



Between Civility and Conflict: Toward a Community Engaged Procedural Rhetoric

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This article connects the author's practice, Fulkerson's "map" of composition studies, and insights from critical race studies, specifically whiteness studies, to argue that even though many or even most community-based writing courses fit into a critical/cultural studies-type philosophy, such an orientation is limited. The article argues for "community-engaged procedural rhetorical," in which students would learn in community-engaged writing courses the meta-skills to analyze what strategies and tactics worked rhetorically and materially to make change in a given situation, and to extrapolate this learning toward the future.

Interests Repugnant to Public Policy/Very Nice People Or, Community-Based Writing Instruction "At the Turn of the 21st Century"

Two articles, both published in June 2005, will frame the story told below. The first is Richard Fulkerson's "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," published in *College Composition and Communication*, and the second is Russell Shorto's "What's Their Real Problem with Gay Marriage? (It's the Gay Part)," published in the *New York Times Magazine*.

In his article, Fulkerson "maps the terrain," as he sees it, of the contemporary teaching of composition. Three overarching approaches make it onto Fulkerson's map: critical/cultural studies (CCS), expressivism, and procedural rhetoric. In a CCS-type course, teachers direct students to study texts, work to interpret the ideological assumptions undergirding those texts, and recognize the structural inequalities in our society revealed and supported by those

texts. Fulkerson critiques such courses primarily because, in his view, they demand a particular—neo-Marxist, conflicting-group-interests—ideological stance from students. “Teachers dedicated to exposing the social injustice of racism, classism, homophobia, misogyny, or capitalism cannot perforce accept student viewpoints that deny such views or fail to register their contemporary relevance,” he writes (665). He continues,

Students are “free” to write their papers from any perspective they choose. They have only to make a thoughtful case for their position. The problem is that a socially committed teacher will rarely find contrary views presented by an undergraduate to be sufficiently “thoughtful,” any more than a literature scholar will find an undergraduate reinterpretation of “Hills Like White Elephants” convincing. (666)

In Fulkerson’s view, Critical/ Cultural Studies frames the work of composition as students articulating critical thinking about social structures, but only so long as they write about conflict and power relations as endemic to those social structures.

Like other approaches informed by Critical/ Cultural Studies, service learning has historically demanded, either explicitly or implicitly, that students consider underlying structural causes of the problems addressed by the “service.” For example, in an often cited 1996 article, Barbara Jacoby writes,

Service-learning programs are also explicitly structured to promote learning about the larger social issues behind the needs to which their service is responding. This learning includes a deeper understanding of the historical, sociological, cultural, economic, and political contexts of the needs or issues being addressed (Kendall, 1990). Reflection could be designed, for example, to encourage students working in a homeless shelter to ask such questions as Why are there homeless people? What national and state policies affect homelessness? Why do we create homeless shelters rather than identify and solve the root causes of the problem? If homelessness is a global problem, how do other countries deal with it? (7)

I teach within a composition program that explicitly defines itself as taking a cultural studies approach, an approach that seeks to expose conflicting interests, especially those submerged in language (e.g., the conflicting interests implied in “we” and “homeless people”). This essay serves to critique and refine my own practices, not just as a “socially committed” teacher, but as a socially situated teacher. I aim to connect my practice, Fulkerson’s map, and recent composition theory that has integrated insights from critical race studies, specifically whiteness studies; I argue that even though many or even most community-based writing courses fit into a CCS-type philosophy, such an orientation is limited. A synthesis of approaches is especially needed in the current context of growing religious fundamentalism paired with political conservatism.

