

Ethics and Expectations: Developing a Workable Balance Between Academic Goals and Ethical Behavior

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This article traces the development of a sophomore composition service-learning course, using data gathered from a formal qualitative study as well as subsequent teacher reflection. Course redesign has been guided by the need to balance the initial emphasis on and measurement of academic outcomes with exploration of the ethics of service. The author shares her emerging set of best practices, in which successful critical reflection is best supported by an explicit, front-loaded discussion of ethical terminology and student standpoints.

In the initial wave of service-learning scholarship, many authors advocated working the hyphen, to borrow Michelle Fine's phrase, between "service" and "learning" (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters; Eyler and Giles; Stanton, Giles, and Cruz). Now that the field has firmly established that learning can indeed occur via service, scholars have turned their attention to another hyphen: that between "server" and "served." When we assign students to write *for*, *about*, or even *with* people outside the classroom community (Deans) we are asking them to enter into an implicit server-served relationship. Based on teaching experiences, formal research studies, and my own class design efforts, I have begun asking the following questions: Who is serving whom and why? Is the writing invited or imposed? What is the relationship between the student-author and the public audience? Common knowledge among service-learning practitioners is that students can engage these questions in reflective writing, which is often touted as having the potential to transform an experience of volunteerism into the more ambi-

tious category of service-learning. What I have come to find after teaching and redesigning a service-learning class is that I need to front-load my course with reading, discussion, and writing about ethical concepts and terminology before students can effectively reflect.

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The first time I taught (and formally studied) the service-learning class that is the subject of this essay, I emphasized measuring students' academic behaviors and achievements, without including an explicit focus on exploring their burgeoning ethical

attitudes about service-learning. In my initial study, I did not expect my data to prompt me to ask: What do we do when students meet—and even exceed—our academic learning goals, but violate implicit ethical codes of community-based assignments? The question continued to echo in my ears, however, leading me to revise the class. In my redesign, I used different strategies to construct a class that would not leave me feeling like the academic outcomes were met at the expense of the (my) ethical goals for service-learning.

The Scope of Study

I look at two versions of a service-learning course, Sophomore (Intermediate) Composition, taught at two different institutions. I begin by describing the first version of the class, showing how I arrived at the nagging question about the disconnect between academic outcomes and ethical attitudes. I then discuss the aspects of the course I chose to redesign. In the second iteration of the class, I retained the culminating paper assignment, and I continued to measure students' work for rhetorical sensitivity. What I changed were the assignments in the first half of the term. To address the lack of attention to ethics that I observed in my first class, I planned lessons that consciously engaged students in discussions regarding tacit ethical assumptions about the “server-served” relationship and the complex roles that factors such as class and ethnicity can play in service-learning projects.

The first time I taught the course, I shaped it according to institutional requirements to meet a pre-determined set of learning goals for sophomore

composition (see Appendix A). I did this for three reasons: 1) the writing program consistently emphasized these goals, and I was well-trained to meet them; 2) I was a graduate student teaching assistant and felt compelled to adhere to programmatic goals; 3) as a student member of the Writing Program Committee, I had helped write these learning outcomes and felt committed to them. As I explain in detail below, I over-emphasized academic outcomes in the first version of the class, because, like Bruce Herzberg, I was “a little afraid of diluting the academic discourse instruction” with too much attention to service (“Conversation” 71). The next time I taught the class—as an assistant professor at another institution with a much larger, looser writing program—I re-framed it according to my desire to foreground explicit negotiation of the ethics bound up with service-learning writing.

In my redesigned class, I re-embraced the civic and ameliorative goals that originally attracted me to service-learning. For that class, I created assignments that prompted students to develop a framework for discussing the ethics that would guide their service-learning experience. Clearly, students and community partners must co-construct implicit (and sometimes explicit) guidelines for interaction. In addition to that, though, and intertwined with academic goals, I carved out a space for students to ruminate explicitly on ethics prior to beginning any direct or indirect service, followed by continued reflection upon ethics as well as learning outcomes as the course progressed.

