

Selling Peace in a Time of War: The Rhetorical and Ethical Challenges of a Graduate-Level Service-Learning Course

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This article describes a service-learning-based capstone course for MA students in Professional Writing and Editing at the University of Cincinnati and illuminates the potential advantages of service-learning on an advanced level. Of particular benefit are the rhetorical and ethical challenges that partnerships with nonprofits can raise, requiring students to draw not only on their writing and design skills but also on their informed judgment. Our experience suggests, however, that, for students preparing for writing careers, the goals of “doing good” or “becoming good citizens,” often cited as desirable outcomes for service-learning, should be secondary to the goal of developing a strong professional ethic.

In the spring of 2003, the English Department at the University of Cincinnati ran its first capstone course for graduating MA students in the Professional Writing and Editing (PW&E) program. The department had voted the year before to eliminate the master’s exam, which had been based on a reading list for each of the department’s MA tracks, and, in its place to require students to take a track-specific capstone course. The instructor assigned to develop this course for the PW&E track was Kathryn Rentz, the professorial half of our professor-student authoring team. Rentz decided to arrange a service-learning partnership with a local nonprofit organization,

with the expectation that this format would effectively combine real-world projects with extensive discussion and reflection, and would thereby serve as an appropriate review of skills and concepts learned in the program.

As it turned out, this inaugural capstone course was a humdinger. Rentz and the students had agreed several weeks before the start of spring quarter that they would partner with Cincinnati's Center for Peace Education (CPE), an

organization Rentz had discovered on a list of volunteer opportunities provided by the University of Cincinnati's Center for Community Engagement. Cincinnati was in a healing mode after race riots two years earlier, and the course participants hoped to contribute to this effort. But two weeks before the course began, the United States

bombed Iraq. The students thus found themselves in the situation of having to advance the mission of a peace organization in a pro-war environment.

Should a graduate or advanced-undergraduate service-learning course in professional writing foster “caring for others” and “civic responsibility,” goals assumed to be central to K-12 and undergraduate service-learning?

This article is the result of a collaboration between Rentz and Ashley Mattingly, a student in the course. We recount what we did, how we did it, and what we gained, with an emphasis on the rhetorical and ethical challenges posed by our project. In the process, we also consider a question that this course generated for us—namely, should a graduate or advanced-level undergraduate service-learning course in professional writing significantly foster “caring for others” and “civic responsibility,” goals assumed to be central to K-12 and undergraduate service-learning?

Our answer to this question tends to be “yes, but in a limited sense.” While we would insist that our course did not encourage simple “vocationalism” (Howard, qtd. in Dubinsky 61), our experience led us to believe that service-learning at the graduate or advanced-undergraduate level, at least in professional writing, needs to take on a somewhat different character than it typically assumes at more elementary levels. For students preparing for professional-writing careers, service-learning should emphasize “good work” over “doing good,” while nevertheless emphasizing ethical responsibility and critical reflection.

Genesis and Structure of the Course (Rentz)

The University of Cincinnati, like many schools nationwide, has recently been formalizing and expanding its participation in experiential education. The University developed a Center for Community Engagement and a Center for Service Learning, adopted “responsible civic engagement” as a General Education goal (Center for Service Learning), and hired several administrators to promote collaborations between UC students and the community. It was partly in response to these initiatives that I decided to try service-learning as the basis for the new capstone course. In preparation, I attended the annual conference of the National Youth Leadership Council, a prominent advocate of service-learning, as well as several conference presentations specifically focused on service-learning in professional writing.

In addition, I had read a number of articles about service-learning in professional writing, though these focused largely on service-learning for undergraduates. (See Dubinsky; Graves; Hafer; Huckin; Matthews and Zimmerman; Rehling; Stevens; Tucker, McCarthy, Hoxmeier, and Lenk. Sapp and Crabtree discuss service-learning projects for individual graduate students but not for graduate courses.) I was eager to try a service-learning course on the graduate level. Our PW&E program’s primary goal is to prepare students to tackle real-world writing problems, and I believed that a service-learning-based capstone course would enable them to do this in a supportive environment that afforded ample opportunity for reflection.

