or the purpose of the project writing.
Surveys & Course Evaluations	individual and anonymous	Students could comment on the course and their learning and share recommendations for future service-learning writing courses.

These artifacts offered several perspectives on what the students learned from their experiences.

Keeping in mind that I wanted to provide readers with evidence of what actually happened in my service-learning courses, I knew that I had to take a rigorous and systematic look at the data.

### **Data Analysis**

These artifacts provide an opportunity for readers to hear directly from the students; however, the quantity and raw nature of the materials caused their analysis to be complicated. I began by determining which artifacts yielded useful data. The surveys and course evaluations contained pertinent comments, as did the following documents in the students' project portfolios: Proposals, Reflective Logs, Closing Memos, and Reflection Essays. However, the students' compilation of raw research materials, which filled much of the project portfolios, did not reveal evidence of the students' writing process or reflection. Likewise, the project documents themselves did not reveal why or how the students had created the materials.

Once I had selected the appropriate artifacts, I employed a multi-phase method of data-crunching and systematic analysis. The goal was to shine light on any type of writing progress, as well as perceived growth in understanding and connecting with the community. I created a database of the students' quotes, using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Before building the database, I reviewed the student projects and noticed four broad categories of comments: audience and how students considered audience when expressing their ideas; purpose and how the students' purposes drove their decision-making; confusion, difficulty, and how students worked through obstacles; and research and learning. I created spreadsheets with columns for each of these four categories and placed corresponding quotes from the students' materials in the columns. Using this method, I created one spreadsheet for each type of artifact—Proposal, Reflective Log, Closing Memo, Reflection Essay, and Surveys and Course Evaluations—with the same four columns for each. Altogether, the spreadsheets total 71 pages.

**Table 3.3: Screenshot from the Database**

Fall 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Closing Memos

Pseudonyms & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision - - Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Caila, Cay -- website	We are very thankful for the opportunity to work with the center throughout the semester. We	The web site introduces the new RSO, Beautify Southern Illinois Student Alliance. It has all the	In the planning process of our project, we realized that it would take too much time to re-	Being volunteers on the clean-up days allowed us to speak firsthand about each day, the details, and

I then reviewed the student comments in the spreadsheets, and several more specific themes became apparent: student decision-making; audience and purpose; collaboration; written expression; professionalism and motivation; service; and the instructor's role. In order to gauge

the importance of these themes, I tabulated how frequently each theme appeared in the spreadsheets, and I created charts of the numerical results, which are presented in the next chapter of this dissertation. The quantitative data served mostly to illustrate which themes seemed most important to students and therefore most worthy of study. In this way, the quantitative data supported the qualitative results. Here are examples of students' quotes that fell under each of the themes:

- Students wrote at great length about their decision-making throughout the projects. They described how they brainstormed in order to plan and why they made the choices they did, for instance: “We went with the most work that we thought we were going to realistically be able to accomplish.”
- Regarding audience and purpose, students sometimes used those exact terms and sometimes referred to the rhetorical tenets indirectly, often suggesting the importance of ethos at the same time. One student talked about trying “to write in ways that the agency would desire.” Students' discussions of purpose included their project goals, many of which reached into the future, beyond the semester.
- Students wrote about how they collaborated with the nonprofit agencies and also worked within their peer student groups. Many of their reflections dealt with communication issues. One student described requesting a follow-up meeting with an agency director in order to “provide for comfortable communication between parties.”
- Regarding written expression, students wrote about the practicalities of putting together their documents and which group members wrote which sections. They also discussed what they learned about professional writing: “I now know how to write up proposals and memos,” and, “[W]e had many corrections to make.”

- Considerations of service appear throughout the students' work. The students reveal how seriously they took their work in the community. They write, for example, about "becoming a part of an organization dedicated to improving . . . ," and about how they learned "how each individual person can contribute."
- The word "professionalism" appears often in the students' comments. References to this theme included discussions of the students' motivations to be precise and pay attention to detail.
- The students did not mention the instructor often in their writings. When they did, it tended to be references to my approval of their ideas, or, regarding writing, my request for revisions. There also were generalized comments about the course, such as this one: "[B]y the end of the class you take away from it way more than anyone would have ever thought for a class called English 291."

Recording and categorizing the student comments in both qualitative and quantitative ways helped me understand what the students thought they were learning. The next chapter of this dissertation offers the resulting data: the frequency of students' references to each of the themes and the content of their references.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

This chapter allows readers to see the origins of the dissertation data as well as how the data was collected and analyzed. I created spreadsheets to input my students' written comments during two sections of English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing. While studying the spreadsheets, I realized that the comments fell within certain themes: decision-making; audience and purpose; written expression; professionalism and motivation; service; the role of the instructor; and collaboration among peer students, with nonprofit agency personnel, and with others in the wider community. I then extracted data about each of these themes in the form of both quotations and frequency of reference, with a focus on letting the students speak for themselves.

To provide readers a concrete foundation for considering the students' comments, I begin by describing the service-learning projects during my two sections of English 291, in the spring and fall of 2003.

#### **Student Project Descriptions**

During the spring, we spent the first two weeks of the semester talking about best practices for teamwork and brainstorming which social issues the students might be interested in exploring. Students formed peer groups based on their interests. Each group's first charge was to find a nonprofit agency that fit their interest area and would be willing to work with them; as necessary, I offered lists or suggestions of agencies they might consider. Then, each group of students negotiated project details with their chosen agency, making sure the students would be producing something which would be of value to the agency and also fit the course outcomes.

**Table 4.1: Spring Student Groups and Projects**

Group Members*	Nonprofit Agency	Project
Opal, Jack, and Pete	Poshard Foundation for Abused Children	researched child abuse and helped build a shelter in Cairo, Ill.; used scholarly and on-site research to produce a binder of information the foundation could present to potential donors
Eva and Dahl	Abundant Health Resource Clinic	marketed a fund-raiser via letters to the editor and fliers the students created and posted around town; volunteered before, during, and after the event
Abe, Jan, Cira, and Fay	Humane Society of Southern Illinois	ran a publicity campaign, including fliers and advertisements, to encourage adoptions; the students ended up paying to place their ad in the Daily Egyptian themselves—someone responded and adopted a dog
Tom, Sara, Max, and Ana	Humane Society of Southern Illinois	created new web material; the students had planned to redesign the web site as well, but that part of the project proved problematic
Jaime, Art, Ann, and Bob	The Science Center	updated the Science Center's brochures and volunteered during center events
Tod, Seth, and Lila	SIUC's Center for Environmental Health and Safety, or CEHS	proposed writing a grant which CEHS needed, but the students realized that would take more time than they had available; instead, they did research and wrote a report of basic information that center could use in grant applications

\*The students' names are pseudonyms.

As explained in Chapter 3, the two semesters differed in the choice of nonprofit organization: in the spring, students selected agencies to work with; during the fall, I chose the agency. Aside from that, the rest of the decisions remained in the hands of the students both semesters: they all determined their interest areas and peer groups, and they all negotiated their projects with the agency.

Because CEHS Executive Director Paul Restivo and his staff had been model collaborators with a group of my spring students, I met with Restivo over the summer to propose an experiment: all my fall students would work with him and his center. Restivo was eager to try it; he enjoys collaborating with students and encouraging their leadership potential.

During the initial, brainstorming days of fall, Restivo explained to my students his Center’s five specialty areas of environmental service, around which the students could determine their interest areas, form groups, and design projects. But the entire class made a collaborative choice right at the beginning: the students decided they would prefer to work together on one whole-class project—litter cleanup—in order to have a larger impact. I agreed but challenged them to come up with distinct responsibilities for several small groups and to divide themselves into groups based upon their interests in completing those particular responsibilities. They did.

**Table 4.2: Fall Student Groups and Projects**

Group Members*	Responsibility	Project
Kim, May, and Mel	cleanup campaigns in Murphysboro and the Lake Kinkaid Spillway	organized and ran cleanups; focused on getting other students involved; gave Beautify Southern Illinois a final report of what they did, including suggestions for future student cleanups
Jen, Lyn, and Sue	cleanup campaigns in Carterville	organized and ran cleanups; focused on trying to involve people who live in Carterville, which was less than successful; gave the city a binder of information about what the students did and suggestions for how cleanups could be run
Ned, Juan, Jeb, and Ted	fund-raising	wrote letters to businesses, created fliers, and walked door-to-door seeking donations; gave local communities reports about what the students did and learned about fund-raising in the process
Yara, Jabr, Ed, Deb, Cap, and Jag	publicity	to publicize the three cleanups and awareness about littering in general, created brochures, wrote letters to the editor, and created a display for Morris Library; split into two groups of three in order to work more effectively
Caila and Cay	web site	wanted to help CEHS redesign its web site for Beautify Southern Illinois but realized this was too large a project for one semester; instead, the students shared ideas with a CEHS staff

		member and produced material for the web site, including articles about the three cleanups <sup>10</sup>
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\*The students' names are pseudonyms.

The projects offered students opportunities to write in various formats, including materials they produced as a group for the nonprofit agency and reflective materials they wrote individually. In order to collect and catalogue the students' comments within these materials, I used Excel spreadsheets to create databases.

### **Databases**

The databases are organized according to semester—spring and fall—and type of artifact: Proposals, Closing Memos, Reflection Essays, Reflective Logs, and Anonymous Surveys and Course Evaluations.<sup>11</sup> This organization resulted in 10 spreadsheets, of varying sizes depending upon the amount of student writing in each artifact: the longest spreadsheets were those involving Reflective Logs, because students entered progress notes and reflections into their logs throughout the semester. Altogether, the databases total 71 pages.

I catalogued every student comment that spoke to my research questions. Early in the process, I realized that the comments fell within four overarching categories, which I consequently used as database column headings: expression of ideas—audience, choice; places of decision—purpose, choice; places of confusion or difficulty; and more places of learning, research. These categories helped me to be rigorous and systematic in organizing the student comments within the artifacts. Following are explanations of each type of artifact, accompanied by screenshots to give readers a sense of the raw data.

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<sup>10</sup> Two of the students' articles are still publicly accessible on the CEHS web site; I have included one of them as Appendix F of this dissertation.

<sup>11</sup> The documents are described in Chapter 3, page 79.

## **Proposals**

The two databases for fall and spring student comments in Proposals totaled 11 pages. The student groups had written their Proposals after negotiating project details with the nonprofit agencies, and the Proposals were signed by the students and agency directors before the students began their project work. The Proposals reveal the students' promises to the agencies and the students' rationales behind their decisions.

Table 4.3: Screenshot of a Page from the Spring Proposals Database

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Proposals

Pseudonyms & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision - - Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Jaime, Art, Ann, Bob -- The Science Center	Objectives: After talking with you, we feel that the following contributions can be made: 1. To introduce the museum's programs in a way that encourages families and teachers to visit. 2. To help promote upcoming events through the brochures. 3. To integrate new information and graphics into the brochure. 4. To assist in events through volunteer work. 5. To create four different brochures for upcoming events. ... Research: We	Hopefully, we will be able to improve local awareness and participation in your events. ... Background: We have seen some of your brochures and promotional material and believe them to be a little outdated. You have events coming up in the near future that need to be promoted as well. Also, we believe that you would like to increase support for your events and The Science Center in general. ... Final Product: 1. An updated Outreach Brochure. 2. A Summer Programs	Science Center Contributions: We need input for what information should be included in the brochure. We'd also like to know the design preferences that you have in mind for them and how you would like the information displayed. We will also require feedback from our brochure drafts that we submit to you. Importantly, we will require good communication with the development of the project.	Research: Also, we will look through previous brochures to gain a feel of how they were done.

Table 4.4: Screenshot of a Page from the Fall Proposals Database

Fall 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Proposals

Pseudonyms & project	Expression of Ideas -- <i>Audience, Choice</i>	Places of Decision - - <i>Purpose, Choice</i>	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Caila, Cay -- website design group	Final Product: We hope to achieve these objectives by creating a page that has the following features: 1. A new logo representing the Clean-up Campaign will be designed by the advertising group and be presented on the new page by our group. 2. A new color scheme will be used to match that of the newly designed logo. 3. The new site will have photographs, designs, and other images that will make the site look more inviting. 4. There will be a new home page	We know how important it is to you to get more students interested and involved in keeping Carbondale and other surrounding communities clean. Background: We understand that you want the page updated so that it will draw the attention of more students. We know that many people do not visit the site because it's not interesting and doesn't catch the attention of the student body. We have planned to make this site more appealing to	User testing: Various design ideas are to be presented as paper copies for judgment by a selected group of fellow students. Questions pertaining to how well each design appeals to the students' interests and what they would expect to find on the site through the links are necessary for completion of the web page. A questionnaire will be created for the user test. Through this method, we can learn how to expand the site's appeal and	Research: The research for our project is a vital part because this is how we will learn about the program that we will be using for our web page. Our research will include speaking with Tiffany Heil, who is the student worker at the Center. She will then tell us who is in charge of the site and who will be working on the site with us. From there we will learn to use Front Page 2000, which is the program that was used to create the site and is used when updating it. Scheduled

### **Closing Memos**

The two databases for fall and spring student comments in Closing Memos totaled eight pages. As with the Proposals, the Closing Memos are addressed to the nonprofit agencies. While the Proposal launched the project, the Closing Memo marked its culmination. Both documents were written collaboratively within student groups. In Closing Memos, the groups' comments reveal what the students believed they accomplished and why they did exactly what they did throughout the semester.



**Table 4.5: Screenshot of a Page from the Spring Closing Memos Database**

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Closing Memos

Pseudonyms & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision - - Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Todd, Seth, Lila - Center for Environmental Health and Safety	While working with the Cleanup Southern Illinois Campaign our group's objective was to create a grant template that the organization could use to try to obtain financial resources. The small business template explains to potential donors how the campaign got started, what it does, who gets involved, and how people can contribute.	Hopefully our small template will be able to heighten awareness, but most importantly prompt donations to further the accomplishments of the Cleanup Southern Illinois Campaign.		We would like to thank you very much for all of the help and support that both Paul and Jessica provided. From factual, concrete information to the hopes and aspirations of the expansion of the grassroots campaign, all of the information gathered from the Center for Environmental Health and Safety has been very helpful. The campaign was defined clearly from early on in that it was more than a "war on litter" but rather a

Table 4.6: Screenshot of a Page from the Fall Closing Memos Database

Fall 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Closing Memos

Pseudonyms & project	Expression of Ideas -- <i>Audience, Choice</i>	Places of Decision - - <i>Purpose, Choice</i>	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Caila, Cay -- website	We are very thankful for the opportunity to work with the center throughout the semester. We hope that the time, effort, and results that came from our project can be of assistance to the center and student alliance for the present and the future. If there are any questions or comments, please feel free to give us your feedback on your convenience.	The web site introduces the new RSO, Beautify Southern Illinois Student Alliance. It has all the information needed in understanding the purpose of the alliance, the goals, mission, and ideas behind the student organization. It also provides information pertaining to members and how to become a member. ... The second part of our project was writing articles for the Beautify Southern Illinois Campaign. This part of our project served to	In the planning process of our project, we realized that it would take too much time to re-design the web site. As an alternative, we created a new website for the new registered student organization, Beautify Southern Illinois Students Alliance. In order to be sure that we were doing enough technical writing activities for the course, we also decided to assist Tiffany Heil in writing articles for the Clean-up Campaign, as well	Being volunteers on the clean-up days allowed us to speak firsthand about each day, the details, and outcome fo the activity. ... Throughout the semester we have learned a lot about service learning, technical writing, and teamwork. The service-learning broadened our learning experience to one that is beyond the boundaries of a typical classroom and into a hands on learning experience. Our group learned that planning and research is very

### **Reflection Essays**

The two databases for fall and spring comments in Reflection Essays totaled 23 pages. These essays, unlike the student groups' Proposals and Closing Memos, were individual pieces of writing and were not shared with the nonprofit agency. The target audience was the instructor and peer student collaborators. For these essays, which came at the end of the semester, students reflected upon project elements of their choice. Therefore, the comments reveal what the students felt most worthy of reflection, as well as their thought processes regarding a myriad of project elements.