My Primary Teaching Principle: Rhetorical Sensitivity

My teaching philosophy for writing classes hinges on my conception of *rhetorical sensitivity*. I define the development of rhetorical sensitivity as a process through which students accrue the ability to recognize and critically examine writing tools and rhetorical situations and their own positions within those contexts. My notion of rhetorical sensitivity follows trends in composition studies for the past several years; compositionists as diverse as Lisa Ede, Nora Bacon, and Joseph Petraglia have all asserted that rhetorical sensitivity is a key learning outcome for composition classes.

In order to assess the outcomes of my class, I developed a list of criteria to measure *rhetorical sensitivity*:

- Demonstrated recognition of the elements of a specific

rhetorical situation and their impact on one's own writing

- Ability to see and consider a range of rhetorical possibilities (available means, rival hypotheses)
- Ability to recognize and consciously shape genres for writing
- Ability to scrutinize one's own rhetoric (style, arrangement, use of appeals, textual tools, etc.)
- Ability to discuss audience as addressed and/or invoked
- Demonstrated recognition that there is no blueprint for "good writing."

I applied these criteria to the various data I collected: student papers; documents co-authored by students and community partners; interview transcripts with college students and community partners; anonymous surveys; transcriptions of group meetings (with and without community partners); and my own teacher-research journal.

The First Version: Highlighted Academics, Hidden Ethical Expectations

I studied my own sophomore composition class writing collaboratively with students at Ridglea Residence and School (RRS), a local public boarding school that functions as a residential alternative to foster care for children who are five to eighteen years old.¹ These university-community collaborative groups were assigned the task of identifying issues of local concern and composing proposals and public discourse that addressed these issues. The groups worked together for eight weeks and were expected to submit their written products to an audience they identified as appropriate (thus, the audience varied from group to group); my students were expected to include all group drafts in their final portfolios.

Consistent with my research hypothesis that the more engaged groups would produce higher quality writing, one group that showed very low levels of engagement ended up with a poor project (Gabor). Another group, that dedicated more time and energy than any other group in the class, ended up with a stellar project and demonstrated high achievement on subsequent academic assignments. The group that completely confounded me, though, included students who met my academic learning outcomes—that is, who demonstrated rhetorically sensitive behavior—but harbored condescending attitudes toward their community partners. It was this group that stood out among the eight groups in the study.

I attribute this group's contradictory mixture of success and failure to my own short-sightedness about the implicit ethical code that students are expected to abide by in their community-based experiences. As someone teaching what I defined as *community-based experience* as opposed to service-learning, I emphasized the academic goals for the assignment instead of spending class time on the ethics of service and the nuances of the server-served relationship. This was true, in part, because I did not see my students as “serving” the community in the way that after-school tutors or homeless shelter volunteers serve the community; I saw my students as collaborators *with* community members, in the “writing with the community” vein that Tom Deans defines and Linda Flower exemplifies in her work at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh. I consciously avoided using the vocabulary of service for two reasons: I wanted to define (and therefore justify) my class in academic terms, and I wanted to avoid the trap of thinking that service-learning automatically leads to critical thinking (Herzberg, “Community Service”). My “fool-proof” plan for challenging my students to critically reflect upon their experience was the culminating paper that I created for the class and assigned after the community-based experience was completed. This “Rhetorical Citizenship” paper required students to pose a definition of *rhetorical citizenship* and then use their own experience to argue how they were-or were not-acting as rhetorical citizens (see Appendix B). To prepare for this paper, students read texts by John Dewey, Isocrates, and educational philosopher Maxine Greene, each of which explores the interconnectedness among ethics, citizenship, and writing. However, I now realize that the Rhetorical Citizenship assignment was a case of too little, too late.

To illustrate, I present the story of a collaborative writing group with four members: two of my Moramar

University students, Lynn and Marc, and two RRS high school seniors, Steven and Patrick.² The group wrote a proposal arguing that RRS needs more police protection and that youth access to guns is a problem that the local community must address. To accompany their proposal, they composed a speech. The required “primary research” that supported this project was an

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interview of the two RRS student members of the group, conducted by the Moramar student members. This group based their proposal on the gritty testimony of Steven and Patrick, two less privileged boys who had first-hand knowledge of tough street life. While I did (and still do) encourage university students to incorporate the perspectives of all group members, I cringed at the way the college students objectified the students at the boarding school.