To be honest, I didn’t think very deliberately about how the course might encourage the benefits of service-learning referred to variously as “caring for others,” “civic-mindedness,” “citizenship,” or “doing good.” I simply wanted to partner our students with a nonprofit organization for whom they could perform significant work, while reviewing and synthesizing what they had learned over the previous five quarters. Our program offers skills-oriented courses on such subjects as web design, online documentation, editing, writing reports and proposals, and promotional writing, but it also requires that students take a theory course—either Rhetoric or Professional Writing Theory—and the skills-oriented courses also include theoretical components. With its intentional blending of practice and reflection, service-learning seemed the perfect pedagogical basis for our capstone course in Professional Writing and Editing.

When I met with the directors of the Center for Peace Education to work out our collaborative arrangement, I described our program, our students, the particular gains we wanted from the capstone course, and the likely mutual benefits of our partnership. The two directors were thrilled to receive our invitation to collaborate. I realized then that being able to offer the aid of professionals in training is a great advantage of conducting service-learning on the graduate level. But CPE also had wonderful assets as a service-learning partner. The organization was well established, having taught conflict resolution and related skills in the Cincinnati area, mostly to school-age children, for over 20 years. The directors were well prepared to teach us about their programs and gave us a range of writing tasks from which to choose. CPE promised to create a partnership in which students would be challenged, feel that they were making a positive contribution, have important levels of responsibility, and receive input and appreciation from supervisors in the field, all criteria that Eyler and Giles (33) identify as characteristics of the kind of quality placement critical to the success of a service-learning project.

With the partnership arranged, I turned to creating a syllabus. To maximize students' learning from each other while also enabling the capstone grade to reflect each student's knowledge and skills, I set up the following guidelines:

- Each student would have primary responsibility for at least one major writing-related task for CPE, to be evaluated both by the instructor and by CPE.
- Each student would help others in the class by providing information and advice, offering feedback on written work, and finding and making available readings relevant to each project.
- Each student would keep a project/class journal reflecting on his or her work for CPE and making connections between the course, program readings, and this professional practice.
- Each student would complete a take-home final exam drawing on course projects, our reflections/dialog on these, and additional concepts and skills covered in the program.

When the US bombed Iraq, what had appeared to be a relatively straightforward service-learning arrangement took on an added layer of complexity. With CPE suddenly so out of synch with the sentiments of the country and of conservative Cincinnati in particular, I worried that we would fail to produce

material that would help strengthen this organization in this environment and that our first effort to create a capstone experience would be a gigantic failure. But the students rose to the challenge—and what enabled them to do so, as the next section reveals, was not so much their caring about the social mission of the organization as the strong sense of professionalism that they brought to the task.

A Student's Viewpoint (Mattingly)

I entered the capstone experience intent on applying the skills I had developed in the program and producing strong examples of my work for my portfolio. Although half of the class

already had jobs, I was preparing to re-enter the workforce, where I had previously been a grants assistant with a biomedical engineering firm, and to begin a career in writing and editing. Although initially focused on just producing a professional project and graduating, I became deeply involved with

all aspects of our partnership with the Center for Peace Education as the class uncovered the complexities of collaborating with a “real” client.

What enabled students to meet the challenge was not so much their caring about the social mission of the organization as the strong sense of professionalism that they brought to the task.

As the course began, I dreaded the obstacles we would face when writing for a peace organization in Cincinnati, a city that, for the most part, supported the war in Iraq. Once we learned that CPE was not just a pro-peace organization but instead one that taught conflict resolution and social-emotional skills to a broad range of students, these imagined obstacles became interesting rhetorical challenges. We strove to produce written material that effectively promoted CPE in a conservative city without violating the organization's values.

Below I evaluate the capstone course according to the four criteria defined by the Commission on National and Community Service (Waterman 2).