Thus, the next part of this story, perhaps the setting (or, my setting), opens with Russell Shorto’s June 2005 *New York Times Magazine* cover story investigating anti-gay marriage activists. The activists Shorto portrays seem to find George Bush’s statement (from the election debates) that we should “treat people with tolerance and respect and dignity” an anathema and to disagree with Bush’s own position that “in a free society, consenting adults can live the way they want” (Shorto 37). The anti-gay marriage movement has passed amendments in eighteen states at last count, and—segue to exposition—my own home state of Pennsylvania passed HB 2604, which pronounced “same-sex marriage” as “repugnant to our public policy” (Lamba Legal Defense). My partner pays for her own health benefits out of pocket because the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, for which I work through West Chester University, will not provide health benefits for same-sex partners. (Though if Emily dies and I file the right paperwork, I can have my firmly bourgeois bereavement leave.) My own interests are emphatically at stake in texts such as HB 2604 and our faculty contract, which describe and prescribe my life. Could I ever find contrary views regarding these texts, the social relations they structure, and the social conflicts they display, offered by an undergraduate or otherwise, sufficiently “thoughtful”? Would I ever tolerate even a consideration of an underlying cause that failed to validate the injustice of my marginalization in this social system, even for a moment or for the sake of learning?

I currently teach in an institution that is, technically, secular and pluralistic.

WCU is the second largest institution in Pennsylvania's state system, with about 10,000 undergraduates. It is located in a small urban area, but attended by a mostly Christian, largely white (about 90%), and generally conservative base of students, many of whom live close enough to drive home for dinner. Many of these students have been exposed to school-community projects through K-12 requirements or have done volunteer work through community or church activities. When I was first hired, one of my colleagues said to me, "I think you will find that West Chester students are very nice people, overall." I found this portrait to be accurate, and while I tend toward the acerbic myself, I have grown to appreciate students' warmth and good will.

This nice climate is also official policy. WCU's Office of Social Equity offers the following statement from our university President, "There is no place at our University for destructive forces such as racism, sexism, Homophobia, and anti-Semitism. I ask all of you to join me in our effort to make West Chester University a community that embraces diversity. To be less is unacceptable." That is, we—students, faculty and administration—at WCU strive to be a democratic campus, a civil community, grounded in mytho-American, liberal notions of equality and shared humanity. We even have a campus-wide event dedicated to appreciation of diversity, designated "Civility Day."

I find myself, as a teacher, theorist, citizen and subject, situated between civility and conflict. Even if this "civility" is primarily a hegemonic swathe used to buy my (and my students') consent in an unjust system, it is not purely that: civility addresses me and my students, and it is essential that it be addressed. There is a growing body of critique, which I will utilize below, which suggests that as teachers of community engaged writing, we must find a place between civility and conflict, a pedagogy that does not ignore the ground of cultural studies but does not erect barricades there either. In order to make this argument concrete, I will provide an example from my own recent practice.

Between Conflict and Civility

Or, How I "Thought Critically" Over My Summer Vacation

I have been teaching a variety of community-based writing courses since 1992, first *for* and *with* members of the community in GED programs and, since 1999, with university students *for*, *about* and *with* the community

(Deans). Most recently, I began teaching a course in my university's Honors program. The WCU Honors program, with its dictum, "to be honorable is to serve," requires a capstone course in which juniors and seniors design and implement their own individual service learning projects.

An excerpt from my Honors capstone syllabus situates my pedagogy in this course within the borders of CCS:

The **immediate goal** of a SL project is to identify and address a "surface" need, a need identified in collaboration with a community group or set of community members. Surface does not mean unimportant or superficial here; in the context of service-learning, surface means what is apparent on the surface, which we are obliged to examine as a sign of (not the whole of) the structures underlying the need.

This is what differentiates service learning from volunteerism. Service learning, as an orientation to education and citizenship, assumes that there are "reasons" why certain needs exist for certain populations in certain contexts, and not others. The deepest types of learning from these projects happen through the process of exposing these "reasons," these cultural stories about why things are the way they are....

The following e-mail, sent to the Honors students in my course who were working on their individually designed and pre-approved (by me) capstone projects over the summer, serves to further clarify the types of reasons or cultural stories I habitually look for.

THANKS all who posted to the Blackboard. And thanks especially to those who replied, who gave encouragement, who offered ideas and resources. I will try over the next week or so to respond to people individually, but contact me one-on-one for any immediate concerns.

One question I have for everybody-not something you have to reply to, but just to think about, is:

What is the conflict (as you currently see it) underlying the need your project addresses?

My assumption here is that if there is no conflict (of interested parties) then there probably would be no problem/need. Is this assumption correct? Good question. Fire away.