Table 4.7: Screenshot of a Page from the Spring Reflection Essays Database

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflection Essays

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision -- Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Art -- Science Center	I knew I had to keep at it and make the best brochure I could with the means I had. ... The flyer would not just be a grade and then tossed into the waste bin, but the flyer would actually be put into use by The Science Center as their general information flyer. I was determined to develop a brochure that would please Pam.	Most other groups had four members; there, I was choosing to work with The Science Center group to help lighten the load of work. ... Secondly, with me being a chemistry major and the word science involved, I felt as though I could be more interested in carrying out a project involving The Science Center. ... Taking the interview knowledge of what Pam would like from our technical writing portion of the project, the group was then able to decide exactly what we would	Taking all of the information and combining it in a presentable manner without losing credibility was a challenging task. Obtaining the content of the brochure was not nearly as difficult as the actual arrangement and presentation. ... By the time I had started making the brochure and noted the deadline for the project I panicked. The brochure development went so slowly in the beginning, between research, information verification, and learning Microsoft	I took my part of the project seriously and therefore I feel that I have gained a good deal from this class. The reaction Pam gave me when she saw the final product was more satisfying for me than the thanks I received at the end of the birthday party. Most anyone could run the silly putty booth or carry a table, but the general information brochure took a lot more time, energy, and commitment. ... I feel a sense of accomplishment knowing that someone might go to The Science Center based on the

**Table 4.8: Screenshot of a Page from the Fall Reflection Essays Database**

Fall 2003, English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflection Essays

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision -- Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Jabr -- ads	<p>With being the advertising group we had to interact with all of the groups in the class and see what they needed from us or what some of them did without us. ... We also worked through Monica to get shirts made that her mom donated for the first clean-up that we designed and made ourselves. We worked alongside the fundraising group and got all the information we needed for the shirt. Each business that donated got its emblem on the back of the shirt.</p>	<p>Throughout the semester we did a lot of projects like creating the flyers that we posted all over campus and Carterville and Murphysboro. Some of our group members took time to send information to radio stations and newspapers to get publicity for the clean-ups and the Beautify Southern Illinois Campaign. The group split up and one section set up a display in the library and the others section set up an information table in the student center to help stop littering</p>	<p>There were actually some projects that we did not get done completely like we wanted to. We wanted to change the design of the symbol for the Beautify Southern Illinois Campaign but only got a few ideas that Tiffany can decide on if she wants to change it. We also had to come up with a creation for a public service announcement for Zimmer radio group and we created one and Brian told us what to change and we did but we won't be able to be there</p>	

### **Reflective Logs**

The two databases for fall and spring comments in Reflective Logs totaled 23 pages as well. Students entered information and observations into their individual logs during every class meeting and as necessary outside of class. Each student recorded what s/he and his/her small group was doing at the time, plus analysis of project progress. As with the Reflection Essays, these individual Reflective Logs were read by the instructor and the students' small-group members, and the students' comments reveal their thought processes about many aspects of their projects. Because these logs provide an abundance of material for my study, I am including here two pages from each of the fall and spring databases for Reflective Logs.

**Table 4.9: Screenshot of a Page from the Spring Reflective Logs Database**

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflective Logs

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- <i>Audience, Choice</i>	Places of Decision - - <i>Purpose, Choice</i>	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Fay -- 1st Humane Society group, ad	Abe, Jan, and I met and designed a really cool brochure for the shelter. It was an informational packet on the importance of spaying or neutering your pet. We added animations and quotes, as well as essential spay/neuter information. We were very pleased with the end product.		Our group completed the first draft proposal, the interview notes, and the second draft proposal. Andrew typed the first draft proposal, then went to the shelter on Thursday and interviewed Karen Mullins. Me, Cat, and Jan took both the interview notes and the 1st proposal and filled in the blanks on the first draft. This included clearly stating objectives, making a schedule of events, and deciding what exactly we were going to do for the Humane Society.	Abe went to the Humane Society and turned in what we had done so far. They were very pleased with the amount of work our group had done for them and were happy to tell Andrew that after almost a year of being there, the Pet of the Week (Max) got adopted the day our ad went out!!! So now I feel great because our project has helped at least one pet live a happier life.

Table 4.10: Screenshot of a Second Page from the Spring Reflective Logs Database

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflective Logs

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- <i>Audience, Choice</i>	Places of Decision - - <i>Purpose, Choice</i>	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Pete -- Poshard Foundati on	We made initial contact with Mrs. Graves at the Poshard Foundation. The meeting was held in her office at JALC along with Opal & Jack attending. We informally discussed some ideas for the project. She seemed to be thinking along the same lines as us and described the need for an information packet suitable for presentation to prospective donors to the foundation. ... I delivered the proposal to Mrs. Graves. She	Our team discussed some of the research information that we have been looking at. We agreed to continue gathering information about child abuse in the region in preparation for the project. On Wednesday we will compare our findings and decide on a strategy for compiling our different ideas into the document. ... Our team has decided that we will each write four or five paragraphs of fifty to one hundred words	Our team discussed an impromptu plan for gaining some information about the Poshard Foundation. We agreed to jot down some questions that we have for Mrs. Graves. Next meeting we will condense the list of questions and present them to Mrs. Graves prior to our formal interview. ... Our team began preparing for writing our first draft proposal .... We deemed it necessary to meet with her before writing the proposal. ... We are	We had an official interview with Mrs. Graves ... a very good discussion concerning our project. She answered the questions we had prepared for her in advance and provided us with a brief synopsis of the foundation's history in writing. She also addressed several impromptu questions I had concerning the political and religious affiliations of the foundation. ... As the semester and this project have progressed I find myself viewing the project from a new perspective. I am no longer concerned solely with the grade.



**Table 4.11: Screenshot of a Page from the Fall Reflective Logs Database**

Fall 2003, English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflective Logs

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- <i>Audience, Choice</i>	Places of Decision - - <i>Purpose, Choice</i>	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Cap -- advertising	In class we decided on the flyer and made an appointment to meet at the Center to discuss our flyers with Paul. We decided on two flyers, but to take to the Center for Paul's review. We met (the advertising committee) at the Center to show Paul our Ads. We met at the Center and discussed our Ads with Paul. He gave suggestions and we made a few corrections and then we printed copies to be distributed.	We went to the Center to discuss the needs of the organization. This was a great opportunity to see what the Center really needed and what we as a class could do to help. ... We decided in class that myself, Yara, and Jabr were assigned to produce some flyers for the clean up in Carterville as well so Murphysboro (spillway). This was a good opportunity for us to show our creative skills as well as decision making skills to make a mature decision on which		We also talked about what types of materials were available for our use within the Center, and Southern Illinois Campus. This was especially helpful to know what type of material is available to assist in the great projects for the Center.

**Table 4.12: Screenshot of a Second Page from the Fall Reflective Logs Database**

Fall 2003, English 291, Technical Writing  
Reflective Logs

Pseudonym & project	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision - - Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
Juan -- fundraising	9/8/03: Business Letter. I believe the business letter was very helpful because it allowed the businesses to see what our intentions are and whom they could contact. ... 9/19/03: Status Memo to Paul. The memo was a good tool to keep Paul informed of our groups progress. ... 10/6/03: Wrote Progress Report to Paul. Was very useful in showing Paul our groups plans for the future. 10/8/03: Started Writing Business Thank You Letters. I believe the thank you	8/22-9/2/03: Brainstormed. Was a great way to decide how to raise funds for the clean up. ... 9/9/03: Proposal. The proposal was a great way to show the concerns of the group and allowed us to show how we planned on raising funds for the group.	9/2/03: Memo Proposal. The memo took a very long time to do but was essential to show the plans and concerns of our group.	8/24/03: Searched the CEHS website. I learned a lot of beneficial information about the centers activities and purposes. ... 8/27/03: CEHS Observation. Learned where the center is located and learned about the many resources that it has available for use. ... 9/4/03: Website Research. I felt that the website research gave us very good guidelines for fundraising.

### **Anonymous Surveys and Course Evaluations**

The final type of artifacts I catalogued were my students' anonymous comments on surveys and course evaluations, which I combined on the same spreadsheets because the comments on course evaluations were few in number. Altogether, these comments across both semesters filled six spreadsheets. The comments illustrate what the students believed they had learned. I gave each survey a number, which appears in the first column. The numbers sprinkled throughout the other four columns refer to the survey questions the students were answering.

**Table 4.13: Screenshot of a Page from the Spring Surveys Database**

Spring 2003 English 291, Technical Writing  
Anonymous Surveys Course Evaluations

#	-- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision -- Purpose, Choice	Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
3	3) We had to write to the agency's target audience.			4) I learned how to write grants. This will be very useful to me. 5) how to write for someone else.
4	3) It was easier to write because we used the whole semester to work just with the agency. Everything was fresh in my mind, and the words just seemed to flow whenever I wrote about it.			4) how a professional proposal is set up.
6	3) It made me gear my writing toward the feelings of my group members and also our agency.			4) how to do proposals and memos.
7	3) It made me think more of audience and how my writing would affect them.			4) that I'm going to need it in business. 5) I brainstormed more.
8		3) It made me realize it had to be a bit more professional than my normal writing is.	2) Worrying that I might not have enough time to get my brochures done. ... 1) our final projects accepted by them.	4) I learned how to write proposals. 5) I learned how things could be phrased better and not be repetitious.

Table 4.14: Screenshot of a Page from the Fall Surveys Database

Fall 2003, English 291, Technical Writing  
Anonymous Surveys and Course Evaluations (ce)

#	Expression of Ideas -- Audience, Choice	Places of Decision - - Purpose, Choice	Places of Confusion or Difficulty	More Places of Learning, Research
	1) being able to apply technical writing to an actual agency project	3) more structure and accuracy 4) how to structure toward a company/agency		5) application, application, application
2				3) I think it helped on a professional level. I now know how to write up proposals and memos. 4) That I can use it every day.
3			3) It made me take it more seriously. Instead of wondering why I was writing, I actually had a realistic goal.	4) memo format, proposal format, writing is never perfect
4		3) It made me more cautious and aware of what I wanted to say and what I wanted others to read.		
5				3) increased my professionalism 4) Technical writing is very important in any career.
6		3) I wanted it to look and sound professional. I took more time on		4) It really is not as difficult or tedious as I thought. The person receiving

With the students' comments typed into databases, I began to analyze the data. I realized that the comments fell within these themes: decision-making; audience and purpose; written expression; professionalism and motivation; service; the role of the instructor; and collaboration among peer students, with nonprofit agency personnel, and with others in the wider community.

For the purposes of analysis, I grouped the rhetorical themes of purpose and audience together because the students often wrote in terms of addressing audience and purpose simultaneously. Likewise, I put all references to collaboration under one heading because the students often intertwined their discussions of working with peers and working with community partners.

### **Common Themes**

I coded the databases for references to the common themes and then tallied the students' references to each theme. The greater the frequency of student references, the more likely that students had operated out of an understanding of that theme; in this way, the quantifiable data helped focus the qualitative analysis.

The quantitative data is presented in its entirety here, whereas the students' voices are the focus of Chapter 5. For the remainder of this chapter, I show readers the numerical tabulations for references to each of the themes: I begin each discussion with a chart illustrating how many student comments about that theme appeared in each artifact, by semester; I then briefly describe the phrasing that students used to discuss that particular theme, reserving for Chapter 5 analysis of the implications of the students' comments. I present the themes in the order of frequency of student comments. Because students referenced their decision-making process the most often, I begin with that theme.

**Table 4.15: References to Student Decision-Making**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	30	8	39	67	1	1	146
Fall	29	25	51	27	0	0	132
<i>total</i>	59	33	90	94	1	1	278

In the artifacts across both semesters, students wrote frequently about their decisions, the process of making those decisions, and what caused their decisions to be necessary. They also wrote about the results of their choices. The students' comments reflect the sometimes difficult circumstances which necessitated further decisions as projects progressed; as the students encountered obstacles, they brainstormed anew, adjusted their project decisions, and continued to try. At 278 references, this was the theme that arose most often throughout the artifacts.

Student references to their decisions were more numerous spring semester than fall, but only slightly so. The biggest difference between the artifacts of the two terms was in where the references to decision-making appeared. In the spring, students tended to discuss their decisions within their individual Reflection Essays, whose audience was me and their peer group members, but not the nonprofit agency. This could mean the spring students viewed their decisions primarily as individual or peer-group choices and that they viewed their decisions important enough to reflect upon at length. In the fall, students tended to write about decisions frequently in their group Closing Memos, whose primary audience was CEHS. This could be a result of their close working relationship with CEHS.

The students' decision-making affected every aspect of their work, from which group they would join to how they would complete specific aspects of their projects. In order to make these choices, the students took into consideration the rhetorical tenets of purpose and audience.

**Table 4.16: References to Purpose**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	48	7	13	43	0 & 4*	0 & 1	116
Fall	36	40	32	38	0 & 8	0 & 2	156
<i>total</i>	84	47	45	81	12	3	272

**Table 4.17: References to Audience**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	18	5	5	26	6 & 4*	0 & 1	65
Fall	25	31	35	38	4 & 7	0 & 1	141
<i>total</i>	43	36	40	64	21	2	206

\*The two numbers distinguish between direct & indirect references.

More often than not, the students reflected upon audience and purpose simultaneously. Within my students' writings, there are instances in which only purpose or audience is referenced: most of these involve purpose; only rarely is audience mentioned without a reference to purpose. It could be argued that discussions of purpose imply discussions of audience, as illustrated by James L. Kinneavy's description of purpose as "the effect that the discourse is oriented to achieve in the average listener or reader for whom it is intended" (129). Purpose was the theme that emerged second-most frequently in the students' artifacts, preceded only slightly by decision-making. There were 272 references to purpose, compared with 278 references to decision-making. Audience per se appeared 206 times throughout the students' writing, which put this rhetorical tenet toward the bottom of the frequency ladder of themes that my students referenced.

In order to explore whether the students were aware of audience and purpose—and also whether they realized that they had learned about these tenets—I counted separately their direct



and indirect references to “purpose” and “audience” in surveys and course evaluations. Within these two anonymous artifacts, all of the students’ references to purpose were indirect; that is, the students did not write the word “purpose” on their surveys or evaluations. They did mention approximate words, such as “goals,” “effects,” and “outcomes,” plus phrases that reveal an understanding of the importance of writing with purpose, such as these: “wanted to have a long-term effect ...,” “in the interest of ...,” “in order to raise awareness of ...,” and “To improve the natural environment ...” I interpreted these comments to mean that the students were considering purpose, even if they did not use that precise term.

By contrast, direct references to “audience” do appear in the anonymous surveys, as though the students realized they had learned about this rhetorical tenet and saw this learning as a benefit to a course grounded in practical projects. One student, for instance, wrote this: “I learned to write for an audience. Analytical writing is writing for a teacher only.” Some of the students’ references to audience in their surveys and evaluations were indirect, by, for instance, calling attention to “the person receiving the memo” or “the reader.” One student wrote about having to “tailor my writing to the customer.”

Considerations of audience appear most frequently in the students’ end-of-term Reflection Essays, indicating, perhaps, that their awareness of audience grew as the semester progressed. In their individual essays, many students reflected upon how they had tailored their writing to attract the attention of readers; other students wrote of how they had focused on questions of audience in order to resolve project difficulties.

References to both audience and purpose were significantly more frequent in the fall artifacts than the spring: fall students referred to audience 141 times, and spring students only 65 times, a difference of 79; fall students referred to purpose 156 times, and spring students only

116 times, a difference of 40. I am not sure how to interpret these differences, such as whether the differences might be attributed to the fact that all the fall students worked with a single and highly collaborative community partner.

**Table 4.18: References to Collaboration with Agencies**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	31	6	39	38	6	1	<i>121</i>
Fall	20	20	56	44	4	1	<i>145</i>
<i>total</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>266</i>

**Table 4.19: References to Collaboration Among Peer Group Members**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	21	11	31	44	1	1	<i>109</i>
Fall	17	17	46	28	1	1	<i>110</i>
<i>total</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>219</i>

Artifacts from the fall semester, when all students worked with one agency, included somewhat more references to collaborating with community partners than the spring artifacts did: 145 references in the fall versus 121 in the spring. For comparison's sake, the number of times students mentioned collaborating with peer students was constant across the two semesters: 110 in the fall versus 109 in the spring. This data might, again, show the impact of students working with a single and highly collaborative community partner. Some of the student comments, especially those of fall students, reveal occasions of collaboration with an agency director that seemed to mirror a relationship with an instructor. The fall artifacts included comments about the students' whole-class decision to work on one large project for CEHS, and

the students' comments reveal complex layers of collaboration—teamwork within and among groups—as the students worked through their whole-class project.