Although this graduate-level course essentially met all of the criteria, we tended to focus less on serving the community directly and more on developing professional material that would strengthen the organization.

Criterion #1: Students Learn Through Service Experiences that Meet Actual Community Needs. Jill Yungbluth, CPE’s executive director, visited our first class, bringing with her extensive information about the organization. The board of directors had recently met to plan CPE’s future and had identified two important goals: extending the organization’s reach into area schools and increasing its donor base. As we began assessing CPE’s materials to help them address these objectives, we realized that that we could not just enhance their current documents. The image CPE conveyed in their material was that of an organization that worked primarily with inner-city children. For CPE to increase its influence in and support from Cincinnati, we felt that the organization would need to change that image. After we made this fundamental decision, we were no longer responding to needs determined only by CPE but were developing strategies that would guide CPE’s overall growth.

To be able to speak for CPE, we first studied the organization. We read CPE’s curricula, reviewed grants and marketing materials, interviewed the key founder, and essentially immersed ourselves in the appropriate discourse for this community. Although we acquired the community’s vocabulary quickly, it took longer to understand the philosophy behind the organization’s language and goals. By the middle of the course, we could evaluate which language and marketing strategies were appropriate. For example, when revising language for CPE’s material, we chose the word “influence” over the more combative word “impact” and vetoed the suggestion to use the phrase “best in the tri-state” because it conveyed a competitive spirit incompatible with CPE’s ethos.

Although we avoided terms and strategies that we felt clashed with CPE’s philosophy, we also felt that we had to make deliberate changes to its public identity. We chose to begin with the center’s name, and when we met with Jill Yungbluth and founder Louise Gomer-Bangel, we broached the topic. We feared that an emphasis on “peace” in the current political environment would deter schools from working with the organization. Although Yungbluth and Gomer-Bangel agreed to consider the name change, we decided that CPE had too much history invested in the name for us to change it without radically changing their identity. Not only would every document and almost every program name change, but also an important tie with the original mission of the organization—to address schoolchildren’s behavior problems

through peace training, not through military school—would be lost. Opting to make more subtle changes, we performed a balancing act: We updated CPE’s identity to appeal to its audience in the current social context while honoring the organization’s history and mission.

Appendices A and B, the “before” and “after” homepages for CPE, illustrate the strategies we used. To retain CPE’s sense of history and still cut across political lines, we emphasized CPE’s identity as an educational and not a political organization. One subtle yet fundamental change we made along these lines was to revise the logo and use a lighter stroke on “peace” and a heavier stroke for “education.” We also revised the opening text to focus on benefits to students, schools, and Cincinnati rather than on the mission to spread peace. A third way we emphasized education was to directly address CPE’s primary “customers,” school principals, by providing a special link on the homepage for them and adding evidence of CPE’s likely effectiveness in their schools.

To further increase CPE’s appeal, we demonstrated with graphics and text that CPE’s training programs could benefit all kinds of students at all kinds of schools. The existing web site and promotional videos showed trainers working mainly with African American students, and the tagline read, “building safer schools and communities.” The projected message was that CPE worked primarily with inner-city schools troubled by violence. To make the organization more widely appealing, we chose pictures of children from different backgrounds for CPE’s homepage and also created a more inclusive tagline, “building better schools for a better world.”

As we began shaping CPE’s new identity, we wrestled with the ethics of our determining an organization’s ethos and goals. As an outside group, one that was involved with CPE for a mere ten weeks, we sensed that the professional identity we hoped to construct might violate the organization’s sense of history, be rejected by the founding members, or even promise a kind of business-like training that CPE could not provide. One student summarized this discursive conflict by writing in a shared journal entry at the end of the quarter, “I found that throughout the ten-week course, the tension between the realities of capitalistic marketing and the ideals of a mission-driven organization did not subside.” We ultimately decided to bolster CPE’s professional image by broadening the scope of their language and images and by using persuasive

quantitative and qualitative evidence accepted by area educational groups. We did, however, avoid more overt business language.