Although Patrick and Steven lived markedly different lives from the average Moramar University student and although I acknowledged—and, in fact, promoted—the value of drawing upon life experience as evidence, I was disappointed that my students represented Patrick and Steven as subject matter rather than as collaborative thinkers working in the *writing with* model. In other words, Patrick and Steven contributed their “othered” experience to the project, and Lynn and Marc contributed all of the writing. In the following

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example—taken from the group’s written proposal to address the problem of local gun access and violence—Steven and Patrick are represented as the objects of the story rather than as speaking subjects: “When asked if they feel threatened by the gun presence in the neighborhood while on the RRS campus, the boys said ‘yes.’” Here the community partners are collectively reduced

to one word, “boys,” an arguably belittling term for a pair of co-authors. Later in the paper, the group uses the pronoun “we,” which seemed to mark an inclusion of all authors. The paper reads: “Herein lies the reason we bring attention to this situation.” However, the rest of the paragraph undermines that sense of inclusion: “These kids are starting out with a strike against them. It should be their privilege to have a gun-free childhood as others do. [. . .] No more than a block away from [Ridglea’s front entrance] lies a world of drive-by shootings, Black Market distribution of firearms, and drugs.” These sentences again cast Steven and Patrick as helpless “others” instead of as analytical co-authors commenting on a serious local problem.

The text seemed to reinforce the unbalanced server-served relationship rather

than critique the privilege the university students had in terms of socio-economic background. As Bruce Herzberg states, “I don’t believe that questions about social structures, ideology, and social justice are automatically raised by community service” (“Community Service” 316). While Herzberg recognizes that some community-engagement practices can raise such questions (and I agree that they can), in this case, the questions were raised in ways that reinforced us-them, privileged-victimized dichotomies. Initially, I read the students’ paper as a sign of their lack of rhetorical sensitivity—the university students did not recognize the bad ethos they built through their objectification of their group members. However, I revised this assumption during our class workshop on their draft.

Prompted by me and their classmates during our workshop, Lynn and Marc acknowledged that they needed to include more hard evidence, but argued that they felt their best strategy for persuasion was employing the pathetic appeal based on Steven and Patrick’s experiences. In other words, Lynn and Marc clearly understood that they were making rhetorical choices in their text, which is a sign of rhetorical sensitivity. This instance of rhetorical sensitivity represents the achievement of an academic goal, but left me feeling uneasy about the textual treatment of the community partners; it was a violation of an ethical code that I had not made explicit to my students.

I turn to Lynn’s end-of-the-semester reflective paper on “Rhetorical Citizenship” to exemplify how she met the course’s academic goals without realizing that her own ethical assumptions (about social class and writing ability) remained unexamined:

In my journey to become a more informed and involved citizen in [our city], I got the opportunity to prepare such a proposal [. . .] regarding the over-presence of guns in the city. I was able to draw upon the experiences of two RRS seniors to emotionally enjoin my readers to listen to what I have to say. [. . .] I was dealing with not only children, which are universally accepted deserviers of aid, but also a public institution, which, to this audience, is as important a cause as any other. The issue I was dealing with could have been presented in a number of ways, but because of my audience, I drew upon the things they valued in order to be the most effec-

tive in my argument.

In this excerpt, the exclusive use of the pronoun “I” stands out. The students in my class were assigned to reflect on their actions vis-à-vis a definition of a “rhetorical citizen,” so naturally they wrote using the first person singular voice. However, when referring to the group projects, most students used “we” or explicitly mentioned their role within a group. Lynn did not. She represented herself as the author and Steven and Patrick as the subject matter: “I was able to draw upon the experiences of two RRS seniors to emotionally enjoin *my* readers to listen to what I have to say” (emphasis added). Her phrase “I was able” implies that her group members did not have the ability to draw upon their own experience to create a compelling text.

Lynn constructed herself as the rightful transformer of Steven and Patrick’s voice in a manner that bell hooks has identified as the speech of the colonizer.