Throughout both semesters, students frequently reflected upon the working relationships among their small groups of peer students and with the agencies. Some of the reflections focused on working with the agency and some on working with peers, but most often they dealt with the dynamics of both, intertwined. While comments about peer interactions were notably frequent, at 219, the student comments about working with community partners were even more frequent, at 266. This put collaboration with agencies at a close third to the two themes mentioned most frequently: decision-making, at 278 references, and purpose, at 272.

While writing about their work with agency personnel, the students described times of frustration, as well as times of learning and of appreciation. The students often discussed efforts they were making to ensure they understood the agency's needs and that both they and the agency were in agreement. Some of the spring students discussed communication problems with their agency contacts, but none of the fall students reported having trouble connecting with agency contacts. By and large, the students' reflections regarding agency personnel paint pictures of the agencies facilitating the students' project work and learning.

Through their collaborations, the students learned from each other. They collaborated while planning their projects, while fulfilling their service obligations, and throughout the various stages of writing their project documents.

**Table 4.20: References to Written Expression**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	13	7	40	41	14	1	<i>116</i>
Fall	13	22	55	5	16	2	<i>113</i>
<i>total</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>229</i>

Throughout their projects, the students mentioned writing in its many stages, indicating an awareness of revision and the writing process, a total of 229 times. Writing generally appears in the artifacts as something the students did in order to carry out their projects; therefore, the students' comments about writing often incorporate reflections about collaboration or other aspects of their work, such as writing on behalf of an agency or for a public audience.

Issues of writing emerge most often in the students' reflective materials—their individual logs and final essays. Only some of the comments identify specific writing skills. They largely talk about writing in a general sense, such as Reflective Log notes of the documents they were working on at the time. There is little reflection about how the students were growing as writers other than a few general such comments—particularly regarding the genre of technical writing—in response to survey questions.

Although writing does not figure prominently in the students' comments, writing might be implicit in their discussions of audience, purpose, and professionalism because these themes depend upon writing for expression. I did not include such references in the tabulations for written expression.

There was a minor difference between the semesters in types of references to written expression. Spring students tended to discuss the writing process in their Reflection Essays, and fall students were more likely to mention writing in their Group Closing Memos. I am not sure how to interpret these oddities. Considering all the artifacts, there are approximately the same number of references to writing in both semesters.

**Table 4.21: References to Professionalism and Motivation**

<i>Semester</i>	<b>Group Proposals</b>	<b>Group Closing Memos</b>	<b>Reflective Logs</b>	<b>Reflection Essays</b>	<b>Anonymous Surveys</b>	<b>Course Evaluations</b>	<i>total</i>
Spring	12	7	34	37	15	1	106
Fall	0	9	53	20	17	2	101
<i>total</i>	12	16	87	57	32	3	207

Throughout the artifacts, the students made 207 references to how much work they were doing and how much emphasis they were placing on making sure the work met high standards of professional quality, so that their projects could have their intended impacts. The students' references indicate understanding of the need for accuracy and detail. In their end-of-term surveys, the students mentioned the importance of producing professional documents, or how much effort they were expending due to this professional dimension, a total of 32 times—the highest amount of survey references to any theme, followed by written expression, at 30.

There is evidence in the artifacts that the students understood the stakes at hand and the hard work necessary when writing for a professional audience. The artifacts also reveal an understanding of creating clear, effective materials that would serve a community need.

**Table 4.22: References to Service**

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Group Proposals</b>	<b>Group Closing Memos</b>	<b>Reflective Logs</b>	<b>Reflection Essays</b>	<b>Anonymous Surveys</b>	<b>Course Evaluations</b>	<i>total</i>
Spring	5	5	11	32	0	2	55
Fall	9	16	18	18	0	4	65
<i>total</i>	14	21	29	50	0	6	120

References to the service elements of projects were infrequent—numbering only 120—and appeared mostly in general terms, such as this one, from a Reflection Essay: “I am proud of our efforts and the web design group and hope that our hard work, energy, and results can be put

into action to help the cause” (Caila). Such comments indicate that the students viewed community service as the driving force for their projects.

Many of the students wrote about ways in which fulfilling their required 15 hours of service work helped them understand the social issues at hand. Overall, I found more evidence of volunteering as a means to gather information, in order to write effectively, than of volunteering as a means to become better citizens of the world. A small number of students, however, did comment about what they learned regarding social issues during the process of researching and writing.

**Table 4.23: References to the Instructor’s Role**

Semester	Group Proposals	Group Closing Memos	Reflective Logs	Reflection Essays	Anonymous Surveys	Course Evaluations	<i>total</i>
Spring	1	0	4	9	0	0	14
Fall	0	1	3	0	2	2	8
<i>total</i>	1	1	7	9	2	2	22

The students infrequently wrote about the course or the instructor. At only 22 references, this is the theme that appears least often, falling far behind the next-to-last one, service, which garnered 120 references. Most of the references to the instructor’s contributions are couched in terms of proofreading or helping students determine whether their projects fit the outcomes for English 291. References to the course itself, which I considered indirect references to the instructor, all dealt with the students’ perceptions of how a service-learning course is different from others. Significant in its absence is any indication that the instructor directed the students’ service projects.

While the spring Reflection Essays included nine references to the instructor, the fall Reflection Essays contained none. This could be because of the fall students’ close relationship with CEHS staff, particularly Executive Director Restivo. He was generous with his care as well

as his time, making himself easily available to the students and joining us in the classroom on several occasions. When the fall students did mention me in their artifacts, it was often in combination with references to Restivo, such as this entry of a Reflective Log: “Revised letter to mayor after meeting with Teresa & Paul. More to this than I originally thought” (Sue).

Categorizing and analyzing my students’ artifacts allowed many themes to reveal themselves for this study. There were overlaps among the themes, as many students wrote about more than one type of learning within the same paragraph. A group’s Closing Memo refers to several themes—collaboration, service, purpose, written expression, professionalism and motivation, the instructor’s minimized role, and audience:

One of the most important aspects that we have learned is networking. Through our efforts with the center we, collectively, have learned the importance of working with other people to achieve common goals. We have successfully organized, advertised, and executed three individual cleanups, benefiting the Southern Illinois Region. In the midst of these great achievements, we have also strengthened our technical writing skills in writing memos, proposals, thank you letters, as well as progress reports. Writing in these real life scenarios required us to put our best foot forward and remain professional throughout our writing. One realization was that not only would Teresa be reading our writing but some businesses also would be reading them. (Yara, Jabr, Ed, Deb, Cap, and Jag)

The only theme that this group of students did not mention in this excerpt is decision-making. Nevertheless, every project step these six students took required them to make choices. Further, the fact that six students’ names are attached to this memo is a point of interest in itself. These students split into two smaller groups of three at the beginning of the semester in order to work more efficiently, and they chose to come back together for their culminating work to wrap up the project.

For the purposes of my dissertation research, the students' voices ultimately are more important than the numbers. The quantifiable data resulting from tabulating the frequency of references to themes might be interesting, but it is useful only to highlight which themes the students found important enough to mention, and which more so than others. The tabulated data lends focus to the discussion of implications, which occurs in Chapter 5.



## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS

Through service-learning, students give volunteer assistance, learn about the community via hands-on immersion, and explore academic knowledge connected with service projects. The students in my two sections of English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing created professional documents such as brochures, web site articles, and research packets for their nonprofit agency partners. I analyzed my students' group Proposals and Closing Memos; individual Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays; and anonymous course evaluations and end-of-term surveys created for my dissertation research. I was interested in drawing out whether the students had learned the rhetorical tenets of audience and purpose and other aspects of written expression as a result of their partnerships with community members, as well as whether the students' ability to make their own project decisions affected their learning. While reviewing the written artifacts, I realized the students also mentioned other themes—collaboration, service, professionalism and motivation, and the role of the instructor—which therefore merited study as well.

I acknowledge that service-learning is only one of many effective pedagogies and that I therefore am not arguing for this method over any particular other. To explore the implications of service-learning in writing courses, particularly those which privilege self-directed learning, I share my students' own words and place their words in the context of scholarship in the fields of service-learning and composition studies. This chapter is organized in the same sequence as Chapter 4, in order of the frequency with which the above-mentioned themes were referenced in the students' artifacts.

### Student Decision-Making

The students formed small groups based upon their interests; they researched and designed each element of their projects according to the needs of both a nonprofit agency and the English 291 course requirements; and they made choices about how to carry out their work, often revising plans at one time or another during the semester. Some of the students' decisions were individual, others were negotiated among their small groups of peers, and many were negotiated with the nonprofit agency. The students' written artifacts contain 277 references to the processes and impacts of their decisions, making this theme the one most often discussed by students. In her Reflection Essay, a student described some of the decisions made by her group of four students, after they agreed among themselves to work with The Science Center:

The other major decision that we had to make was what we actually wanted to do for them, and then which brochures to make. Since almost all the brochures were out of date, it was an easy decision for us to make to update them. When it came down to which ones to do, we listened to [Director Pam Madden] describe the various things that she would like done and together decided which ones seemed of the most importance and which we would be able to finish in the time period given. . . . Individually, we all came up with our own concepts of how to make our brochures. Also, we all came up with our own questions of things to ask Pam throughout the extent of the project, to gather information that would not only help ourselves but our group members as well. (Ann)

Ann's comments reflect the large amount of time and consideration she and her peers put into making decisions, as well as how important they viewed their decisions to be.

As Wardle states, "ownership" is essential for engaged learning (77). The comments of students in this study indicate their ownership of the projects, leading them to feel a sense of responsibility about fulfilling their commitments to the agencies. Pete admitted in his end-of-term Reflection Essay that his initial goal had not been noble:

In the beginning, my goal was to complete the required assignment in an effort to receive a good grade. As work progressed and our group became more involved with the Poshard Foundation, my priorities began to shift. The grade was still

important but not as important as delivering a respectable result to [Administrator Audrey Graves]. I felt like she had placed a tremendous amount of confidence in our team and I did not want to disappoint her. Meeting her expectations became a higher priority than the project grade.

Maxine Hairston recommends student choice, although she is referring to choice of writing topics for purposes of liberation and expression, noting that students should select topics they are curious about: “Only then will they be motivated to invest real effort in their work. . . . [T]he topic should be their choice, a careful and thoughtful choice, to be sure, but not what someone else thinks is good for them” (189).

A student, Cat, described knowing immediately that she wanted to work with the Humane Society of Southern Illinois—“because I love animals”—and then negotiating with her group members to determine their use of volunteer hours and their writing project. Cat referenced many types of decisions, including designing a project that would satisfy course goals as well as help the community:

We then started brainstorming different ideas for the project. Before we came to any conclusion, we all decided that it would be best to make our first trip to the shelter and see what they needed and what they would like to focus on. . . . As a group, we decided that we were going to raise money somehow to purchase rugs for the animals’ cages so that they would be more comfortable while staying at the shelter. We then decided to focus more on trying to get the animals adopted. . . . We decided to run a “Pet of the Week” advertisement in the Daily Egyptian. This would satisfy more of the technical writing requirements of the project and would also help the shelter try to increase adoption rates. (Cat)

She and her peers wrote advertisements and publicity brochures, in addition to fulfilling their promised service work of cleaning cages, walking dogs, and fund-raising.

Another student, Opal, described her methodic and sometimes frustrating path toward determining her agency partner:

I wanted to do something significant, something that’s much more needed. Something that would be helpful to somebody who doesn’t possess the necessary resources or staff to create something they are very much in need of. . . . Kids,

children, the little ones. . . . Habitat for Humanity immediately came to mind. . . . Among my alternative options were such volunteer-drive organizations as Red Cross and Big Brothers, Big Sisters Organization. I began feeling overwhelmed. There's so much need out there, so many opportunities for involvement. . . . As I read more and asked some people about it, I gained more appreciation for Dr. [Glenn] Poshard and his foundation that he'd created to help victims of domestic abuse. . . . Mrs. Graves was responsive to my desire to help, and stated that they are truly understaffed and truly in need of anything we might offer in terms of any promotional material/informational booklets, etc. for the Foundation. I felt a sudden surge of motivation and excitement about my find. . . . I was glad that though not instantly, I finally arrived at the idea to work with the Foundation because it truly had laid the groundwork for the entire project and the whole semester. (Opal)

Opal's reasoned passion for working with the Poshard Foundation for Abused Children had convinced two other class members, Jack and Pete, to form a group with her.

Although student motivation is enhanced when the students shape their own projects, there is little mention of student decision-making in the scholarship of service-learning. Most of the practical recommendations allow no room for student choice: model projects tend to be described as though instructor control were a given, implying that student choice is at worst wrong and at best unimportant. An article by Donna M. Bickford and Nedra Reynolds, "Activism and Service-learning: Reframing Volunteerism As Acts of Dissent," has an ambitious focus on empowerment, yet the authors find it necessary to devote a section to detailing how instructors should control student projects: "Service-Learning Projects Are Difficult to Start, Manage, Sustain, and Make Reciprocal" (234).

I am not the only person who has noticed this tendency to focus on the micromanagement of projects by instructors. Herzberg calls service-learning "undertheorized," explaining that "I believe this is often a consequence of the effort to manage details of placements and travel and oversight" ("Service" 403). He does not, however, suggest that instructors refrain from managing details. Similar concerns over instructor workload are raised in the dissertation study by

Stevenson. The instructor of the course she studied confessed to her afterward that he viewed service-learning as a burden because “gaining mastery and keeping clear communication with a large list of sites is a huge workload in itself for the instructor” (140). I argue that such managing of sites is not the job of the instructor and can be counterproductive by making the students passive operatives.

Social scientists William Morgan and Matthew J. Streb studied the effects of student control over service-learning projects. Although Morgan and Streb were interested in sociological issues, not writing, their work is pertinent to my study because they consider the impact of student decision-making on the outcomes of service-learning. They developed a means to measure agency in decision-making, which they call “student voice.” For Morgan and Streb, a project with a low level of student voice is one for which the instructor arranges details and asks students to carry out predetermined assigned work. A project with a high level of student voice requires students to design and control projects. If asked Morgan and Streb’s questions for the student voice index, my students would have scored high.

Morgan and Streb cross-referenced scores for student voice with the results of survey questions that measured the students’ sense of civic engagement—defined as “working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference” (Ehrlich vi). The students who reported a high voice index increased their level of civic engagement over the course of the service-learning project, while students reporting a low voice index decreased their level of engagement. “[I]t is only when students have input in their projects that the pedagogical approach will have a positive effect on participants; otherwise, service-learning is likely to do harm” (39). Morgan and Streb speculate as to why a lack of student voice might decrease civic and educational growth:

Participation in service-learning projects that limit student input may create resentment, making the project unlikely to change students' civic values and certainly not making them more excited and active in the classroom. Students need to have real responsibilities, have challenging tasks, to help plan the project, and to make important decisions in order for the project to have a positive influence. (44)

Also arguing for student ownership of projects is Richard Battistoni, a political scientist and Campus Compact engaged scholar on civic engagement. Battistoni calls for including "public problem-solving" in service-learning courses. As an example, he describes a group of his students who felt their service hours were not being used well; the students were able to turn this situation around by meeting with the site director and designing a new service plan. Students should work in teams and, additionally, be given "an active role in the design and structure of the school's service-learning program itself" (Battistoni 34-5).

A few composition scholars have keyed in on the importance of student agency within service-learning projects. Wade Dorman and Susan Fox Dorman describe allowing students to make key decisions in selecting, planning, and carrying out service-learning writing projects, arguing that this is an antidote to the chronic problem of rote learning in composition classrooms. "Alienated, our students are sightseers rather than explorers; instead of discovering for themselves, they follow the path laid out in text and lecture, taking notes on what the tour guide/teacher points out" (125). And Thomas N. Huckin describes realizing, through one of his own service-learning courses, which he deemed ineffective, that his students need to participate fully. The agency, which he had assigned, allowed his students only to enter data into brochures. His students were frustrated because the project did not "turn out to be as challenging as it should be" (54).