The excerpts above, in the light of Fulkerson's map of composition in the new millennium, situate me as a CCS teacher. Analyze your text—in this case, a cultural artifact, your own service learning project—and show me its ideological underbelly. I am cueing students to work against hegemonic notions like “there but for the grace of God go I” (Herzberg). My pedagogy assumes conflicting group interests are at work and challenges the perception of need as the experience of unlucky individuals in an unfortunately flawed but essentially just system.

The e-mail, however, does leave room for students to question the assumption of conflict. And one of the first conditions that led me to reflect on my practice at this moment was the studied lack of response to my question (though I did not mandate such response, and there may have been any number of reasons for that lack). No one argued with it. It was just (civily) ignored.

I was also prompted to re-view my practice by my own responses to two capstone proposals in particular. The course, as currently designed, requires students to propose projects before or at least immediately upon entering the course. My tendency is to look for proposals that show an initial understanding of social structures and social needs as signifiers of underlying conflicting group interests. At the least, I want to be able to easily see “The Underlying Conflict,” even if students’ proposals do not make it evident that the students themselves do. That way, I can push students to “think critically” about the situation in which they are serving and studying.

One student, Val (all names are pseudonyms), proposed coordinating repair and cleanup work on the campus Catholic Center in collaboration with the priest who staffs the center. Another student, Rae, proposed researching the feasibility of providing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) community housing on campus in collaboration with the professional staff person

who, among other responsibilities, heads the LGBT Concerns committee. The questions I asked of each of the proposals invited students to clarify time commitments, work to be accomplished, and other practical matters. But my initial internal responses set off alarm bells: my vexation upon reading Val's proposal and my delight upon reading Rae's. I'm pretty sure I managed to put those feelings aside and respond *fairly* to each of their proposals. Even at the time, though, I was clear that I was not *impartial*, in the sense of neutral, non-aligned, disinterested. I am profoundly interested. Of course, my interestedness in all social conflicts is always already present; the conflicts highlighted by Val and Rae are just more obvious to me than most. I approved Rae's proposal with some of the above clarifying questions. I pushed Val to clarify these practical issues too, but in a good deal more detail, and she—an honors student after all—asked to meet with me to discuss and address my concerns.

Replacing the “Race to Truth”

As the day of the conference with Val approached, I was fortunate to be designing another course focusing on critical race studies and thus reviewing some recent literature on whiteness. Catherine Fox, in “The Race to Truth: Disarticulating Critical Thinking from Whiteness,” comments on the conflation of critical thinking with acceptance of a certain ideological stance. She writes, “In the problem-posing approach to teaching...the instructor too often has already solved the problem” (200). She uses the theoretical framework of “whiteness” to separate, for herself, critical thinking from ideology. “Whitely” ways of being and thinking (often but not always associated with an individual identifying as “white,” in the way that one can be masculine but not male, feminine but not female) assume “a staggering faith in their own rightness and goodness” (Frye qtd. in Fox 202).

And thus I found myself reflected in Fox's mirror. Many times, I have said to students a version of the following: “It is *because* I respect you that I challenge you and tell you what I believe and why. I will believe what I believe until my own thinking or someone else's challenges my beliefs. I hope you place facts in front of me that challenge me. I hope you look forward to my doing the same.” But do I really look forward to being challenged? I'd like to think so, but I'm not sure. Certainly I am willing to say, “I don't know,” when I don't, but much of my habitual way of being, like most academics'

according to Fox, is *whitely*-reflective of a staggering faith that my own analyses are right. It's practically a job-related hazard. And this is why, I now believe, Val ended up in my office, and Rae did not.

Rather than assume that my own analyses are right (and thus my students' are either in agreement with my own or wrong), I might instead assume that in each of our analyses, contradictions inhere. Those contradictions are likely to be linked, but not determined, by our locations in the multiple communities and systems which position us in relation to each other and the issue under discussion. And these contradictions are not bad, wrong, or blinders to be removed. As Susan Welsh asserts in her critique of what is often termed student "resistance" in critical pedagogy, "Contradictory consciousness is what develops intelligence, interpretive competence, and intervention in culture" (13). Isn't that what community-engaged writing is meant to be—intervention in culture? That is one feature that distinguishes a service learning course from a "standard" CCS course; a service learning course means to DO something outside the classroom, to intervene in some community. It is important, then, to try to understand students' and our own communal affiliations.