One example illustrates this process well. As a class, we discussed using popular buzzwords like “conflict management” and “emotional intelligence” to make CPE more marketable to suburban schools and even the business community. We were mindful, however, of Herbert Marcuse’s argument that “functionalized, abridged . . . language” used without regard to its original domain of values “is the language of one-dimensional thought” (95). Imagining that Marcuse would suggest that we were flattening key terms, ignoring their history, and applying them in a superficial manner, we chose to create a professional image without the business jargon.

We also were concerned that de-emphasizing CPE’s service to inner-city African American children in order to broaden the organization’s appeal to largely white, more affluent neighborhoods was ethically questionable. Although we intended to show how CPE’s programs benefited all schools, our more inclusive identity could suggest that CPE had abandoned its original commitment to urban schools. Even though we were generally pleased with our decisions, these questions and doubts never quite disappeared.

Ultimately, meeting the needs of this nonprofit organization meant looking beyond its immediate needs to strategies for a viable future. This challenge required not only writing and design skills but also well-informed judgment and an awareness that our best solution would not necessarily be a perfect solution.

Criterion #2: The Service Experience Provides Structured Time for the Students to Think, Talk, or Write About Their Service Activities.

Virtually all our class time was used for sharing weekly journal entries, reflecting on our work, and refining our writing choices. Within this workshop environment, we could agree on the identity we were building for CPE.

The key project that focused this discussion was reviewing the web site. As we assessed CPE’s site, we found that many elements were discordant with the professional image that the organization wanted to project. For example, when users clicked on the staff link, personal photos that included boyfriends

and even a monkey appeared on the screen. Also, the Center's primary audience is school principals, but the web site rarely addressed this audience. When we began to revise the site and choose language for the text, the collaborative problem-solving process gave everyone a sense of what language was appropriate for the new image, what benefits we would stress, who our target audience was, and what evidence supported our claims. After deciding to target principals, for example, we incorporated appeals to principals on CPE's homepage, discussed which benefits and supporting evidence principals would find persuasive, and discovered the importance of designing a promotional package just for this group. After these discussions, all class members could accurately incorporate these elements into their individual projects.

We also used the electronic classroom tool Blackboard to exchange ideas and drafts outside of class. We posted links to sources on the Internet, distributed information that would help other students with their projects, and maintained a running discussion on certain tasks, such as rewriting the mission statement and deciding on a tagline. Our online discussions were not as productive as the in-class sessions because students checked and responded at different times and to different "threads" of the discussion; it often took a week to resolve minor questions. However, all the students were committed to editing their peers' work, and we all posted drafts of our separate projects and received comments back from other students within days. In addition to making our in-class and online discussions productive, this commitment made our service-learning course different from traditional courses and fostered a sense of professional responsibility. The success of our individual projects depended on our ability to agree upon a unifying identity for CPE and to express this identity consistently in all of our projects. In other words, rather than competing for grades, we worked together as a professional team.

Criterion #3: The Service Experience Provides Students with Opportunities to Use Newly Acquired Skills and Knowledge in Real-Life Situations in Their Community. The professional writing program at UC includes classes in such areas as journalism, promotional writing, grant and report writing, document design, design software, and professional writing theory. We certainly applied our "newly acquired skills and knowledge" to our work for CPE. Here is a list of our projects and the special skills and knowledge that each drew upon:

- Redesigned homepage. Primarily used document design skills and audience analysis/theory, including the Aristotelian concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos.
- Revised web site. Relied heavily on Jakob Nielsen's principles of usability for web sites; also tapped into Aristotelian modes of persuasion to present the information logically, improve CPE's credibility, and connect emotionally with the audience.
- Formal report assessing CPE's program-evaluation methods. Drew on our knowledge of this genre, on research skills, and on an understanding of different types of evidence (for example, quantitative versus qualitative).
- Principals' Package, Donor Materials (brochures paired with different letters for different audiences). Applied genre theory, persuasion theory/strategies, and document design principles.