My students challenged themselves through their own project designs. One student devoted his Reflection Essay to exploring how his individual choices affected his group's decision-making, in the beginning and throughout:

Most other groups had four members; therefore, I was choosing to work with The Science Center group to help lighten the load of work. . . . Secondly, with me being a chemistry major and the word science involved, I felt as though I could be more interested in carrying out a project involving The Science Center. . . . Taking the interview knowledge of what Pam would like from our technical writing portion of the project, the group was then able to decide exactly what we would produce. I let everyone choose his or her brochure/flyer, and I took the one left. . . . The whole group was able to work on a brochure/flyer that they were comfortable with working on. This made me happy and added morale to the team. (Art)

Unlike Art and Pete, most of the students selected groups based on their interests in particular social issues, and then their small peer groups together selected the nonprofit agency. A second group of students chose the Humane Society of Southern Illinois and began by interviewing agency personnel, who told them what most volunteers end up doing. In their Proposal, addressed to the Humane Society, the students explained their interests and their decisions:

[I]t would seem that the typical group would only want to help do chores around the building, or fund-raise to help bring in supplies and food to the Humane Society. We would like to do something different. Your web-site has caught our attention in many ways. We believe that animal lovers should know as much information as possible about adopting a pet. One thing that is a concern to us is the fact that there are no pictures of any of the pets on the web-site. Also, some of the events and statistics are outdated. The group wants to put up fliers to get the message out on neutering and spaying pets to help control the pet population. . . . When it comes to the building portion of the proposal, we can either wipe out the whole web-site and start from scratch or just replace the old outdated information and pictures. We think all of the group members have basic experience with web-sites. We'll have to see how extensive we can make the site with the skills we have. Basically, we won't know how things will run until we actually start working on it. . . . We need to plan out exactly what we can and cannot do. Once we get that in order, we will submit final drafts of every objective (excluding the last one) for your approval. This way nothing that we do will surprise you in any way. (Tom, Sara, Max, and Ana)

The writing produced by these four students is colored by their degree of personal investment in the project.

Compositionist Ellen Cushman refers to the “intrinsic motivation” which accompanies the power to decide upon one’s own project based upon one’s own interest, which makes one “more likely to participate consistently and with commitment when on site. Students structure for themselves the bulk of the research and are more likely to see projects through to completion” (“Sustainable” 44). Nevertheless, she goes on to argue that allowing students to wander through projects of their own design is ultimately unproductive and does not qualify as “real research,” because it lacks the “more focused, structured kind of inquiry around an immediate, pressing social concern”—an inquiry which would be present if the research were guided by a faculty member engrossed in sustained research (45). Her essay’s purpose is to persuade instructors to be researching mentors at the service site. But her argument is shortsighted: not all student projects need to match the academic rigor of faculty members’ work; most importantly, if students are carrying out research on behalf of a faculty member, they are not structuring their own projects.

During my students’ project work, most of them did wander aimlessly at one point or another. However, their written reflections illustrate how moments of confusion led them to further decisions and more learning because they cared enough about their projects to see them through. Abe described his attempts to fulfill his promise to group members to write the first draft of their Proposal, and how he was thwarted by his group’s largely failed attempts to collect research: “I wrote up the first draft of the proposal. It was very difficult due to the fact that we have not conducted the interview and are unsure of the project we will provide for the Humane Society. I had to leave a lot of blanks and question marks.” Abe then described how his group



met again to decide on project specifics, after which he was able to write a solid draft of their Proposal. These students ended up learning that their initial attempts at writing were difficult because they had not done enough preliminary work. The need for sufficient research and planning is an important lesson—one which arose out of the students' uncertain wandering.

Giving space for uncertainties offers opportunity for students to develop their self-efficacy. “A resilient sense of efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through perseverant effort” (Bandura 73). The writings of both Albert Bandura and Maxine Hairston suggest that instructors should give students avenues for small risks and small successes within a larger framework which feels safe. Hairston talks about creating “a low-risk environment that encourages students to take chances” and, likewise, about the tendency for novice writers to freeze in the face of “high-risk situations” (189). Her advice makes me wonder why my students did not freeze, or drop my class, when told they would be doing two unusual things—service-learning and semester-long group projects. I wonder whether they understood what was ahead. For my students, resistance sometimes arose when their ambitious plans hit stumbling blocks.

There were actually some projects that we did not get done completely like we wanted to. . . . We had to come up with a creation for a public service announcement for Zimmer radio group, and we created one and Brian told us what to change, and we did but we won't be able to be there for the creation of it because we are running out of time. Hopefully we will be able to hear it someday on the radio and know that we got everything accomplished. (Jag)

Nearly all of the projects took unexpected turns, at which points some students asked permission to abandon the project or the group or to switch to a traditional writing assignment. I responded with a problem-solving approach to help them puzzle through the dilemma, plus assurance that obstacles are a feature of real-life projects, plus the reiteration that their grades would reflect their efforts and learning, not the magnitude of what they ended up giving the

nonprofit agencies. In every case, the students groups re-envisioned their projects and found new ways to proceed.

The research was the most time consuming part of our project. We had no idea how to write a grant proposal in the beginning and had to find out almost everything on our own. . . . We quickly became overwhelmed and found that we needed to narrow our focus. We needed to concentrate on doing just one thing, or else we were not going to be able to accomplish anything. (Tod)

Because Tod and his peers had made their own initial plans, they took it upon themselves to refine their plans, making sure they would not over-extend themselves and end up with a less-than-professional final document.

After her group's first litter cleanup attracted disappointingly few volunteers, Yara decided to conduct further research in order to improve her group's publicity for the second cleanup: "I had to understand the purpose of the Center and more about what the Southern Illinois Cleanup Campaign is about and its mission to the community. . . . [I] learned what it takes to create a project that helps the community as a whole."

### **Rhetorical Tenets of Audience and Purpose**

In writing courses, students should be offered the opportunity to increase their knowledge of audience and purpose. One of the priorities of my study, therefore, is analyzing whether and how my students learned about these classical tenets of rhetoric. The students referenced purpose 272 times in their projects and reflections, making this the second-most-often-referenced theme, following closely after decision-making, at 277. The similar frequency of these two themes makes sense because they lean upon each other: my students' need to make project decisions forced them to consider purpose repeatedly.

My students' written artifacts reveal that considerations of purpose formed the sinew of their work. A group of three students, writing their Proposal to the nonprofit agency, explained the efforts and decisions they made in order to determine their purpose:

Through talking with you and seeking to learn as much as possible about your organization, we have established some tentative objectives for creating the informational report that would best serve your needs. . . . We understand that the Foundation wishes to increase the public and corporate awareness of its existence and activities, in order to continue raising some substantial financial support that would enable it to engage in more worthwhile projects and expand its area of impact. (Opal, Jack, and Pete)

These students, by explaining their “objectives for creating the informational report,” indicated that they understand their purpose: to help the foundation raise enough money to fund projects and expand its impact. Simultaneously, the students exhibited understanding of their various audiences: agency personnel, addressed directly as “you,” plus readers in the corporate world and in the larger community.

Such merging of audience and purpose occurs throughout the students' artifacts. Sometimes, however, only purpose is referenced, which could account for the lower total—206—of references to audience in the students' artifacts. Even when students seemed to be writing solely about purpose, they were implicitly discussing audience. Likewise, scholarly discussions of audience and purpose often blend the two. Concepts of audience and purpose can be traced back at least to Aristotle, who held that rhetoric is the art of finding the means to persuade the audience, that language is the medium, that this persuasion takes place through the dialectic of discovering and communicating truth by way of learned discourse.

Offering students the context of a service project makes discovering and communicating truth an intrinsic element of the students' discourse. A group's Proposal, addressed to the nonprofit agency, illustrates the truth that these three students had discovered—the impact of

littering—in order to determine and then communicate their purpose before beginning their project:

As you have explained, there are so many naturally beautiful places in our region, but people devastate them by disposing of trash improperly. . . . [W]e have decided on the objectives for the project: 1. To improve the natural environment at Spillway by picking up litter. 2. To be a role model for other towns in our area so that they will organize more cleanups. 3. To encourage people in the Kincaid Lake area to conduct programs dealing with beautification. (Kim, May, and Mel)

The same students, in their Closing Memo, described their project results and their hope that they had been persuasive and fulfilled their purpose:

The three of us were in charge of planning and organizing two cleanups in the Murphysboro area. . . . We wanted to have a long-term effect on the community so that our time picking up trash would not be wasted. . . . Another point of the project was to present information to your agency on how to conduct a cleanup smoothly.

Kim, May, and Mel created a binder full of information for the City of Murphysboro. The binder included information the students had researched about the environmental costs of litter and about cleanup methods, in addition to a how-to guide for managing volunteer cleanups, based on what went well and what the students realized they could have done differently during the two cleanups they themselves organized and carried out.

The rhetorical tenets of purpose and audience are imbedded in the curricular goals of English 291, Intermediate Technical Writing<sup>12</sup>. My students' projects reveal evidence of how the students assessed various rhetorical situations. Ann wrote in her Reflection Essay: "Almost all of the choices made by us toward the brochures were made in the best interest of effectively drawing attention to the Science Center." She and many other students learned the importance of trying to meet a given audience's needs and expectations, as illustrated in anonymous survey

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<sup>12</sup> The Course Description is Appendix B.

comments such as these: “I now add more details than I ever have. Details are important to the reader,” and, “I learned how to be professional and tailor my writing to the customer.”

Audience is conceived by projecting the readers’ attitudes, beliefs, and expectations, as well as what it would take to persuade the readers toward empathy or action; writers must consider whether readers are predisposed for or against the writers’ ideas. “Writers who wish to be read must often adapt their discourse to meet the needs and expectations of an addressed audience” (Ede and Lunsford “Audience” 89).

My study artifacts suggest that the students learned to address audience because of their awareness of readers in the community. This awareness is different from that which arises in traditional classrooms, where students tend to be aware that “knowing your audience is figuring out what the teacher wants,” as Bergmann and Zepernick found in their study (135). They agree with “students’ quite correct understanding of the rhetorical situation of ‘school writing,’ which is, as students learn in college, substantially different from any other rhetorical situation they are ever likely to encounter” (139-140). My students acknowledged the rhetorical situation of a project located in the community: “I learned to write for an audience. Analytical writing is writing for a teacher only” (survey). Through their service-learning projects, the students deliberately addressed audience and purpose time and again, as evidenced in this Reflection Essay, in which Bob cited considerations of the audiences of his group’s brochures:

There are several things one has to consider when identifying what the reader wants. One thing we have to consider is the reader’s purpose for reading, which for this case would be the purpose of learning more about The Science Center, like location, and what programs The Science Center has to offer. Another thing that is considered is how the reader will look for the information. Because of material learned in class, this was not very difficult. . . . We had to make these bits of information stick out. We also had to figure out what to say to persuade people to go visit The Science Center. . . . We figured that since the museum is in a mall, we would have to communicate with parents and possibly to children. The parents

would see the educational value of The Science Center and also would see that their children would have fun there. (Bob)

This excerpt also suggests that the readers to whom students were tailoring their writing sometimes were amorphous, as in “people,” and sometimes narrowly defined, as in “parents.” Other students likewise exhibited an awareness of both broad and particular audiences. In a Closing Memo, a group of students discussed their desire to reach both the wider population of the town and the town officials: “The overall point of our project was to inform people about the litter problem that exists in our area and to get the small town involved so that they would know how to run a cleanup on their own once we were finished” (Kim, May, and Mel). The students wanted to write in a persuasive and specific way. Battistoni might be heartened by these examples. He argues that emphasizing persuasive communication—both oral and written—is an essential component of service-learning because of the importance of persuasion in public life.

Battistoni recognizes the benefit of struggle in a democracy: “citizens need to be able to listen to each other, to understand the places and interests of others in the community, and to achieve compromises and solve problems when conflict occurs” (33). My students wrote about how they made compromises and solved problems, and how they realized the importance of purpose and audience through their struggles. One group of students, in their Closing Memo, described trying to raise funds for litter cleanups:

We wrote many letters to businesses in attempts to establish relationships and explain our purposes. . . . While getting turned down by some businesses was seen as a negative at the time of our visits, this turned out to be valuable in that we learned through our failures what the managers needed to hear in order to accomplish our objectives. As we refined our approach each time, our dealings became more efficient, and donations became much easier to collect. (Ned, Juan, Jeb, and Tod)

What these and other students learned through their so-called failures was the importance of paying attention to audience.

Overall, the students mentioned audience most frequently in their Reflection Essays, which came at the end of the term—possibly indicating that the students’ awareness of rhetorical situations grew as the semester progressed. Mentzell Ryder writes of how students’ realizations of audience can grow through the opportunities offered within a public context:

Public writing is always a site of struggle, a push and pull that highlights differing views of who can act, what kinds of actions create change, and what ideals we should act toward. If we wish to help students invoke public audiences, we need to create the space where they can investigate these rhetorical components of public-building, and we need to create opportunities for them to practice this important work. Well-designed service-learning courses can provide students with this rich intellectual, powerful work. (226)

Lunsford and Ede would agree with Mentzell Ryder’s view of public audiences. “We continue to believe, then, that the concept of audience provides a helpful theoretical and practical grounding for efforts to understand how texts (and writers and readers) work in today’s world” (Lunsford and Ede “Among” 47). They recommend teaching audience within concerns of communication ethics, collaboration, and rhetoric.

Lunsford, Ede, and Mentzell Ryder see the need to embrace and enliven classical studies. They do not diverge from but rather expand the ideas of such strands as epistemic rhetoric—which describes knowledge as dynamic, dialectic, and created through the process of creating it (Berlin “Contemporary”). For students in a service-learning course to do well, they must try to create knowledge by producing documents which a particular nonprofit agency will be able to use, taking seriously the audience and purpose of their writing.

### **Collaboration**

When students are invested in the purpose of their projects, they work closely with each other and with the nonprofit agency because they want the projects to be successful. My students wrote about their interactions with nonprofit agencies 266 times in project documents and

reflections. Therefore, collaboration ranks a close third to the top two themes: decision-making, at 277 references; and then purpose, at 272. The clustering of these three themes at the top of the frequency list suggests that students collaborated closely with nonprofit agencies in order to make decisions about the purposes of their projects. The students' many types of comments about collaboration illustrate how it occurred as well as what the students learned through working with others.

Service-learning projects necessitate interactions with and cooperation from many people. My students' collaborators included nonprofit agency directors and other agency workers, volunteers, clients, public officials, and others unrelated to the university. Additionally, the students worked in small peer groups, largely made up of three students but sometimes two or four, and once, five (though that was perhaps the least-functional group of them all). In their writings, my students referenced peer collaboration 219 times. I am analyzing their collaborative efforts with peer students and community members together because the theoretical questions apply to both and because the students tended to write about them in concert—indicating that the students carried out their projects simultaneously with each other and agency personnel.

Evidence of types and layers of collaboration appears particularly frequently in the students' reflective materials—their logs and end-of-term essays—suggesting that they viewed collaboration as an important element to reflect upon. Jaime devoted his entire Reflection Essay to analyzing how the choices he and his group members had made affected their ability to work among themselves:

We decided that we would all make up possible interview questions to ask Pam Madden, the director, about The Science Center. . . . We also decided to conduct the interview as a group, not just have one or two members there. . . . At first we were going to work on each brochure and flyer together, but we decided that we would split the work equally among us. . . . Everyone chose what they wanted to do. . . . Since we were not working together on the material, I really had to trust



my other group members to do their job in creating the promotional material. Later, I found out that I had nothing to worry about because they took their jobs very seriously. (Jaime)

Jaime learned about group planning, division of labor, and trust. “Trust” came up for other groups as well. Even in the case of groups whose members experienced seeds of doubt, the students ended up working well together. A student in another group explained his teamwork experience, in his Reflection Essay:

At first our group got off to a bad start, and arguments began between group members over who was doing what. Some of us thought that they had too much to do, while others said they had none. The small arguments that took place only lasted for the first two weeks. . . . Once we got past the difficult stages work was evenly dispersed. . . . [The other three drafted] our proposal and I gave the interview as well as made the questions. When it came to both the fliers and the brochures, we decided to meet and do them together at one computer. I thought this was a good idea, because then we could take all of our opinions and make one final project. (Max)

This reflection illustrates that small peer groups can offer unpredictable and potentially valuable learning opportunities precisely because of the high potential for misunderstandings, due in part to differences in personalities and degree of motivation: some students might aim to excel, while others in the same group might be aiming for only a passing grade.