Welsh asserts that what seems at first to be students' "uncritical" positions might more productively be read as "a critical social literacy, a complex, self-preserving, and community-preserving or community-building strategy aimed against the conditions of power under which public dialogue has been constrained" (9). As a proposal-reader, I might begin by remembering that as they write, both Val and Rae are preserving themselves and the complex communities they value; they are writing their (complex) selves. Just as, perhaps, the WCU Office of Social Equity is narrating itself and writing itself into being as a civil community, a democratic and even just community—at the same time as contradictions inhere within it which remain unjust, which continue to marginalize and oppress some of its members.

Amy Winans builds on both Welsh and Fox, arguing that many faculty construct "generic" white and middle-class students which "efface the complexities of race in people's lived experiences" (256). Though both Winans and Fox focus on the elision specifically of race as a complex lived experience and set of understandings, Welsh does not, and I mean for this analysis to serve as a reminder about the many subject positions that my students engage and the

complex real locations through which we all move. Val, for example, is undoubtedly the committed Catholic that I initially constructed her to be. She also turns out to be roommates and long-time friends with Rae. Val didn't need her eyes opened to false ideological commitments—at least, not the ones I assumed she did. And I didn't need her to be opened that way, either.

Chancing Openness: Service Learning as Problem-Posing Reversed

Fox advocates a pragmatic stance as a replacement for the “whiteness” underlying many “critical thinking” approaches, which, to reiterate, tacitly assume that the professor's job is to pose the right questions to lead the students toward a correct analysis of The Problem. A pragmatic approach says, suppose an idea is valid, what would that mean, concretely, in the social world? Fox hopes that this stance would lead us and our students to be more “open” and “imaginative,” and to “construe critical thinking...not as a way to home in on the truth through rational

deliberation but as an inclination to look for multiple solutions and question their consequences” (205). For me, these are goals to aspire to. Fox

■ **I need to work together with**
 ■ **students to imagine multiple**
 ■ **conflicts, not solutions.**

also notes that this stance leads her to encourage students to reflect and question their “own stake in a particular position or solution.” She asks students, “What do you stand to lose if you give up that belief or position [about the specific conflict under investigation] or to gain if you hold on to it?” (206). This stance also leads her to question her own invested beliefs.

Most of the time, critical pedagogy, or problem-posing pedagogy, moves from identifying a problem to analyzing causes to proposing solutions. In my capstone course, and in many other community-engaged writing courses, the student-learner-server starts with a particular solution. This service learning design thus asks students to move from solutions back through analyses and causes. My proposal guidelines do ask students to collaborate with community members or groups to identify a need, but by design, students write a proposal which sets out plans to DO something. This course design precludes generating multiple solutions (at least not multiple solutions which will be enacted) and questioning each of their consequences. It has left this work of questioning, in fact, at my feet, when I have to (sometimes on short notice) approve, challenge, or occasionally veto a proposal. The whiteness of this

set up is troubling. Can I reject the security of needing to have solved The Problem, at least in my own mind, and still ask critical questions?

As I noted above, I was beginning to ask myself these questions as my conference with Val approached. To prepare, I wrote some notes for myself about both Rae's and Val's proposals:

Rae

My initial, whitely "critical thinking" idea string: LGBT students don't have friendly housing. They need friendly housing because in regular housing, they are discriminated against, feel uncomfortable, or are potentially hurt. They should not be discriminated against, feel uncomfortable, or be hurt. No human should be discriminated against, feel uncomfortable, or be hurt. LGBT students are human.

Pragmatic addition: What do I stand to lose, if this set of ideas does not accurately reflect reality? My own lived safety, dignity and humanity. What do I stand to gain, if it does? A small amount of power, to allocate resources toward shifting institutional policies away from my own marginalization.

No wonder I was gratified by Rae's proposal.