Four months later in her follow up interview, Lynn still showed no signs of recognizing Steven and Patrick’s rights and/or abilities to write their own stories or analyze issues surrounding their stories, nor did Lynn show an awareness of the privilege

that allowed her to implicitly cast herself as a “born writer.” Lynn was explicit about the control she exerted over their stories: “Working in this particular case, I learned that community partners are not necessarily born writers, and must have an advocate for their voice. As a student writer, it was my job and my ability to transform their spoken message into a clear written form” (Personal Interview). In this passage Lynn very explicitly adopts what bell hooks has identified as the speech of the colonizer, a voice that says, “I want to know your story. And then I will tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own.... I am still author, authority. I am still the colonizer, the speaking subject, and you are now at the center of my talk” (152). Despite her enthusiasm for community engagement projects, Lynn constructed herself as the knowledgeable party who helps the “served,” which is one of the most frequently documented pitfalls of community service-learning (Carrick, Himley, and Jacobi; Goodburn; Green; Schutz and Gere).³

Looking at the excerpt from Lynn’s paper another way, I was impressed by her ability to recognize and critically examine writing tools and rhetorical situa-

tions, two key learning outcomes based on my conception of *rhetorical sensitivity*. She demonstrated savvy in invoking an audience that would be most likely convinced by pathos-based appeals about “children, which are universally accepted deserviers of aid.” She also considered a range of rhetorical possibilities—another one of my assessment criteria. For example, she acknowledged that she had several means of persuasion available: “The issue I was dealing with could have been presented in a number of ways.” Then she acknowledged that she chose to “*emotionally* enjoin readers” in order to “be the most effective in my argument.” Among my students’ work, this passage was one of the best representations of awareness of rhetorical choices. At this point in my formal assessment, I felt like Lynn and Marc (and by extension I, too) had failed the community partners ethically even if they had exceeded academic expectations.

Not a week later, however, when I conducted concluding interviews with the boarding school students, Patrick and Steven said that the project was “great” because it allowed them to incorporate “more opinions other than [their] own” into their writing and because they saw that “[their] writing can make a difference” (Personal Interview). Perhaps their level of engagement was best evidenced by the fact that Steven and Patrick took it upon themselves to talk to the RRS Board of Trustees during a school band performance. Steven stated that their testimony and proposal “got a new legislation passed [. . .] so there is going to be an increase in safety issues [at RRS]” (Personal Interview). The boys themselves made a presentation without Moramar students to a “real” audience. Perhaps they were not worried about the appropriation of their voices by my students because their investment was in the RRS Board of Trustees, not the Moramar audience. The boarding school students involved did not express feelings of being “othered” (although I did not ask them a direct question about feeling “othered”), and the school’s decision-makers were moved to action by the emotional appeals put forth in the proposal—two markers of success that contradict the sense of failure that I noted in my reflection.

When I looked at my findings as problems that might be solved by revising the class and the assignments, I began to ask myself several questions:

- Had I created conditions in the classroom that led my students

to assume a superior role in the writing projects?

- Had my own academic training predisposed me to look for discursive othering of disempowered populations?
- Did the RRS students feel silenced (as RRS students in another group admitted to feeling when asked directly)?
- How could I incorporate instruction in ethics before students left the classroom to engage in community-based writing assignments?

I answered with the following thought: As a teacher who brings the “public” or the “community” into writing instruction, I must explicitly teach students to examine the range of positions they (can) occupy and the ethical implications of those stances. The best way I have found to do this is to use the language and scholarship of *service*.

The Redesigned Version: Rhetoric and Ethics, Intertwined and Visible

In the revision of the class, students composed two individually-authored papers, one group project (the community service-learning project), and one reflective essay, in addition to a semester-long writer’s notebook. I chose Elizabeth Ervin’s short, excellent text *Public Literacy* because it foregrounds the elements that I had not successfully given my students before: the nature of service-learning, the nature of public writing, and the role of ethics in community service-learning. I felt that I had been successful in teaching students the academic elements of rhetoric and composition in the past, so I retained my handouts and lessons on composing, revising, etc.

Through my new university’s Office of Community Collaboration, I began working with a local Native Americans’ Rights Organization. The organization’s coordinator and I identified five group writing projects that would meet pressing needs of his organization and that would be appropriate for my students in terms of length and complexity. I also asked him to provide me with articles that he thought my students should read to gain a better understanding of the issues important to Native Americans in our state. In my earlier version of sophomore composition, I had asked the students to gather local information that they would need to support their writing. I had done that in the name of ceding to the students as much control over the projects as possible. However, I found that by giving them control without firm grounding in responsibly using that control, I had fostered an environment that

allowed noblesse oblige to take root.