Throughout these projects, our work was informed by larger perspectives on discourse, such as those of Wittgenstein and Foucault, which helped us perceive and contend with the ethical issues inherent in our project. We studied Wittgenstein's belief in the relativism of language, particularly his concept of "family resemblances," which holds that we understand and label the things in our world based on a "complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (qtd in Bartley 136). Realizing that language is dependent upon its context for meaning, our class re-evaluated CPE's language, especially its use of words such as "peace," "diversity," and "mission" in a time of war and tense racial relations.

To understand how the language we recommended to CPE would change for each community we addressed, we reflected on Michel Foucault's concept of discursive terrains. According to Foucault, "Exchange and communication are positive figures working inside complex systems of restriction" (1162). These social "systems" determine what language, conventions, values, and people a community privileges. To reach its different audiences effectively, CPE needed to follow the rules of discourse for each group. When we composed for different audiences—public school principals versus independent school principals, corporate versus long-time donors—we were adjusting CPE's identity for each community. For example, for principals, CPE builds stronger schools; for donors, CPE creates better citizens. By rephrasing its benefits for particular audiences, CPE communicates that it shares the same values as those communities.

While Foucault's concepts helped us see how to broaden CPE's appeal, they also helped us find the ethical limits of re-labeling the organization's services. As we recast CPE's benefits so that the organization appealed to different communities, we also understood that we were perhaps restricting CPE's discourse, making its identity more palatable to suburban schools but also sidestepping the tough issues of local and international violence. In one notable case, we kept a word in the CPE's materials, even though we thought it might limit the organization's appeal, because the executive director insisted on its importance to CPE's identity. The student primarily responsible for revising the web site wanted to take "diversity" out of CPE's materials in an attempt to distance CPE even further from its prior image as an organization that primarily serves African Americans students. When she commented to CPE's executive director that "we don't want this term," the director laughed and said, "*We* do!" In her good-natured way, she had let us know that we could not abandon a discursive realm that was central to CPE's sense of its identity and mission.

In terms of both application and theory, then, the course enabled us to practice in a real-world setting what we had learned in our academic program. In addition, because we were graduate students, most of us had come from professional backgrounds or had already begun our careers. We therefore could synthesize old and new knowledge and skills, which enabled us to strive for a high degree of professionalism on CPE's behalf.

Criterion #4: The Service Experience Extends Student Learning Beyond the Classroom and Helps to Foster a Sense of Caring for Others.

The capstone course successfully extended our learning "beyond the classroom." As we practiced and applied our skills, we also interacted with a real client. This situation stretched our analytical skills as we worked to find an image that accurately represented the organization amidst a charged political environment. In contrast to in-class projects, in which one generally works with a fairly simple scenario or makes one up to fit the final product, we wrote within the constraints of an ever-changing context.

This project, however, probably did not do much to "foster the development of a sense of caring for others." Although we interacted with a few people at CPE, we were not involved in the organization's community and school

projects. Perhaps if we had interacted more with the students and had been more engaged in the social service of the organization, we would have developed a community-generated “sense of caring.”

In a way, though, we did develop a sense of caring—for our peers and for our CPE partners. We had to value our fellow students’ work enough to take the time to carefully critique multiple drafts. We learned to express our suggestions tactfully and respond to critiques gracefully in order to maintain the collaborative spirit essential to producing professional work. We also took our role as spokespersons for CPE very seriously. We spent many hours learning about the organization and deciding how to represent it in ways that would honor its core values and strengthen its presence in the community.

Overall, our collaboration with CPE succeeded as a capstone course for graduate students largely because of its service-learning elements. We learned a great deal from our field experience and from each other. Especially valuable was the challenge of having to wrestle with profound issues as we helped CPE plan how to navigate politically treacherous waters. In the end, we agreed that a course like this one is excellent preparation for graduate students who want to assume leadership positions in their future careers.