Because of the nature of service-learning, students who might resist or contribute little to group work in other situations might instead become invested in their work, as occurred among Max’s group members. At an imperceptible point during a group service project, each member’s individual goal transforms: students become immersed in project particulars, suspending concerns about grades and focusing instead on producing a collaborative text of value to the community.

There are many variables which can make collaboration difficult, yet instructors who believe in the social construction of knowledge continue to assign group projects and peer

review. According to social constructivism, knowledge is constructed through meaningful interactions within a discourse community of people who share a goal; theorists such as Vygotsky describe knowledge-making as dependent upon the connections of many building blocks. In my courses, I decided to ask students to work in semester-long small groups because collaboration is a learned skill and, rightly, is a course outcome of English 291. Additionally, collaborating can lead to larger results: three writers working well together can bounce ideas off each other and share writing back and forth, creating a multiplicity of possibilities and, in the end, producing something more useful for the nonprofit agency than three individual projects. Further, the students can enjoy a common goal in their efforts to serve, and the agency can coordinate fewer projects and deal with groups of volunteers rather than individuals.

The process of writing in and of itself builds knowledge. Bruffee points to the importance of asking students to write both for and with their peers:

It involves demonstrating to students that they know something only when they can explain it in writing to the satisfaction of the community of their knowledgeable peers. To teach this way, in turn, seems to require us to engage students in collaborative work that does not just reinforce the values and skills they begin with, but that promotes a sort of reacculturation. (652)

The fact that Max and his peers “got off to a bad start” yet ended up writing “together at one computer” is impressive. It can be difficult for four people to negotiate writing line-by-line. In order to do so, the students in his group certainly must have overcome their early disagreements. Each semester, I presented my students with several strategies for writing collaboratively, such as assigning sections of writing to each other or working together on part or all of the project documents. Each group chose which ways would be best given the project particulars and the students’ inclinations. It turned out that most groups chose to sit down at the keyboard together. This suggests that the students felt comfortable collaborating and that the

need to communicate well was understood and shared among them. Mel, in her Reflection Essay, described how her group of three took time to become “comfortable enough to speak up and complete tasks, but before you knew it we were really accomplishing some terrific work.” This group support helped with the writing as well as the public outreach: “I felt more comfortable and confident when I knew that [May and Kim] were standing behind me as I preached about our project to school officials” (Mel).

Service-learning projects provide opportunities for students to practice full collaboration within a community of knowledgeable peers, mirroring the kinds of work and writing which they might be called upon to do in the world beyond their college. Lunsford and Ede rightly point out that students “resist collaboration in their schoolwork even as they collaborate constantly in their out-of-class online writing.” Lunsford and Ede hypothesize that this resistance is a result of academia’s emphasis on individual grades (“Among” 58). They discuss the importance of preparing students for team environments:

[W]e know that most of the innovative work that gets done in the world today gets done in collaborative groups (see Sawyer, Tapscott and Williams, Sunstein, Ede and Lunsford)—including, increasingly, teams that work primarily online. And we know that colleges and universities, for reasons mentioned earlier, are doing very little to prepare students to thrive in such an environment. . . . [W]e need to craft collaborative projects that will engage every member of the group and guide the group in analyzing their work together from beginning to end. (“Among” 58)

Lunsford and Ede’s description fits the kinds of projects that my students were engaged in. Productive collaboration occurred because of the way my students interacted with each other, from start to finish of the semester, and because they defined for themselves projects which motivated them to work together for their chosen cause.

Teamwork alone is not enough. Bruffee, while extolling collaboration, warns that it must occur as part of a “demanding academic environment” if it is to reach its fullest potential as

“social engagement in intellectual pursuits” (652). One of my students seemed to be anticipating Bruffee’s concern by describing, in his Reflection Essay, the peer working relationship which he viewed as contributing to their academic growth:

As if we were ancient Roman philosophers having a discussion, this backdrop led directly to the ease of exchanging ideas. Whether an idea was used or not, it was always considered a viable plan until all three of us decided upon using it or not. Many times, spouting off an idea that seemed ineffective spawned a thought in someone else’s head, leading to completion of the job at hand. Especially visible in the revision process, the free exchange of ideas that was occurring in our group meetings was leading directly to quick and easy learning of things such as grammar rules and different ways to structure sentences. That environment, in my mind, allows one to expand academically more easily. (Seth)

This reflection shows not only an idyllic backdrop for collaboration but also a depth of intellectual pursuit, “a free exchange of ideas,” within which these three students created a peer discourse community. Through collaboration, students develop ideas together and test them out on each other. “They can discuss and examine their experiences, their assumptions, their values, and their questions. They can tell their stories to each other in a nurturant writing community” (Hairston 191).

Instructors sometimes ask students to investigate their own personal and historical discourse communities—their subcultures, including families, neighborhoods, religious institutions, and athletic teams. Instructors likewise guide students to learn about discourse communities by creating one in the classroom, imagining their peers as their audience. Attempts such as these can work, but they can feel like artificial constructs because everyone in the room knows the instructor is the assessor and therefore the ultimate audience.

My students’ written artifacts do not include the term “discourse community”; I did not expect them to because we had not discussed this as part of the course. There is plenty of evidence of discourse communities, however, throughout the artifacts, as in this log entry:

Received more info from Tiffany [Heil] regarding Oct. 4th clean-up. Rearranged article and added necessary info to article, e-mailed article to Ben to be placed on CEHS' web page. I wanted my article to be precise and detailed, so I harassed Tiffany until I got all the info I felt I needed. I rewrote parts that I felt needed doctoring and e-mailed my article to Ben. I hope it informs its readers well enough to make them want to be a part of future clean-ups. (Cay)

Working with real, professional audiences helped the students focus on purpose and audience and develop discourse communities both with their peers and with agency personnel. These relationships were important to the students even though they knew the ultimate audience was the instructor, the grader<sup>13</sup>.

Evidence of my students considering and communicating with their agency contacts permeates their projects and reflections. The students describe how they met and talked with agency personnel, how the students discerned what the agency wanted and needed, and how they made decisions to account for those factors and to ensure good working relationships. Many log entries referred to agency personnel. "Wrote rough draft of proposal to Paul Restivo. While this activity was difficult and time consuming, I feel that the document will clear up any questions and provide for comfortable communication between parties" (Jeb). Such comments suggest that students understood the importance of written communication for effective collaboration.

Students described turning to agency personnel throughout their projects, illustrating a healthy working relationship, as in this log entry by Kim: "October 20: Began to actually think of what to send out to the town of Murphysboro for the long term project; we had problems because we didn't quite understand what it is that we needed to do, so we set up another meeting with Paul."

Several fall students reflected upon the additional layer of collaborative engagement that became necessary because they chose to work together on one large project. I had presented

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<sup>13</sup> The nonprofit agency's opinion was not calculated in the students' grades.

them with an agency, Restivo's SIUC Center for Environmental Health and Safety (CEHS), and informed them of five specialty areas within that agency; I asked them to think about which areas interested them most and then form small working groups around those issues. However, as three students wrote in their group Closing Memo, "[O]ur class decided to do one big project together rather than each group doing a separate one" (Kim, May, and Mel). They chose litter cleanup, and then they self-selected into small groups to tackle project aspects: running cleanup campaigns at the Lake Kinkaid Spillway and in Murphysboro and then informing the community about how to run campaigns (three students); running two cleanup campaigns in Carterville and then informing the community about how to run campaigns (three students); fund-raising for these efforts and then giving the communities reports about their fund-raising (four students); publicity (six students, working mostly as two groups of three); and web-site writing and design (two students).

The students' many descriptions of peer collaboration indicate a high level of accommodation for each other, plus understanding and willingness to get the job done. The group that began with six members had a more difficult time negotiating workload than the smaller groups did; therefore, the six students split into two subgroups for most of the project. One of the students who took a leadership role reflected upon the large-group decision to split up and give the least-producing students more-defined duties:

We figured for our group to not be affected we put these people together. . . . Overall our group worked hard and got along, and with these few problems we were able to figure out how a team successfully works and what to do to make sure everyone keeps up their side of the project. . . . This class will be remembered for a long time for all of the work we got done. (Jag)

Because all of the fall student groups were coordinating efforts toward a large class project, many students wrote about the additional layers of collaboration.

With being the advertising group we had to interact with all of the groups in the class and see what they needed from us or what some of them did without us. . . . We also worked through Mel [a member of another group] to get shirts made that her mom donated for the first clean-up that we designed and made ourselves. We worked alongside the fundraising group and got all the information we needed for the shirt. Each business that donated got its emblem on the back of the shirt. (Jabr)

Although Jabr's descriptions of intra-group communications appear seamless, other students discussed some obstacles. "At times it was frustrating not knowing what was going on with the other groups, but in order to solve that problem all that was needed to be done was ask questions. . . . I have learned how to converse my ideas to others without feeling fear of rejection or disappointment" (Kim). Obstacles became unexpected opportunities for learning.

A few spring students experienced some problems collaborating with agency partners.

We never did find out why [agency director's name removed] failed to show up for the meetings we scheduled, or why she never returned emails or telephone calls. These events, or lack of events, convinced me that good communication is definitely one of the most important aspects of any business or organization. Had the communications between us and the [agency's name removed] been better we could have been finished with the written work long before it was due. (Dahl)

Another spring student, also in his Reflection Essay, described how his group's sometimes difficult relationship with an agency ended up better than it began:

I personally went to the [agency's name removed] hoping to get an interview from someone, but [director's name removed] was not in, and the other workers there would not answer questions. After traveling out there I realized this assignment was not going to be finished on time. . . . I met with the other members of my group and told them what had happened. We brainstormed for a while and came up with a few things to put into the proposal, but still needed to connect with [the director]. . . . I returned to interview [the director]. She happened to be there this time, and I was able to interview her. The interview went well; she seemed like a very nice lady. (Max)

Max's reflections describe how he learned about perseverance and creativity—not giving up but trying alternate means—through his struggles working with the agency. "It helps to realize that not every project will turn out wonderfully, not every student will share in the good

feeling that comes from helping others, and not everyone helped will view the benefits of the project in the same light as the students” (Berle 47). This realization can help students learn not to let difficulties derail projects.

For the most part, the students’ reflections and final projects illustrate positive, close, and functional working relationships with agencies across both semesters. In a spring Reflection Essay, Ann described how her group worked with The Science Center director to determine which documents to produce: “When it came down to which ones to do, we listened to Pam describe the various things that she would like done and together decided which ones seemed of the most importance and which we would be able to finish in the time period given.”

None of the fall students mention difficulties working with CEHS staff members, who were particularly helpful collaborators; Restivo made himself more available to the students than any agency director had during my previous courses. Students described interactions with CEHS staff members throughout their projects. Jag’s reflections show that the collaborative work left him with a sense of accomplishment: “It is nice to know that we as a class did so much good for Southern Illinois and did so much to help out Paul [Restivo] and Tiffany [Heil] with the Center for Environmental Health and Safety. I hope that everyone that leaves this class knows that we went through a lot as a group working together to get everything done.” Another student, Kim, reflected upon collaborating with Heil: “She worked with so much enthusiasm that I would love to keep working with her. She taught us that we could really make a difference if we only took a few hours out of our schedule.”

The artifacts from both semesters contain appreciative references to several community collaborators. “October 8: Worked on thank you letter to Bob Cat to let him know that we appreciated him allowing us to clean up the Spill-Way and also for picking up the trash; he was



so nice to us and took the time to listen, so we just wanted to thank him” (Kim, Reflective Log). When I review comments such as these, I am reminded that the projects helped students understand the impact of trust-based working relationships and the importance of written appreciation, for the receiver of the letter as well as for the person reflecting.

Taken all together, my students’ reflections and project documents suggest that the students collaborated on many levels and in multiple ways because of the nature of their work. They learned how to collaborate in order to satisfy a specific audience and accomplish a specific purpose, which they determined in consultation with agencies. The students’ Reflective Logs, in particular, reveal that they were engaged in collaboration and in thinking about collaboration throughout their semester-long projects.

### **Written Expression**

Service-learning scholars emphasize reflection as a connector between service and learning. Eyler and Giles identify the hyphen in “service-learning” as symbolic of “the central role of reflection in the process of learning through community experience” (4). They and other scholars believe that students need to study social conditions and to reflect upon those conditions, their service, and themselves. To ensure this learning, some type of reflective writing typically is incorporated in service-learning projects of all disciplines. In a writing service-learning course, writing is central to the projects themselves, as well as to reflection.

My students’ artifacts contain 229 references to their use of reflective and technical writing, plus their growth as writers—in terms of learning writing skills for professional situations, for the benefit of a social cause, and of understanding the need for well-composed documents. Nevertheless, while the students used writing and discussed the creation of

documents throughout their project work, the artifacts reveal little evidence of students considering writing in an abstract, philosophical manner.

One student expressed dissatisfaction with the course in a survey comment about writing:

I did not think the work helped my professional communication skills as much as I had originally thought. The course turned out to be a concentration toward service and conservation, rather than technical writing. While I realize writing was intertwined, it was basically a participation grade, causing me to be unaware of any progress or any mistakes that I made.

This student's comment is especially meaningful when considered in light of the minimal amount of comments by other students noting the opposite—their growth as writers. Together, this evidence suggests the course did not integrate enough meta-analysis of writing development.

There were occasional survey comments about generalized writing growth, such as this, “My writing was strengthened, and I now feel more comfortable with my writing.” However, most of the student survey comments about learning writing were more concrete in nature, such as this, “I now know how to write up proposals and memos.”

Most of the references to writing throughout the artifacts involved recounting the actual production and process of writing, often including revising. Max noted in his Reflective Log, “Our group met for class and received our fourth draft proposal from you. To our surprise, we had many corrections to make.” And a student wrote in his/her survey response, “I expanded with sentence structure and wording [of] sentences to sound more professional.” The students' comments seem to fit in with theoretical notions of process—that writers plan, write, and revise, and that they do so recursively, by reviewing, recasting, and forecasting again and again, through “a creative act in which the process—the discovery of the true self—is as important as the product—the self discovered and expressed” (Berlin 726). Expressivism takes on various forms in the classroom:

Expressivist pedagogy employs freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small-group dialogic collaborative responses to foster a writer's aesthetic, cognitive, and moral development. Expressivist pedagogy encourages, even insists upon, a sense of writer presence even in research-based writing. (Burnham 19)

Yancey deconstructs reflection as three discrete but related phenomena: “reflection-in-action,” which is the behavior of writing; “constructive reflection,” which involves generalizing and identity-formation over time; and “reflection-in-presentation,” which is the articulation of learning in a particular context (13-14). She credits Vygotsky and Dewey—two thinkers whose ideas are fundamental to service-learning theories—for establishing that reflection is a social process.