Val

My initial, whitely "critical thinking" idea string: The Catholic Center has sustained serious weather damage. However, the Catholic Center might not be worth a capstone overseeing its repair because such a project does not highlight a conflict between groups with differential access to power. Catholics on this campus are not a group with less access to power (and resources) than other groups. Catholic students on this campus are pretty much the same as Catholics in general in the United States. I know and understand the experiences of Catholics on campus and in the U.S.

Pragmatic addition: What do I stand to lose, if this set of ideas does not accurately reflect reality? A secure analysis of religious/cultural power dynamics, locally and nationally. What

do I stand to gain, if it does? A small amount of power, to refuse to allocate resources to an institution I experience as in many ways oppressive to me.

No wonder I was troubled by Val's proposal. With the pragmatic additions, her proposal forces me to start out "not knowing" and really collaborate with her to explore possible conflicts underlying the need. It forces me to consider an underlying cause that may do something other than validate the injustice of my marginalization in our shared religious and social context.

When I apply Fox's pragmatic critical framework to this type of service learning course, it reverses the direction of the call for openness and creativity. I need to work together with students to imagine multiple *conflicts*, not solutions. Then the questions we keep asking are, "If this is an accurate portrait of the conflict underlying this need, what are the consequences of that? For whom? What do I stand to lose, if this analysis is not correct? What do you stand to lose? What do we each stand to gain if it is correct?" Or perhaps, even, can we construct a need as not generated by conflict, especially in the very local and concrete settings in which my students are "doing service"? Causes of needs and problems, especially locally at the level of our own campus ministries or student housing, are likely to lie somewhere between civility and conflict. And students—especially if they are choosing to work through self-designed projects where their own complex communal affiliations and identities are evidently at stake—must be afforded the opportunities to serve and write through this in-between.

Teaching Untidiness:

Toward a "Community Engaged Procedural Rhetoric"¹

The most recent definition of service-learning from the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse is as follows:

Service-learning combines service objectives with learning objectives with the intent that the activity change both the recipient and the provider of the service. This is accomplished by combining service tasks with structured opportunities that link the task to self-reflection, self-discovery, and the acquisition and comprehension of values, skills, and knowledge content.

This definition does not, either overtly or in effect, emphasize a focus on “causes” of social problems. In fact, “knowledge content” is the last phrase of the definition. Rather, the emphasis is on development and change. At my own institution, this definition is much more closely aligned with the philosophy of the Honors Program than with my Composition Program’s philosophy.

The Honors program at WCU describes itself this way:

Over the course of time we have made a major shift from a “Great Books” model to an interdisciplinary course of study grounded in personal leadership development. Our mission challenges students to reflect upon what contributions they will make to their communities—perhaps the greatest testimony to the value of a higher education degree. The aim of our curriculum is to prepare students to discover their own giftedness, to see the value of team approaches to problem solving, and to have exposure to the components necessary to enact real change. (Dean)

The terminology in this passage—*personal development, reflect, discover their own giftedness, team approaches, necessary component*—is very different than that in the texts excerpted at the beginning of this article, which guided students in my own course. The Honor’s Program’s language, like that of the National Clearinghouse, leads a compositionist such as myself to think about expressivism.

And so I return to Fulkerson, who argues that expressivist approaches remain a second dominant approach to composition. An expressivist course gives “highest value to the writer and her imaginative, psychological, social, and spiritual development and how that development influences individual consciousness and social behavior” (Burnham qtd.in Fulkerson 667). Fulkerson argues that in order to create a composition course, of any type, that fully matches theory to practice, we must ask ourselves four questions: “What makes writing ‘good’? [axiological]; how do written texts come into existence? [procedural]; how does one teach college students effectively, especially where procedural rather than propositional knowledge is the goal? [pedagogical]; and how do we know all of the above (epistemological)?” (657-8).

As I noted above, Fulkerson claims that in a CCS course, what makes writing “good” is an articulate critique of the status quo. Because of this axiology, in many CCS courses, propositional knowledge (what are the conflicting power relations here?) is foregrounded over procedural knowledge (how can we produce effective texts about or even intervening in those power relations?). In expressivist courses, good writing is produced when a writer expresses her own voice. How one helps student writers to get there seems to be varied, but certainly the approach places a great deal of focus on student texts.