The Instructor’s Viewpoint (Rentz)

Ashley’s final words recall Jack Bushnell’s article exploring what we should be educating professional writers to do. Rather than creating corporate mouth-pieces, he says, we should be helping students learn “to think and use lan-

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guage,” a process that will “give them choices as professionals” and “allow them to help define the direction of their organization rather than ceding that role to others” (176). The students in the capstone course brought a sophisticated sense of language to bear on their work that enabled them to

influence the future identity and health of CPE. They were sensitive to the social ramifications of their work, understanding that deciding whether to use one phrase or another would in fact have consequences. They keenly felt their moral responsibility to handle the organization and its future with care.

Yet it would be inaccurate to claim that students used the service-learning experience as a means of social change or a springboard to better citizenship. Instead, without specific direction from me, the students adopted the role of professional consultants. They created a relationship of mutual respect with the CPE staff and did their best to deliver materials that CPE could use. According to CPE's executive director, they succeeded. As Jill Yungbluth wrote in her final assessment of the collaboration,

This partnership was a productive experience. CPE gained fresh language and professional materials that have already been successful at drawing attention to our program. The class took an honest look from the outside into CPE and dedicated themselves to our areas of need. Each student expressed a genuine commitment to creating a project that CPE could easily implement. I am extremely impressed with the quality of each project.

Should my students have also studied the forces that generate problems of conflict and bias in Cincinnati and our society in general? And should they have adopted CPE's mission as their own? According to much of the literature on service-learning, they should have.

But in professional writing programs, and perhaps in most fields of study not oriented to social service by definition, our students are being trained to offer their services from the position of professional experts. To the extent that social analysis and critique will help

them become more responsible professionally, we have an obligation to investigate social issues. We need to be careful, though, not to lose sight of the fact that we are preparing our students to serve others' communication needs.

We also need to be sure they understand that professionalism is different from advocacy. The professional relationship is based on the understanding that experts will bring their knowledge and skill to bear on clients' needs but that, in fact, experts will maintain some distance between themselves and their clients. The Society for Technical Communication's statement of ethical principles asserts that its members will

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“serve the business interests of [their] clients and employers” as long as these “are consistent with the public good” and their own standards of “integrity and excellence.” In service-learning courses for students bound for professional writing careers, I think it is important to emphasize this formulation of “doing good” over volunteerism or social activism.

A few months after our capstone course ended, Ellen Barton and Laurie Evans published an article reviewing a service-learning project in an advanced undergraduate/ graduate technical writing class. This case provides an interesting contrast to our experience with service-learning on the graduate level,

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but it also indirectly supports our sense that, in professional writing programs, the most appropriate and natural “ethic of care” (to use Carol Gilligan’s phrase; see Markel 88-98) for advanced students to assume in regard to their organizational partners is that of consulting professionals. Barton and Evans describe a service-learning course entitled “Introduction to Technical and

Professional Writing Practice” that appears to have been offered at the outset of the students’ programs of study in professional writing. The students’ task was to write a research report that would help the doctors at an academic medical center recognize why trained personnel from organ procurement organizations, not doctors, should be the ones to make the request to the families for their deceased loved ones’ organs, and why they should do this some time after the death of the loved one, not immediately afterwards. But to the surprise of the instructor, the students, having studied the communication context, rejected the role of report writers and assumed the larger role of “communication professionals” who scoped out, and recommended remedies for, the organ procurement agency’s lack of influence with, and respect from, the medical staff. On the one hand, the authors say that the students, in so doing, “overprofessionalized” themselves (416) and assumed too “superior” a position (434) with regard to their organizational partner. On the other hand, the authors point out that the students “rightly” moved from the relatively modest task of writing a report to the more complex task of analyzing and attempting to solve the underlying problems.