To reflect, as to learn, we set a problem for ourselves, we try to conceptualize that problem from diverse perspectives—the scientific and spontaneous—for it is in seeing something from divergent perspectives that we see it more fully. Along the way, we check and confirm, as we seek to reach goals that we have set for ourselves. Reflection becomes a habit of mind, one that transforms. (12)

Reflective writing, in order to transform, needs to entail more than project logs or journals, which Cushman and Herzberg argue can be viewed by students as empty assignments which merely provide proof of their service. A graded Reflection Essay is important: by writing structured and comprehensive reflection, students have the opportunity to think about and express what they have learned. My students, in their end-of-term essays, reflected at length about decision-making processes and considerations of purpose and audience; they tended to mention writing as a means toward those goals:

We also thought it would be important to try to educate people about preventing the overpopulation of animals, which would hopefully keep the number of animals in shelters down. To do this, we created a brochure with information about spaying and neutering pets. (Cira)

Even when students did not mention writing while discussing their efforts to reach an audience, implicit in such discussions are the students' deliberate crafting of words in order to formulate,

analyze, and confirm goals. The artifacts reveal many instances of the students conceptualizing problems from diverse perspectives; writing helped them do this reflective work, regardless of whether the students revealed an awareness of their writing serving that function. In a log entry, Fay reveals how writing helped her and her peers find their way through confusion, determine what further research they needed, and pull their ideas together:

Our group completed the first draft proposal, the interview notes, and the second draft proposal. Abe typed the first draft proposal, then went to the shelter on Thursday and interviewed [Manager] Karen Mullins. Me, Cira, and Jan took both the interview notes and the 1st proposal and filled in the blanks on the first draft. This included clearly stating objectives, making a schedule of events, and deciding what exactly we were going to do for the Humane Society. Our group has been productive aside from some initial confusion, but now everything is in order. (Fay)

Fay's references to writing suggest how interwoven it was with other aspects of her group's project: writing was a means to produce something of value for the agency rather than an end in itself. Her experience illustrates how service-learning can help students grow as ethics-grounded, civic-minded people who use words well. Jeffrey C. Davis calls this "connected" writing instruction, as adapted from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*:

In the spirit of Cicero, Quintilian advocates a comprehensive education that encourages *person formation*, a kind of transformative learning that prepares students to participate fully in society as ethics-grounded, civic-minded people who know how to use words well for all sorts of purposes and occasions. (15)

Some of the students' reflections do indicate an awareness of their writing growth and the fact that the types of writing they were doing will apply to situations beyond college. "[W]e accomplished many things, from the different types of service to the different types of technical writing. Not only did we increase our academic knowledge but we also learned how to apply it to real world needs and situations" (Eva). Her comments, in her Reflection Essay, illustrate praxis, or the union of action and reflection which leads toward social transformation: Eva talked about

action—doing service and writing—and then reflected upon how that service and writing helped the students learn and apply their new knowledge “to real world needs and situations.”

The National Society for Experiential Education identifies reflection as one of its eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities:

For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. (“About Us” 2)

My students reflected about how their experience-based project work caused them to learn about writing in order to produce professional documents. Responding to the end-of-semester survey question of what they had learned, several students made comments such as these: “being able to apply technical writing to an actual agency project,” and, “memo format, proposal format, writing is never perfect,” and, “I am now a ‘memo pro’!”

### **Professionalism and Motivation**

“I wanted it to look and sound professional. I took more time on assignments.” This was among 32 survey comments the students made about their motivations to produce professional documents, making this theme the one mentioned most frequently in survey responses. Until I reviewed the survey data, I had not considered studying the students’ professional stance as part of this dissertation research. But because the students discussed professionalism so frequently in their end-of-term anonymous surveys, I realized that they had understood this theme to be a goal of the course as well as a factor in the success of their service projects.

We were working on conducting some more extensive research as far as factual information, statistics of child abuse for the U.S. as well at the state of Illinois. That helped me to get a better grasp, and acquire a better understanding of the magnitude of the problem we are dealing with, and it also created a sense of urgency, of importance, to educate the public and key community players about

the situation, and how they can get involved to help. . . . I feel like I need to be well-read and understand the subject in depth, to be more efficient in this project.  
(Opal)

Opal's comments about needing to do sufficient research to produce professional materials for the community were similar to many students' reflections about their project work. Altogether, there are 207 references to how much effort the students put into making sure their projects met professional standards; such comments are particularly frequent in Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays. "Having never worked in a professional experience like this before I would say that it helped me learn a lot, especially about working in a group, interacting with a client, and making proper professional decisions" (Ann, Reflection Essay). Her and others' remarks illustrate the students' high degree of consideration for stepping up into the professional situation of working in a collaborative way with a community agency.

Service-learning offers students "a unique opportunity to connect the community with the classroom. Academic concepts are analyzed, expanded, and refined in light of the students' experiential learning" (Parker-Gwin 101). In addition to experiential learning, service-learning often involves project-based and problem-based learning. Unlike in traditional classrooms, where incorporating such methods may seem arbitrary, in service-learning courses, students must solve problems in order to carry out professional, community-based projects. My students' motivations to produce helpful documents are evidenced as well in the bulk and quality of their final projects: every group of students ended up meeting or exceeding the course expectations as they fulfilled their promises to the community. Working with a nonprofit agency "made me take it more seriously. Instead of wondering why I was writing, I actually had a realistic goal" (survey).

Nelms and Dively recommend developing assignments that mirror workplace projects, and they point out that recent research shows the need for improved writing skills in the

workplace. The National Commission on Writing for America’s Families, Schools, and Colleges surveyed major U.S. corporations regarding writing competency and found that writing “is a ‘threshold skill’ for both employment and promotion, particularly for salaried employees” (National 3).

Despite the documented need for strong writing beyond college, Bergmann and Zepernick found that students tend to believe that rules of citation and style are the only things they learn about writing in composition courses: “this view seems to arise from students’ quite correct understanding of the rhetorical situation of ‘school writing’ . . . [as] substantially different from any other rhetorical situation they are ever likely to encounter” (139-140). To work against the perceived disjunct between school and professional situations, Sherwood suggests offering professional internships or similar positions on campus. Via “opportunities for self-directed learning,” students “can confront the ill-structured problems posed by a particular writing task under the experienced eyes and ears of a mentor” (21). Similarly, Nelms and Dively recommend that students “directly engage in approximations” of future writing situations in order to increase the likelihood that they will generalize their current learning into the future (229).

Such recommendations are attempts to help students transfer their knowledge<sup>14</sup>. Service-learning in a situation of professional writing offers the “conditions of transfer” identified by Perkins: engaging in performances similar to later potentialities, and analyzing current performances for connections with later situations (6). Transfer occurs in a sociocultural context:

(C)onversations with others during activities that influence the attention given to ideas provide valuable learning cues of retrieval and relating of information. In short, the social situation creates a universe of meaning for us that shapes our learning, transfer, and even our memory. (Haskell 137)

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<sup>14</sup> Knowledge transfer was discussed in depth in Chapter 2.

Through service-learning, students write in contexts which do not approximate but actually are professional situations. My students' comments suggest that they understood this connection and that their experiential, self-directed learning allowed for the kind of collaborative conversation that Bruffee recommends approximating through communities of classroom peers:

Students learn the 'skill and partnership' of re-externalized conversation, writing, not only in a community that fosters the kind of conversation college teachers value most, but also in a community that approximates the one most students must eventually write for in everyday life, in business, government, and the professions. (642)

References to the need to work closely with agency personnel to ensure high-quality research and precision appear throughout my students' Reflection Essays. "I will be in contact with [Director Pam Madden] this week to finish my research. Also, I will need verification of all the information included in the general information brochure that I am currently working on" (Art). Students worked with each other to persuade agency directors, clients, local politicians, potential donors, and others in the community, as evidenced in survey comments such as this: "I learned how to be professional and tailor my writing to the 'customer.' "

The artifacts suggest the students were aware they would be transferring this knowledge to future situations. They learned the stakes at hand when writing within a realm which is professional and intended to serve others; service-learning students "confront real situations in which the writing they do has real consequences" (Huckin 57). Their experiential learning, coupled with control over their own project design, heightens unpredictability and risk—as in Sherwood's ill-structured problems—and strengthens motivation. bell hooks advocates moving pedagogy out into the practical, everyday world to make education more democratic and inclusive: "To bring a spirit of study to learning that takes place both in and beyond classroom settings, learning must be understood as an experience that enriches life in its entirety" (42).



## Service

Notions of service are threaded throughout my students' projects; however, the students discussed their work explicitly in terms of service only 120 times, which is a small number when compared with the frequency of references to other themes in my study. And when the students did discuss community service or citizenship, they typically did so in general terms, revealing less passion than in their references to some of the other themes.

Considered as a whole, however, the students' comments suggest that they viewed serving the community as important—as a foundational aspect of their work. One student wrote in a course evaluation that the course “was also good because we helped out the community.” Like many of the comments, this assessment illustrates the student's awareness and interest in service in a broad, impersonal sense. The artifacts suggest the students believed they were performing a service that was meaningful and related to technical writing, which fits in with Bringle and Hatcher's recommendation for connections between course material and “meaningful service activities” (“Implementing” 222). The term “service-learning” is defined as “the integration of accomplishment of a needed task with educational growth” (Sigmon 3).

The students stepped into new situations that required considerations of social realities, causing them to push “beyond what they know situationally” (Parker-Gwin 101). Each student completed 15 hours of service, offering opportunities for primary research as the students immersed themselves in the social context. Additionally, this service offered the nonprofit agencies something in exchange for the agencies' time and cooperation, in addition to the writing projects or in case those projects were not useful. None of the agencies complained about working with the students, and several expressed openness to future student volunteers.

Some students reflected upon how the volunteer work affected them personally.

My lackluster attitude turned into a joy filled one while working with the Humane Society of Southern Illinois, and it was from this change in attitude that I realized why the Humane Society had its preconceived notions about our group. They expected a group filled with people that were fulfilling a requirement, but what they got were four students who grew to love the animals that the shelter housed, accompanied with an adopted pet. Through the struggles, I was opened to a new look at volunteering which helped me to appreciate the service, time, and money that we dedicated. (Abe)

While Abe mentions developing his view of volunteerism, most of the students do not offer clear indications of whether their activities enhanced their sense of civic responsibility—an often-cited goal of this pedagogy. In a course evaluation, one student did mention that the course “will aid me in becoming a better student and citizen.” Within the project documents, there are a few references to suggest the students increased their understanding of civic responsibility:

The project increased our awareness of the magnitude of the problem of child abuse and neglect in Southern Illinois. Furthermore, while working with the foundation at the site we were able to learn how each individual person can contribute to creating a safer world for children within our communities. (Opal, Jack, and Pete, Closing Memo)

These three students helped the Poshard Foundation build a shelter for women and children in Cairo, Illinois. They also researched child abuse and compiled information the foundation could use as fodder to try to attract donors. In the process, the students indicate, they learned how they themselves play a role in society.

During class discussions, we reviewed social issues only in relation to the purposes and audiences of the students’ projects, because my focus was on teaching writing. I wonder whether the students would have benefited from in-depth discussions of social issues. Battistoni cites several sociological studies offering evidence “that when accompanied by proper preparation and adequate academic reflection, service-learning can be a potent civic educator” (6).

Service-learning theorists discuss the “server-served dichotomy,” warning that service without enough context can cause volunteers to decrease rather than increase their empathy,

exacerbating the dichotomy between server and served. Without sufficient guidance, students tend to talk in terms of how much they are helping the less-fortunate, not how much they are learning by being placed in situations of mutual benefit.

We would expect that the more than 12,000 service-learning courses that Campus Compact tells us exist on college campuses should be having a countervailing positive civic effect. Instead, we continue to hear anecdotal reports from faculty and other educators that community service not only fails to connect students to public life, but it may tend to reinforce student stereotypes . . . , hardening previously held views. (Battistoni 5)

Education about social issues is necessary to counter the U.S. society's over-emphasis on individual responsibility, which Herzberg says results in a lack of "social imagination": "Immersed in a culture of individualism, convinced of their merit in a meritocracy, students . . . need to see that there is a social basis for most of the conditions they take to be matters of individual choice or individual ability" ("Community" 317).

The length and complexity of a project can affect this dynamic as well. Ill-conceived, short projects often deepen the dichotomy between the server and the served, argue Mastrangelo and Tischia. They report that their students did not understand the reciprocal benefits of service-learning until well into the second semester of a year-long project (33).

None of my students talked about community members in derogatory terms; however, the small amount of student references to social issues causes my analysis of this theme to be incomplete. It is apparent that the students used their knowledge and skills to impact the social issues which they themselves had chosen. But while they reflected upon working hard to make a difference, there is little reflection about whether they felt more engaged in society as a result of their community work.

Throughout the artifacts, there is ample evidence of the practical nature of volunteering—as a means to gather information in order to write. This suggests that employing service-learning

does not necessarily detract from the essential curriculum any more than a different type of project might. When students, for instance, are asked to read, analyze, and write about literature in order to improve their writing skills, it would be expected that some students might develop an enthusiasm for the literary topic; in the same vein, some students might discover or expand their desire to do service over the course of carrying out a service-learning writing assignment. In both cases, students primarily learn about writing.

### **The Instructor's Role**

In a service-learning course, the instructor's degree of control and authority changes because of the addition of a third party: a nonprofit agency. And as writing projects move out of the classroom and into the community, the number of unforeseeable variables increases and the instructor becomes an observing manager. In their artifacts, my students rarely mentioned the instructor—only 22 times—putting this theme in far last place. This paucity of references merits analysis and comparison with the students' ample discussions of their own decision-making and of their collaborations with each other and with agency personnel.

Nowhere did students write about the instructor making decisions about the students' projects. There are references to what the instructor did not do: "The teacher did not put our groups together. We had to choose our group and our own agency" (Jaime, Reflection Essay).

Many of the students' references to agency directors mimic a typical reference to an instructor. "Made corrections to English 291 article. Paul made some very interesting comments . . . that I think will help out a lot" (Caila). Such references to agency directors guiding the students' writing emerged in the artifacts of both spring and fall semesters but were most numerous in those of fall, when all the students worked with Paul Restivo and other CEHS staff members. Restivo participated in class several times, and the students' many references to his

input not surprisingly reflect his high degree of involvement. What is surprising, by comparison, is the near-absence of similar references to the instructor who established the course, taught elements of writing, and established the parameters of the students' collaborations with the agency.

When the students did write about their instructor, it was often in reference to a minor element in the context of wider collaborations and often in regards to proofreading, as evidenced in this student's log entries:

Oct. 13: Started writing October 4th article and picture captions. Drafted a lengthy paper that was missing a lot of important pieces. . . . Oct. 27: Revised article after Teresa's review of it. E-mailed new article to Ben to replace old one. I didn't get a chance to have Teresa read over my article. Now that she has, I have to make a few slight adjustments and send it to Ben to replace the first one. Note to self: Always get work reviewed before sending in what you think is good. (Cay)

The instructor's review was one of many factors in Cay's nonlinear writing process; taking Cay's comment out of context, it might seem as though the instructor's role were that of free-lance editor.

Throughout the written artifacts, it appears as though the students carried out their projects as independent volunteer groups working with nonprofit agencies—this could indicate that the course in fact was proceeding as planned. Student references to the course itself and course materials, as to the instructor, were infrequent and vague.

Another thing that is considered is how the reader will look for the information. Because of material learned in class, this was not very difficult. . . . We had to make these bits of information stick out. We also had to figure out what to say to persuade people to go visit The Science Center. (Bob)

Bob and his peers were writing to satisfy an outside audience, and they had to envision and define a role for that audience (Ede and Lunsford). "One of the factors that makes writing so difficult, as we know, is that we have no recipes: each rhetorical situation is unique and thus

requires the writer, catalyzed and guided by a strong sense of purpose, to reanalyze and reinvent solutions” (87). Eva described the instructor’s sideline advice as the students collaborated with each other and Director Karissa Howell of the Abundant Health Resource Clinic:

[We] then met with Karissa for our formal interview. We found out exactly what she needed from us during this time. She told us about how the agency hosts many different types of fundraisers in order to raise money. Our task was going to be to promote these fundraisers through fliers as well as newspaper write-ups. When we brought the news to Ms. Kramer, she said this would work well with the content of the class. This greatly helped us out with our second draft of the proposal, as we had many more specifics for what we were to be doing. (Eva)

Combining service-learning and writing instruction softens the typical barriers between instructor and students and makes it more possible for the instructor to be “a midwife, an agent for change” whose role is “to nurture change and growth as students encounter individual differences” (Hairston 192). Berlin describes a liberatory classroom, in which both instructor and students shape content and through which students feel empowered to be agents of social change: “This is contrasted with the unequal power relations in the authoritarian classroom, a place where the teacher holds all power and knowledge and the student is the receptacle into which information is poured” (734). Sherwood, Dorman, and Fox Dorman also decry traditional modes of teaching which they say alienate students.

Overall, while analyzing the written artifacts of my students in two sections of English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing, I found many references to the effects of the students’ collaborations with the nonprofit agency, other community members, and peer students, and few references to the instructor or the course. It is unclear how much the students learned about the social issues they were trying to address in their work with nonprofit agencies; likewise, it is unclear whether the students’ level of civic engagement was affected.