Students in community-engaged writing courses need to tell the stories of what worked to make change, why, and how they might do it again.

Fulkerson notes that an emphasis on writing process, often conflated with expressivism, can be a component in any type of course, though it is more inherent in the third location on his map, procedural rhetoric. Fulkerson then describes, broadly, three procedural-rhetorical approaches to composition focusing on argument, genre theory and discourse theory. In these courses, what makes writing good is what works in a particular context with a particular audience. When taught well, we teach toward this goal through a focus on metaknowledges concerning audience, purpose, genre, rhetorical strategies, discourse.

It is the emphasis on process and procedure that provides me with a productive synthesis of conflict and civility. We might easily transfer these questions to community projects and service learning as a whole, asking, “What makes a project ‘good’? How do good projects come into existence? And, how can we teach our students to create them?”

CCS, as a method and with conflict its metaphor, puts me in the position of an eye-opener to truth. What makes a project good is if underlying conflicting group interests are addressed by the service. Students are successful when they stop framing themselves as lucky individuals and start framing themselves as privileged subjects.

Expressivism, on the other hand, with civility its metaphor, runs the danger of leaning too far in the opposite direction, of self-congratulation or self-flagellation. As has long been the critique of expressivism, the approach does not demand reciprocity or ask that the “provider of service” be changed. Instead,

expressivism adopts a democratic sort of acceptance and asks its subjects to be open, vocal, and focused on discovery of what is there. What makes a project good under this model is good will, the narration of ethical intentions toward democracy and an “embracing of diversity.” We teach our students to create such projects through developing their sensibilities and reflecting on their experiences, assuming that they will grow into sensitive individuals, professionals and citizens.

I would assert that the change demanded by an explicit focus on “community engaged procedural rhetoric” could be one that helps students to see themselves as active and empowered citizens, aware that they are embedded in social structures, but social structures that can be influenced. Students can be explicitly taught—through modeling, heuristics, theory, discussion, structured reflection, formal writing, and other means—to articulate what they did that was effective in a particular context, with a particular audience. If post-everything thought can provide us currently-leaning-on-CCS-practitioners of community-engaged writing with anything, it is the insight that power *really* is local and that individuals are shifting, complex subjects with multiple affiliations. Students in community-engaged writing courses need to tell the stories of what worked to make change, why, and how they might do it again.

Teaching Untidiness

Shorto concludes in his article that “the key to understanding those working against gay marriage...[is] the commitment...to a variety of religious belief that is so thoroughgoing it permeates every facet of life and thought, that rejects the secular, pluralistic grounding of society and that answers all questions internally” (67). Originally, as I began to draft this piece, I asked myself: *How do I keep service-learning pedagogically sound and relevant, in the context of a growing religious fundamentalism, when service-learning’s very basis, for me, is grounded in investigating conflict, conflict which cannot be resolved through an internally validated set of beliefs, religious or otherwise?* This question no longer makes sense to me. Rather, I think it is helpful for me to ask Fulkerson’s very different questions: *What makes a project “good”? How are good projects created? And, how can I teach my students to create them in my class and to encourage them to create them in their future lives?*

My provisional answer is that good projects take into account both conflict

and civility. Good projects are likely to be created when the creators (and as instructors, we are co-creators) investigate the moments of marginalization and injustice and the momentary/local and institutionalized/global moments of ethics and democracy, as well as the contradictory moments in between.

So how to teach this untidiness?

First, when I work backwards with students from solutions to causes, I want to remember to value the local more than I have been. My previous syllabus, partially excerpted at the outset of this article, continues this way:

The deepest types of learning from these projects happens through the process of exposing these “reasons,” these cultural stories about why things are the way they are, starting with our own stories about why, then the stories of those being served/collaborated with, and finally the stories of the subcultures that we and the community members are parts of within the “big stories” of the culture at large. Then learner-servers return, circularly, to look at their own initial, often cherished, beliefs and how they may or may not be a part of these wider circles of “why-stories.”