Even by the end of the article, the authors are ambivalent. While they are pleased that the students “enthusiastically embraced this sense of professionalism as communicators” (416), they also seem disappointed that the students thus failed to “pursue insider status” (433) with the agency. My reading of this case is that the students, even though they were new to the field, appropriately gravitated toward a more professional role than the authors had anticipated for them. The students apparently made some tonal gaffs in their recommendations to the agency, but these gaffs suggest to me not that the students had assumed the wrong role in the partnership but that it was a mistake to set up such a partnership before the students had had a chance to acquire the knowledge and sensitivities they needed in order to perform such a role gracefully. We should *expect* that students seeking to credential themselves as professional communicators will adopt a consulting role with client organizations. If we have provided them with appropriate practical and theoretical training, they *will* know better than the client organization, in some ways, what the organization needs to do in order to achieve its goals. Their professional ethic will involve applying their expert insights to the organization’s situation in a tactful way that nevertheless honors the organization’s right to define its own identity. This is the “sense of caring” that it seems to me most appropriate to develop in future professional writers.

Judging from the literature on service-learning in K-12 and undergraduate classrooms (for example, Bringle, Games, and Mallory; Eyler and Giles; Furco and Billig), the development of civic responsibility and social caring may be a defensible goal of courses designed for the general undergraduate population—though I have to confess that I am uneasy with the “path to virtue” or “doing good” emphasis of service-learning even on the lower educational levels. It is surprising to me how much of the service-learning literature speaks of social good without an acknowledgement that what gets defined as a good cause depends on who is doing the defining (two exceptions are Bacon; Matthews and Zimmerman). In fact, as we often emphasize as both scholars and teachers, there is a political dimension to every kind of discourse and action. For example, as Joseph Kahne and Joel Westheimer point out, George H. W. Bush promoted volunteerism in his famous “thousand points of light” speech, but “requiring students to ‘serve America’ . . . might also promote a thousand points of the status quo.” Service-learning initiatives, they further explain, can be seen as backing “a conservative political agenda that denies a

role for government.” On the other hand, as Steven Michaels points out, service-learning can be “a subtle but clever form of indoctrination” into “left-to-extreme-left politics.” I see elements along these lines in much service-learning literature—for example, in the desire to turn our students into “ideal orators” who “bring help to the suppliant, to raise up those that are cast down,” and so forth (Cicero, qtd in Dubinsky 61), in an emphasis on social justice (Herzberg), and in advice to arrange service-learning internships that will enable students to experience “the power of communication to effect social change” (Rehling 78). Teachers on any level need to be alert to the danger of imposing their own values on their students and to seek ways to avoid such undue influence—for example, by letting students choose their own organizational partners (Bowdon and Scott; Bacon).

These concerns suggest that service-learning as defined by the Commission on National and Community Service may not carry over seamlessly into professional programs. I found only three service-learning books that included chapters on graduate-level programs (Droge and Murphy; Howard; Jacoby and Associates), and a search in ERIC combining the terms “graduate-level” and “service-learning” yielded only eleven hits. Even though Fisher claims that “service-learning can be integrated into any graduate program” (13), the relative scarcity of literature on service-learning at the graduate level suggests that pedagogy focusing on civic virtue may be less appropriate for programs in which students have enrolled to learn career-related roles and skills. In graduate and advanced-undergraduate professional-writing programs, I believe that we have an implied contract with our students to prepare them, first and foremost, for professional work. Foregrounding “social justice” (Fisher 208), “citizenship” (Astin), or “civic responsibility” (Bringle and Hatcher) instead would be a breach of that contract. On the other hand, given the interpenetration of ethics and language use, programs in professional writing can and should stress, as Howe defines it, “working cooperatively with others in a morally meaningful way” (v).