What is clear is that my students stepped into the leadership roles expected of them, and they often did so beyond the course requirements. Through experiential projects, the students increased their understanding of professionalism and their skills as technical writers. They understood and acted out of concern for the rhetorical tenets of audience and purpose. Art talked in his Reflection Essay about his group's decisions regarding what to include in brochures and how to present the information. He ended with these thoughts:

The flyer would not just be a grade and then tossed into the waste bin, but the flyer would actually be put into use. . . . I feel a sense of accomplishment knowing that someone might go to The Science Center based on the brochure that I designed and produced from beginning to end. Most of the students in this class have never done anything like this before. This English class was set up in a way that by the end of the class you take away from it way more than anyone would have ever thought for a class called English 291. (Art)

Art's reference to what "you take away" from this course hints at one of the major goals of service-learning: to provide real-world learning which motivates students to remember and transfer their new skills to future situations.

The references most prevalent throughout my students' artifacts have to do with decision-making. The students discussed how they negotiated—and renegotiated—their projects in order to take into account the needs of the agency, the requirements of the course, and their own interests. While describing what they did, how they did it, and why, the students were revealing all of their small and large choices.

I conclude this dissertation with Chapter 6, reflecting upon what I have learned through the research and what I might suggest for other instructors and researchers of service-learning writing pedagogy. Peter Elbow calls for compositionists to engage in learning alongside our students, encouraging both them and us to "undergo the necessary anxiety involved in change":

We should show that we are still learning, still willing to look at things in new ways, still sometimes uncertain or even stuck, still willing to ask naïve questions, still engaged in the interminable process of working out the relationship between what we teach and the rest of our lives. (“Embracing” 59)



## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

My desire to help students experience the power of writing led me toward service-learning and the research of this dissertation. After I began to ask students to write about and for nonprofit agencies, I witnessed a shift: my students at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) seemed more engaged in learning about writing than my previous students had. Professor Lisa J. McClure encouraged me and suggested I consider researching service-learning. As I did so, I learned that this pedagogy is not often used for writing curricula nor studied much in the field of composition; service-learning has a stronger foothold in the social sciences. Further, I found that most projects, across all disciplines, do not allow students to design their own projects.

I began this dissertation study to research whether writing for nonprofit agencies helps students learn the rhetorical tenets of audience and purpose and whether the students' ability to make decisions within their projects is a factor. The breadth of my analysis eventually widened—to include collaboration, service, professionalism and motivation, and the role of the instructor—while my core intent remained the same: researching how the students' learning might be influenced by service-learning.

This dissertation discusses the impact of service-learning on student writing as suggested by the work produced during two semesters of English 291: Intermediate Technical Writing. I gave students pseudonyms as I recorded their written comments in group Proposals and Closing Memos, individual Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays, and anonymous course evaluations

and end-of-term surveys created for this study. To ground my exploration, I began with the following research questions:

**What do the students indicate they have learned? What language do they use to describe what they learned? How does their language compare to the language used to describe pedagogical goals?**

The students' reflective artifacts contain many references to what they learned, especially about collaboration and technical writing. When responding to survey questions, the students mentioned their writing growth in general terms, such as these, "being able to apply technical writing to an actual agency project," and, "memo format, proposal format, writing is never perfect," indicating that they felt they had learned skills within the genre of technical writing.

Many students additionally made reference to the writing process—particularly as the process was occurring—via Reflective Logs:

Our group completed the first draft proposal, the interview notes, and the second draft proposal. Andrew typed the first draft proposal, then went to the shelter on Thursday and interviewed Karen Mullins. Me, Cristina, and Judy took both the interview notes and the 1st proposal and filled in the blanks on the first draft.  
(Fay)

Few of the students indicated a greater awareness of the writing process in an abstract sense or a realization of having expanded their own processes; nevertheless, they described their writing as complex and interwoven, with nonlinear stages of research and multiple drafts.

Students mentioned their collaborations with each other and with agency personnel many times throughout the projects and reflections. "Made corrections to English 291 article. Paul made some very interesting comments . . . that I think will help out a lot" (Caila, Reflective Log). Student references to collaboration included not only description of teamwork but also what they learned from it. One student, for example, contemplated the impact of an agency staff member's missing meetings with the student's small group of peers:

These events, or lack of events, convinced me that good communication is definitely one of the most important aspects of any business or organization. Had the communications between us and the [agency's name removed] been better we could have been finished with the written work long before it was due. (Dahl, Reflection Essay)

The students' artifacts indicate learning in other areas as well. Altogether, their references fell within the following themes: decision-making; the rhetorical tenets of audience and purpose; collaboration; written expression; professionalism and motivation; service; and the role of the instructor. These themes, therefore, became the focus of my dissertation.

**Do students come out of service-learning with a sense of the importance of audience and with the skills to adjust to audience? Do students come out of service-learning with a sense of the importance of purpose when writing and the tools to adapt their writing accordingly?**

As I reviewed the artifacts in search of references to audience and purpose, I found multiple examples of students noting the need to address their community audiences in order to fulfill project goals.

We understand that the Foundation wishes to increase the public and corporate awareness of its existence and activities, in order to continue raising some substantial financial support that would enable it to engage in more worthwhile projects and expand its area of impact. (Opal, Jack, and Pete, Proposal)

Perhaps the practical settings of service-learning help students better understand considerations of audience and purpose. My students' comments, particularly in reflective documents, suggest they realized they were learning about rhetorical tenets. In survey responses, students frequently referred to meeting readers' needs, for instance, "I learned how to be professional and tailor my writing to the customer," and, "I learned to write for an audience. Analytical writing is writing for a teacher only."

### **What learning is affected by the additional factor of a non-profit organization?**

The students' projects and reflections provide evidence of considering the needs of non-profit service organizations—a consideration which helped motivate the students to learn how to produce professional work. The students' words indicate a sense of responsibility toward the community and also of appreciation for individual community partners. This was most apparent in the students' reflective comments, such as these: “Worked on thank you letter to Bob Cat to let him know that we appreciated him allowing us to clean up the Spill-Way and also for picking up the trash; he was so nice to us and took the time to listen, so we just wanted to thank him” (Kim, Reflective Log), and, “She [an agency employee] worked with so much enthusiasm that I would love to keep working with her. She taught us that we could really make a difference if we only took a few hours out of our schedule” (Kim, Reflection Essay).

Although it is not possible to ascertain whether the students would have worked more or less diligently had the organizations not been service-oriented, the fact that the students felt a responsibility to do a good job reveals the viability of learning in such environments.

### **What learning is affected by the volunteering aspect of the project?**

The effect of volunteering on individuals is a critical issue in service-learning research. My methodology, however, did not clearly reveal the students' reactions to volunteering nor whether their level of civic engagement had increased or decreased because of their service-learning activities. While it is apparently not sufficient to rely solely on student references to study this theme, some of the references do offer glimpses into the students' growth as individuals engaged with society:

The project increased our awareness of the magnitude of the problem of child abuse and neglect in Southern Illinois. Furthermore, while working with the foundation at the site we were able to learn how each individual person can

contribute to creating a safer world for children within our communities. (Opal, Jack, and Pete, Closing Memo)

These three students' comment is one of only few such references across all the student artifacts.

The paucity of reflections about service in and of itself, while not revealing potentially useful information about civic engagement, could indicate an unrelated positive possibility—that service-learning does not necessarily cause students to focus too heavily on volunteerism. There is no evidence in my study to suggest that the service dimension detracted from the learning dimension.

### **What learning arises out of places of confusion? What learning arises out of places of decision?**

The students wrote frequently about their decisions throughout the semester, and these references include descriptions of choices they had to rethink during times of confusion and other difficulties. “We quickly became overwhelmed and found that we needed to narrow our focus. We needed to concentrate on doing just one thing, or else we were not going to be able to accomplish anything” (Tod, Reflection Essay).

The prevalence of reflections about making choices indicates that the students realized their decisions were important. The ability to determine their own projects helped them engage with their work; they cared about improving their writing in order to produce materials which they themselves had deemed necessary.

While getting turned down by some businesses was seen as a negative at the time of our visits, this turned out to be valuable in that we learned through our failures what the managers needed to hear in order to accomplish our objectives. As we refined our approach each time, our dealings became more efficient, and donations became much easier to collect. (Ned, Juan, Jeb, and Tod, Closing Memo)

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

My research results are dependent largely upon the questions I posed and, in equal measure, the ones I did not think to ask. For further study, I would reframe some research questions in the hopes of uncovering more in-depth or different types of information, and I would borrow methodology from social sciences.

Because I had not intended to focus on social issues, I am therefore left with only minimal, accidental evidence of whether my students' experiences enhanced their sense of civic responsibility and individual power to affect change. To study this in the future, my open-ended research question about volunteering could be refined to pinpoint whether doing service within a writing project affects engagement. Also helpful would be the survey instruments used in sociological research regarding whether service causes students to be more likely to vote, donate to causes, or become involved in community organizations (Dorman and Fox Dorman). Additionally, I recommend interviewing students to ferret out which aspects of their community interactions affect the students' sense of shared responsibility and whether their writing progress is dependent upon their level of engagement.

My dissertation also does not question whether students' abstract knowledge of social issues—which is distinct from civic engagement—impacts their growth as writers. I recommend creating side-by-side sections of a service-learning writing course, augmenting one section with in-depth study of social issues, and then analyzing the differences. Such research could cross-reference writing progress with changes in both civic engagement and academic knowledge of social issues.

Because all the students in my dissertation study worked with nonprofit organizations, I could not question the difference between projects with nonprofit agencies and similarly

experiential projects with private businesses. This brings to mind my first service-learning courses, back when I allowed students to select any outside organization. Most students chose nonprofit agencies, but a small number did not. One group of students researched environmental issues and then designed a ventilation system for their favorite bar on Illinois Avenue. Another group, made up of business majors, developed student-oriented information packets for an investment firm. I continue to wonder whether those students' learning differed from that of my students who worked with nonprofit agencies. To draw comparisons, an instructor could ask half the students to work with non-profits and the other half with for-profits, and then survey and interview the students as well as the agency and business personnel involved. Research questions could hone in on factors which affect students' motivation, professionalism, and growth as writers.

While my study provides a qualitative look at student decision-making, this theme merits further investigation in order to derive quantitative data. Research could replicate my methodology but augment the surveys by adding "student voice" questions developed by William Morgan and Matthew J. Streb: "1) I had real responsibilities; 2) I had challenging tasks; 3) I helped plan the project; and 4) I made important decisions" (42). Although the two sociologists cross-referenced their results for student voice and civic engagement, compositionists could cross-reference the voice index with survey responses about writing development—quantifying whether students who report a higher degree of decision-making ability also report more growth in writing. Researchers could develop a writing course with two sections: in one, the students design their own community projects; in the other, the instructor sends students out to complete predetermined projects. Such research could shed light on decision-making as well as on the roles of student, instructor, and community partner.

Throughout the fields of both composition and service-learning there is a generalized paucity of research using methods that result in quantitative data. “Few studies on service-learning use control groups, pre-tests and post-tests, large samples, and multivariate analysis to control for background factors” (Morgan and Streb 40).

Preliminary service-learning studies indicate that outcomes vary course by course; therefore, service-learning scholars such as Christina Leimer, Miller, Eyler, Giles, Morgan and Streb call for research that isolates course variables to provide quantifiable comparison. Monetary support is needed for such research. While there are federal grants targeted for service-learning initiatives, the bulk of the funding is geared toward the logistics of program management and not toward supporting scholarly research or professional development for instructors (Morgan and Streb 50).

A control section that differs only in the use of service projects vs. an alternate pedagogy could offer reliable data for comparing compare service-learning with the pedagogy of the control section.

### **Recommendations for Service-Learning Writing Courses**

Based upon this dissertation study, I recommend that instructors establish frameworks for students to design their own service-learning projects. At the same time, my research illuminates a couple of preventive recommendations: to help students develop empathy while volunteering, rather than harden perspectives, instructors should lead students in explorative discussions of social issues; and while collaboration among peers can increase the learning potential of a project, instructors need to be vigilant that students with alternate perspectives are not silenced during group work.



A useful tool to help address all of these concerns is reflection, which is central to both service-learning and composition. Through critical discussion and unstructured analytical writing, students can discover, expand, and voice their learning and, indeed, their selves. The rich potential of reflective service-learning makes it a vehicle for the social and political liberation articulated by Freire: reflective moments of discovery, of consciousness-raising, are potentially liberatory, and instructors can help students become agents of change who think and write toward a growing awareness of the world (Cushman “Public” 333). My students’ Reflective Logs and Reflection Essays are filled with the reasoning of their decision-making, suggesting that the act of reflective writing helped them consider and re-consider their thoughts, choices, and actions.

Students can be encouraged to reflect both individually and as a class upon their service experiences and the social realities they are writing within. Whole-class analytical discussion is a “contextualizing move” that helps students transition into individual, intentional written reflection (Huckin “Technical” 58). Fostering a classroom environment in which students are encouraged to write and speak openly stimulates critical thinking; it does not ensure a neat and tidy process through which all reach agreement.

Whenever we write, read, speak, or (as Krista Ratcliffe has so eloquently reminded us) listen, there are no guarantees that either the process or the outcome will be ethical. This is an understanding that we can—and should—bring with us when we enter our classrooms, especially our first-year writing classrooms. For there we have the opportunity to help our students experience the intellectual stimulation and excitement, as well as the responsibility, of engaging and collaborating with multiple audiences, from peers to professionals, as well as addressed and invoked audiences of all kinds. (Lunsford and Ede “Among” 64)

Instructors can help students analyze what they are learning through collaborating with community partners—an intrinsic element of service-learning. Instructors could further increase the learning about collaboration by asking students to produce projects in small peer groups.

Throughout my students' written artifacts are descriptions of how the student groups worked together and resolved their differences for the sake of their project goals; they learned how to negotiate.

While instructors should encourage collaboration as much as possible, they need to be aware of potential pitfalls of group work in a classroom setting. How can an instructor keep track of which student is doing what, whether the group is representing all of its members correctly and fully, and whether group work is empowering to all the students? When the instructor conferences regularly with each group, problems are revealed quickly and transformed into learning opportunities. In addition, instructors should build individual assignments into group projects. This allows the instructor to attend to each student's writing development and allows students to develop unique voices and to each influence the project in a particular way. When students fold their individual elements into the larger goals of a collaborative project, they share knowledge of writing and abstract thinking and learn collaborative problem-solving.

Aware of collaboration's potential for excluding minority voices, instructors should encourage students to reflect upon their own backgrounds and their reactions to the service work. Bleich recommends "a pedagogy of discourse," or collaborative conversation which includes the telling of personal histories (298), to ground education in "a sense of mutual implication. New principles of individual and collective self-disclosure can help us to teach ourselves and our students what the joys, feelings, meanings, and struggles of working seriously and professionally with others really are" (308). When instructors encourage students to discuss, write, and do research in order to explore their differences and their similarities, the eventual group consensus is more likely to include all members' voices.

We have to make ourselves brave enough to risk the dissent that inevitably comes when democracy is in action. Once teachers do that, we'll see the work of the

small groups in our classes become the real work of the class, with students negotiating their own ideas against and around the ideas they're offered. When students find a real voice, their own and not some mimicked institutional voice, both students and teachers acknowledge the possibility of the real change that might ensue. (Roskelly 128)

Allowing for open discussion of students' ideas and backgrounds and the social issues surrounding the service projects might mitigate against another potential problem: the server-served dichotomy, which social scientists define as an inability to empathize with people in the community. Requiring students to volunteer without providing social context and without letting students design their own projects could cause students to not feel invested in their work and see only scarcity—pitying the people they are serving rather than viewing the complexities of the situations and the overlapping of influences in every member of society. Students should reflect deliberately upon social issues and their own responsibilities and power to implement change, expanding their awareness of similarity rather than difference. Although composition does not fall within the discipline of sociology, it would be a missed opportunity to not incorporate the study and discussion of social issues during service-learning writing projects.

Such contemplation also could ward off resistance toward connecting volunteerism and academics. Some students associate “service” with the volunteer hours they were required to fulfill to graduate high school, or the community service that courts dole out in lieu of jail time. Resistance also occurs among students who fear service-learning projects might be too time-consuming during college. Although during my courses I did not encounter initial resistance by students, I have read of this being a common problem. Among my students, resistance sometimes surfaced when they hit apparent roadblocks mid-semester; this further suggests to me that in-class analysis of social issues could help students remain attuned to the important purpose

of their writing, even amid difficulties. When students view service-learning as an asset rather than a burden, they shift from resisting to engaging.