Therefore, the fundamental purpose of the SL project is to provide an opportunity to analyze and perhaps change a social injustice, even if on a small scale. Sometimes the lasting change may be changing one’s own role in the “stories” one brings to the surface through reflective action.

This text privileges the “big stories of the culture at large.” It tosses students the bone, it now seems to me, that lasting change can always happen inside them (expressivism hidden in CCS clothing?), even if their particular project makes only small change in the outside world. If they analyze their cherished “content” properly and “bring it to the surface,” students may change their “own role in the story.” This seems too global, too strategic an emphasis (it only counts if it’s permanent after the paper is handed in), and too whitely on my own part—there are “THE big stories” and, it implies, I know them.

Rather than this emphasis, I would like my students to leave my community-engaged writing courses with the meta-skills to analyze what strategies and

tactics worked rhetorically and materially to make change in a given situation, and to extrapolate this learning toward the future. For clarity, in arenas such as warfare, sports and business, *strategies* and *tactics* are differentiated. Strategies are essentially plans made in advance, while tactics are those decisions made on the ground. The rhetorical concept of *kairos* is worth applying here, as are the insights of de Certeau regarding strategies versus “the tactics of the weak.” Such study, is, after all, the “content” of many compositionists’ expertise (even while we have other areas of expertise as well). While there is not the space to develop these ideas here, in the future I would like to see a community-engaged procedural rhetoric which utilizes a fuller and more theoretically-based engagement with genre theory (which Fulkerson himself only treats briefly). Genre theory, at least that which in actuality uses the grounding work of Halliday as its basis, provides the potential to analyze *through language* the subject matter, social roles and means of communication in socio-linguistic exchanges. Although courses based in genre study can become rote creation of stock documents (Lankshear and Knobel cogently make this critique), community-engaged writing courses are more likely to alleviate that tendency. A community-engaged writing course utilizing Hallidayan genre theory would help me teach the analysis of language in use—conflict and civility and their contradictions—on the untidy ground. Thus, secondly (after being provided with the opportunity to reflect in this essay and analyze my own contradictions), I propose to look for models, refine them, and develop such a pedagogy in my own practice.

As a start, here is the preliminary form of an assignment in a syllabus I am currently drafting, in collaboration with another faculty member, for a lower-level research-writing and service-learning class called “Investigating Civic Engagement and Writing in the Public Sphere”:

Strategies and Tactics for Professionals and Citizens—A Final Reflection Paper (5-7 pp.) Try to understand what you did that was effective in this particular context, with this particular audience. Use your fieldwork journal; what we have learned in class about considerations of audience and purpose, genre and context; your own secondary research if appropriate; anything from *True Notebooks* and/or your primary research that is relevant. Stay local and concrete, while putting both yourself and the community into

context. It is important not to ignore your analysis of the root causes of the problem at hand, while recognizing that what is “root” in one situation may be different than what is at root elsewhere. Tell the story or stories of what worked to make change, or not, why and how you might do it again. Think to the future—how might you apply your learning in this situation to intervening in a social situation: at work, in your community, in a group or institution that you belong to or might belong to in the future?

Some things seem tidy to me: Will “content knowledge” be important for students to complete this or related assignments? Absolutely—any kind of tangible change is unlikely happen without an analysis of root causes. But roots grow and change in and on the ground, capillary-like. Will I need to provide my students with heuristics for understanding what they did, ways to analyze the texts they encountered and produced in community contexts? Absolutely. Will this work be challenging for me? That answer is obvious too. But I want to graduate students who will be professionals and citizens negotiating in ongoing ways toward a more civil society, who feel confused, empowered, guilty, enthusiastic, curious...all of it. I want students who will fashion themselves, if called to, into my colleagues and allies. I need them.

Note

1 It is important for me to note that it is likely that many faculty are already putting into practice the type of pedagogy I am articulating in this section. Like Tom Deans's well-cited book, which gave the community of practitioners a common language for understanding and talking about our practices as well as a push to refine them, I hope that this article may both suggest a set of practices to those who have not considered them, and also name and distill a set of practices for those already engaged in them.

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