If teaching under the service-learning banner requires a primary emphasis on doing social good, then professional-writing instructors may have to adopt the more generic, less value-charged goals of “experiential education” or “situated learning.” On the other hand, if proponents of service-learning can regard reflective professional service as an appropriate substitute for civic

education in professional programs, then service-learning can serve as the perfect basis for graduate and advanced-undergraduate courses in professional writing. As Eyler and Giles point out, service-learning forces students to contend with and reflect on “ill-structured problems”—that is, problems that “are complicated and are embedded in a complex social context”—that help students to develop the “ability to evaluate conflicting information,” to understand “that there is no simple or definitive solution,” and to become sensitive to the consequences of their actions (16). Experiencing this kind of social and moral development as part of their professional education will enable our students to become good citizens within, and through, their chosen careers.

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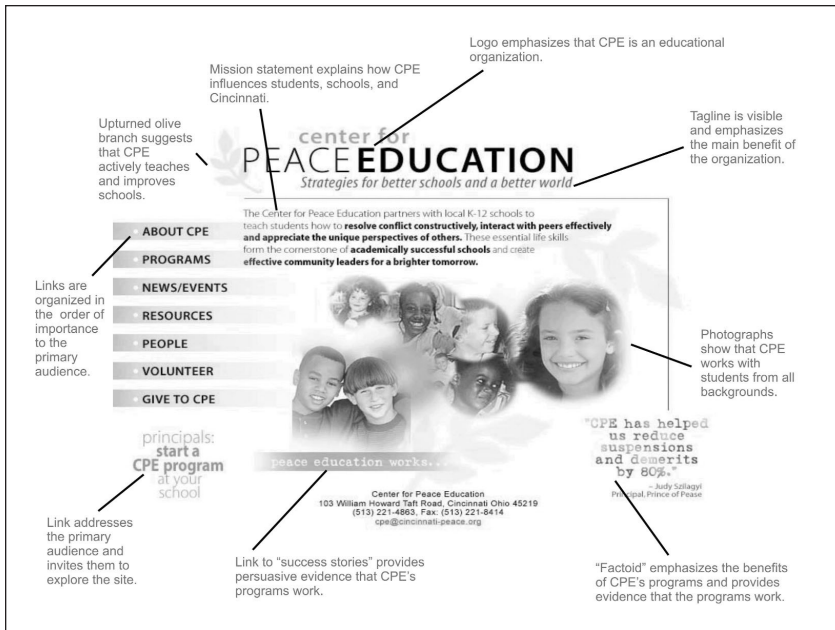
The image shows a screenshot of the Center for Peace Education (CPE) homepage. The page has a header with the title "CENTER FOR PEACE EDUCATION" and contact information. A left sidebar contains a menu with links: ABOUT CPE, PUBLICATIONS, BULLETIN BOARDS, PROGRAMS, NEWS/EVENTS, PEOPLE, RESOURCES, GET INVOLVED, and CONTACT CPE. The main content area features a mission statement, a quote from a fifth-grade student, and a list of funders. Annotations with arrows point to various elements, asking questions about their effectiveness and placement.

Annotations on the page include:

- Does a mission statement belong on the homepage?
- Will an emphasis on "peace" and all its current associations affect this organization?
- Will anyone see this tagline?
- Are the links organized logically and effectively?
- What does this graphic say about CPE?
- What do these photographs say about CPE?
- Does this quote promote CPE?

Central Question: Will this homepage make the target audience, school principals, search the rest of CPE's Web site?

Appendix A: Original CPE Homepage



Appendix B: Revised CPE Homepage

Kathryn Rentz is an associate professor and Coordinator of Professional Writing in the English Department at the University of Cincinnati. Her research on genre, narrative, and other language-related issues has appeared in the *Journal of Business Communication*, *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *Technical Communication Quarterly*, and other journals, and in the anthology *Narrative and Professional Communication* (Ablex, 1999). In 2002 the Society for Technical Communication awarded her a faculty internship with a software company, from which she learned a great deal about writing in nonacademic settings.

Ashley Mattingly received a B.A. in English from Hanover College in 1999 and a M.A. in English with an emphasis in Professional Writing from the University of Cincinnati in 2003. She is currently a Development Associate/Editorial Specialist for Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana and does freelance web and document design.