Service-learning projects change the dynamic between instructor and students because the core project work occurs in the community, whose members consequently have an impact on the schoolwork. The resulting potential for unpredictability should be not be feared nor corralled but embraced and expanded—by letting students negotiate their own projects with nonprofit agencies and make their own problem-solving decisions. While in a classroom an instructor cannot deny his/her authority, at a service site an instructor could choose to function largely as facilitator, helping students and nonprofit agency personnel work together. The instructor should establish a framework for meeting course outcomes, advise students through their own project design with agency contacts, coach the students throughout their project work, teach necessary skills, and guide reflective analysis. What the instructor should not do is hand students ready-made projects for which students merely produce materials. Morgan and Streb found that the degree of student control over projects was the only factor that caused service-learning to affect a student's sense of civic engagement: "it is only when students have input in their projects that the pedagogical approach will have a positive effect on participants; otherwise, service-learning is likely to do harm" (39). If the instructor releases the reins of control, service-learning can inspire engagement, leading to truly collaborative creation of knowledge.

This might not be possible for every instructor, however. I tried to guide three other graduate teaching assistants at SIUC who were interested in service-learning. In all three cases, their courses were less successful than they had hoped. When their students hit roadblocks, these well-meaning instructors let the students abandon their service projects and do more typical research essays. I am curious what it takes for an instructor to trust that flailing projects will turn

around, leading to further growth. Furthermore, I understand that by predetermining the social issue, agency, project, or peer groups, instructors reduce variables, prevent some problems, and can be more assured of particular outcomes; the tradeoff is that without the ability to determine their own projects, students are less engaged in their coursework and in society, and they learn less.

My students' artifacts suggest they were motivated to improve their writing in order to meet the professional demands of community partners—specific and authentic audiences with identifiable needs. Such hands-on learning should be reinforced by meta-reflective discussions about rhetorical skills in the context of community.

An instructor can help students realize their writing growth by leading class discussions and assigning written reflections about the process of writing and how the students' new knowledge might transfer to other writing situations. Agency directors and other community members could talk to the class about the kinds of professional writing they do, and the students could reflect upon parallels between the described writing and the students' own project writing. Instructors should “help students recognize that they are making choices, and how to make those choices consciously, based on knowledge about the discourse community and rhetorical situation in which they are working” (Bergmann and Zepernick 142). Such analyses can help students realize they are learning more than the mechanical rules of writing or the idiosyncrasies of English papers—misperceptions prevalent among college students (133).

Through writing, people connect ideas both internally and externally, engaging with society. When students are given the opportunity, they learn how to address audience and purpose in order to make project decisions, and they learn transferable writing in the process of creating documents they believe the community needs. “Students do engage. They do develop

the confidence that they can make meaningful change. They are more connected, less alienated” (Dorman and Fox Dorman 131).

My students describe working their way through service-learning projects as though the work belonged to them, which it did. At the end of each semester, the students wanted me to keep their projects; while I realize it is not uncommon for students to neglect to pick up their portfolios after a term, what I am describing is something more pronounced. I tried to give the students back their projects on the day of their final presentations, but nearly all of them seemed to derive satisfaction from giving me their work for my research and as examples for future students of this adventure called “service-learning.” It was as though my students viewed themselves as helping me more than the other way around.

The students had worked with nonprofit agencies to design their own projects, and the way the students write about their work suggests they perceived it to be both professional and important. Abe reflects upon how he had trouble with motivation until his interview, with agency Manager Karen Mullins, for which he arrived with a checklist of duties to fulfill and materials to collect for course credit.

It was during the interview that the checklist turned into a desire to help these animals. Karen discussed with me the hardships of having to see hundreds of animals a year put to sleep, along with the Humane Society’s wish that every animal would be adopted. A couple hundred animals a year must be euthanized due to overpopulation, and the extreme cost of providing them with the proper care that they need. I knew at that moment my goal was to get one of those little guys adopted, not to get an “A” in the class. The group [later] brainstormed an idea to recreate the “Pet of the Week” ads. . . . We consulted the shelter, and they asked that we advertise Max in the paper, in order to end his bad luck streak of one year. (Abe, Reflection Essay)

These four students’ attempts to raise money for the ad failed, and they decided to pay for the ad themselves. Max was adopted: “after almost a year of being there, the Pet of the Week got

adopted the day our ad went out!!! So now I feel great,” wrote group member Fay in her Reflective Log.

Allowing students to make their own decisions is allowing service-learning to live up to its potential for teaching writing. By directing themselves, students learn how to work in collaborative groups and develop their individual voices as they discover, reflect upon, create and express knowledge, shaping projects which they themselves deem necessary. Because students are invested in the outcome, they are motivated to address audience and purpose through professional-quality writing. When instructors facilitate and guide, not dictate, they provide the opportunity for students to engage with the community and learn how to write well in order to contribute.

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## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**  
**SERVICE-LEARNING COURSES TAUGHT**

<b>University</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Term</b>
SIUC	Eng 101: Composition I	Fall 2000 2 sections
SIUC	Eng 102: Composition II	Spring 2001 2 sections
SIUC	Eng 102: Composition II	Summer 2001
SIUC	Eng 102: Composition II	Fall 2001
SIUC	Eng 102: Composition II	Spring 2002
SIUC	Eng 102: Composition II	Fall 2002
SIUC	Eng 291: Technical Writing	Spring 2003
SIUC	Eng 291: Technical Writing	Fall 2003
SIUC	Eng 119: Creative Writing	Summer 2004
CWU	Eng 100T: Transitional English	Fall 2005
CWU	Eng 102: Composition II	Winter 2006
CWU	Eng 102: Composition II	Spring 2010

## APPENDIX B

### ENGLISH 291 COURSE DESCRIPTION

#### English 291 Fall 2003

Instructor: Teresa Kramer  
Office phone: 453-6865  
Mailbox: 2380 Faner Hall  
E-mail: tkramer@siu.edu

Office: 3202B Faner Hall  
Office hours: 1-2 p.m. Fridays  
9-10 a.m. Wednesdays  
and by appointment

#### Texts

Paul V. Anderson. *Technical Communication: A Reader-Centered Approach*. 5th ed. Boston, Mass: Thomson Heinle, 2003.

Jane E. Aaron. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*. 4th ed. NY: Longman, 2001.

#### Course Description

This course provides students with a greater awareness of the demands of professional literacy. Students assess rhetorical situations (context, purpose, audience, and subject matter) that are typical of nonacademic settings, while fostering skills that are essential for academic literacy. Emphasis is placed on writing as a process, with a focus on making transitions from academic to work-world tasks: group invention, issues of authorship, recursive writing, and the synthesis of feedback and research.

#### Service-Learning

Through service-learning, you apply your work to a real-life cultural/social setting. You and your small group of students will select a technical-writing project that suits your interests; the options are limitless. Your writing will draw upon your research and volunteer work. As you learn about the agency and issues and how to express your ideas through writing, the community as a whole will end up benefiting.

This semester, we have the opportunity to work with SIUC's Center for Environmental Health and Safety. Your group will plan and carry out a project that

interests you and at the same time benefits the center. Thus, your work will not be for a hypothetical purpose, but a real one.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory at every class, conference, or other planned meeting. Arriving late is disruptive and therefore not acceptable.

Papers and assignments are due at the beginning of class or conference time; if you know you will be late or have to miss class or a conference, leave me a message by e-mail plus turn in the assignment beforehand at my English Department office, 2380 Faner Hall—a secretary must sign in your paper for me to know it was done on time.

Late work is not accepted. The only exceptions are for excused absences for religious holidays, documented university events, or documented illnesses or family emergencies.

If you are absent, be sure to find out from me what you missed and what is due for the next class meeting.

### Revision Policy

I maintain an open revision policy. While a polished draft is due on the due date, anyone may continue to improve any paper throughout the semester, until two weeks before finals.

### Coursework

#### Project Portfolio (425 points)

- Observation (75 points, individual grade): This will include taking observational notes; collecting information; interviewing; and conducting national research that puts the issue into context.
- Proposal (75 points, group grade): This will be a written agreement between your group and the Center for Environmental Health and Safety, outlining your project, why you're doing it, and what you hope to accomplish. This will be your group's guide for the rest of the semester.
- Project (100 points, group grade).
- Reflection (100 points): You will keep a log throughout the project; you will write an essay, toward the end, that analyzes how you and the

community were affected by your work; you will write a closing memo to the Center; and you will ask the Center for a signature and any closing comments.

- Service Work (75 points, individual grade): You each will log 15 service hours, which in turn will inform your work.

Final Presentation (25 points, group grade):

- This will be during the class final exam time.

Group Effort (50 points):

- You will help me assess the members of your group, including yourself, at several stages throughout the semester.

Writer's Notebook (100 points)

- Attendance is tied to the Writer's Notebook. We will do an assignment, such as free-writing, group brainstorming, or reflective journaling, during each class. Each notebook entry is worth about 5 points toward attendance. Students who arrive late may receive half-credit for that day's work.

### Plagiarism

Each student is expected to abide by the English Department's official policy statement on and description of plagiarism, which can be found on the Internet at <http://www.siu.edu/departments/english/writing/plagiarism.html>. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas as your own without giving the appropriate credit or without the person's consent to use his or her words or ideas without acknowledgment. The consequences of plagiarism are serious. In the work world, it can result in legal action. For students, it can result in a failing grade, disciplinary reprimand, censure, probation, and even suspension or dismissal from the university.



## APPENDIX C

### ENGLISH 291 FINAL ASSIGNMENTS

## Reflection Phase

### Group Work

**Transmittal (or Closing) Memo to Agency:** This is a memo that you will deliver with your final project to the Center for Environmental Health and Safety. See pages 515-18 and 601-2 in the book for examples; these are not exactly but rather close to what you need.

Your memo should be about two pages and include the following:

- a brief introduction
- a summary of your project and its purpose (including present and future uses and whom the project does, will, or could benefit)
- what you have learned through doing this project and working with the center
- a thank-you with details of what the center's staff members did to ensure your project's success
- any recommendations for the future
- a closing that includes a request for the center's response and feedback.

Due to me: by end of this week—Friday, Nov. 21.

You will give this and your project to the center during the last week of classes, Dec. 1-5.

### Individual Work

**First-person Reflection Essay:** Write about three to five pages, double-spaced, either in standard essay format or as a memo, reflecting upon your semester-long endeavor. There are many possible angles. Narrow your topic, so that you can go into great detail and analyze in depth. To begin brainstorming, look through your portfolio and re-read your Reflective Logs.

Here are a few ideas. Each one could be a separate essay:  
reasons behind the many choices your group made

- your various audiences—the center, volunteers, businesses, other donors, community members, the news-reading public, the radio-listening public, web-site readers, etc.
- the center's needs and how well your project addressed them
- your personal interests and how they fit in with this project
- group dynamics—in what ways your group was successful or unsuccessful, and what you learned that will help with future teamwork. This could include how your group interacted with other groups in the class.
- service work—tell an interesting story and make observations
- analyze how your group designed and carried out your project
- anything else you learned/observed/are interested in exploring in an essay.

Due: first draft—Friday, Nov. 21; second draft—Wednesday, Dec. 3.

## APPENDIX D

### HUMAN SUBJECTS RELEASE FORM

#### Informed Consent Form for Student Writers Participating in Research on Service-Learning

This project is set up to explore how a service-learning curriculum affects or does not affect the way students' writing develops, with particular attention to aspects that make service-learning productive or unproductive from the perspective of student writers. Should you agree to participate, the researcher will collect copies of your work for this class and ask you to complete a questionnaire at the end of the quarter.

All the material collected during the study will remain confidential within legal limits. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

If the researcher is the instructor, she will ask a volunteer to speak with the students early in the quarter, while she is out of the room. The volunteer will explain the project, give each student a copy of the cover letter and consent form, and further explain that they may withdraw from the study at any time. The volunteer will collect the consent forms and hold them until after the quarter is over and all grades are turned in. The instructor will not know which students agreed to participate until after the quarter is over and she has turned in all grades.

If another person is the instructor, s/he will leave the room while the researcher speaks with the students, early in the quarter. She will explain the project, give each student a copy of the cover letter and consent form, and further explain that they may withdraw from the study at any time. She will collect the consent forms. The instructor will not know which students agreed to participate until after the quarter is over and s/he has turned in all grades.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to have my work included in this study, with the understanding that all aspects of my involvement will be kept confidential within legal limits and that I may withdraw from the study at any time. I also understand that I will be given a copy of this form.

Signature:

Date:

If you have questions about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher, Teresa Kramer, 618/529-3992, tkramer@siu.edu.

Sign below if you want all material related to you to be destroyed upon study completion:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, request that all information related to my involvement be destroyed upon completion of the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Southern Illinois University Carbondale Human Subjects Committee and the Central Washington University Human Subjects Review Committee. Questions concerning your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the SIUC Committee Chairperson, Office of Research Development and Administration, Carbondale, IL 62901-4709, 618/453-4533.



## APPENDIX F

## ENGLISH 291 STUDENT ARTICLE ON WEB SITE

# Beautify Southern Illinois

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**CleanUp Campaign 2003** Story by [student's name removed]

If you haven't engaged in any community service activities, this semester would be the best time to do so. The Clean-Up Campaign is an ongoing project dedicated to keeping Carbondale and surrounding areas clean and always takes place on Saturday mornings. Fundraisers took place to provide the volunteers with cleaning supplies, food, and prizes.

October 4th was the second of four scheduled clean-ups to take place this semester as part of the Center for Environmental Health and Safety's "Clean-Up Campaign." The Center has teamed up with an English 291 class, instructed by Teresa Kramer, as part of a semester long project focused on community service. Although this is a semester long project for the English 291 class, the Clean-Up Campaign is a year round community service activity. The day of cleaning took place from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in both areas.

Two big groups, each consisting of twenty or more volunteers, split up; one went to Carterville, the other to Murphysboro's Spillway. Alpha Tau Omega and Delta Sigma Phi were among the group that cleaned a stretch on 13 in Carterville. A group from the English 291 class cleaned a park located in Carterville. Volunteers consisted of the students from the English class, and other SIU volunteers, headed out to Murphysboro's Spillway. Here, volunteers spent their day climbing the spillway and cleaning through and around it, and the lake.

As a whole, the English class received an abundance of donations, with help from Tiffany Heil of CEHS. T-shirts were donated by Donna Schwartzkopf of Schwartzkopf Printing, located in Alton, IL. European Tan donated three free tanning sessions. Melange Café donated a coffee mug. Saluki Central donated a sweatshirt. Rosetta's News donated a free video rental, and Sam's Café donated two free gyro meals. For Carterville's clean-up, Papa Johns donated five pizzas. Auto Time and Party donated a case of Napa Oil. Dr. and Mrs. Simpson donated dental goody bags filled with toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss. Sandra Congiard donated a Carterville Lions flag, and Veach's Short Stop donated two twelve packs of soda. For Murphysboro Spillway, Borowiak's IGA donated plastic silverware. Old Depot also donated plastic silverware as well as foam plates, napkins and bottled water. Domino's donated pizzas, and 17th Street Bar and Grill donated BBQ, coleslaw and baked beans. Dairy Queen of Murphysboro and Carterville donated a total of forty dollars. Tom Inic of The Tub surgeon donated twenty five dollars to the clean-up campaign.

We would like to thank all the volunteers from the English 291 class, other Saluki volunteers, the gentlemen of Alpha Tau Omega and the gentlemen of Delta Sigma Phi for their support and participation in the Clean-Up Campaign. We would also like to thank everyone who made a donation to the campaign.

All community service projects are open to any and everyone interested in keeping the community clean. The next clean-up dates are scheduled for November 8th and December 6th. If you or anyone you know is interested in volunteering, sponsoring or donating to the Clean-Up Campaign, contact Tiffany Heil at [Beautify@cehs.siu.edu](mailto:Beautify@cehs.siu.edu).

<http://www.cehs.siu.edu/beautify/Events/articles/cleanup100403.htm>

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Giving Students the Reins: Taking Advantage of Service-Learning's Potential as a Pedagogy for Teaching Writing.

Major Professor: Dr. Lisa J. McClure