In the second version of the class, I tried to subvert the server-served dichotomy by asking our community partner to act as a co-educator early and often. In addition to assigning class readings, board members of the Native American agency visited our classroom five times throughout the semester, and-perhaps most important-one board member led a class discussion based on student-generated questions. I had asked the students to write down (anonymously) any questions they had about Native Americans in general or about Native Americans in our community. When the coordinator came to our class for the first time, he answered questions from the class-generated list. Once the discussion got rolling, students began to ask more questions and take more interest in and ownership of the pending service-learning project. This class discussion helped my students perceive our community partners as co-educators and not as recipients of our service.

In addition to attempting to reframe the service-learning experience as a reciprocal relationship, I foregrounded the role ethics plays in service-learning projects. In the first version of this class, I had assigned my “Rhetorical Citizenship” paper as a place for students to reflect on their academic and ethical participation in service-learning. However, since I saw this paper as “too little, too late” in the first version of my class, I added several lesson plans and two new formal writing assignments at the beginning of my revised class: a “Defining Key Terms” paper and a “Rhetorical Analysis” paper. Early in the semester (in weeks 2 and 3), I designed a three-class series of lessons that began with an investigation of the wide-ranging notions about the general idea of “ethics” (see Appendix C). From that global discussion, students discussed ethics in the context of service-learning experiences, prompted by their reading of a challenging *CCC* article, Ann Green’s “Difficult Stories.” Her piece opened up a discussion of how other service-learning students in a composition class generally failed to acknowledge their own comparative privilege. In the third week, the class turned to the specific conditions of our project and related ethical concerns and questions, which prepared students for the frank discussion with our community partner described above. While engaging in these activities in class, students were writing their definition papers outside of class. For the “Defining Key Terms” paper, I asked each of my students to individually compose an extended definition of one of the fol-

lowing key terms: *Community, Ethics, Literacy, Public, or Service-Learning* (see Appendix D). Reading Ervin's textbook, several service-learning websites, and articles by Deans, Herzberg, and Green in concert with in-class activities helped the students write articulately and thoughtfully about these concepts.

I felt a strong sense of satisfaction that in the first month of instruction, already my class had participated in frank discussions about race, class, access to education and how those factors infuse the server-served relationship. In their book *Service-Learning Code of Ethics*, Andrea Chapdelaine, Ana Ruiz, Judith Warchal, and Carole Wells argue that “[s]tudents will better understand [ethical] issues and be prepared to resolve the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their service-learning experiences” if they have had the opportunity to engage in “reading, reflection, class discussion, and debate” (xii). While I agree with all of their recommendations, I add that writing definitions of complex concepts is also a key factor in enabling students to “resolve the ethical dilemmas they encounter in their service-learning experiences.” To support their claim about introducing students to ethical aspects of service-learning, Chapdelaine and her colleagues list eight items in their “Service-Learning Code of Ethics for Students” (16-17, 23-26). The second item on the list is: “Students in service-learning shall understand their role and its limitations in the context of the service-learning assignment” (17). Again, I support this goal (and the other seven goals), but this item leaves me asking: How? In Sophomore Composition my answer was: by writing papers in which students articulated their (emerging) understanding, in which students attempted to define and analyze concepts and situations related directly to their service-learning projects. Writing definitions allows students to combine knowledge gained from assigned readings and their own experiences. My students remarked that the act of committing a definition to paper helped them solidify their ideas and at the same time begin to grasp the fluid nature of meaning-achievements that served both my service-learning goals and the English Department's academic goals. By engaging in these activities in the first half of the term, we were able to place the inherent ethical nature of public writing at the forefront of the class.

Following the short definition paper, I assigned students a “Rhetorical Analysis” Paper in which they were asked to analyze the rhetorical situation for their service-learning writing project (See Appendix E). Like the first

paper, this assignment furthered my goal of enhancing the students' rhetorical sensitivity; it also asked them to deliberate-in writing-about the service-learning project and how they understood it. This assignment mirrors a fairly common assignment in intermediate writing classes: one in which students must identify a rhetorical situation using Lloyd Bitzer's terms (exigence, audience, constraints) and then go about considering how various stakeholders might approach addressing said situation.

In my class, the rhetorical analysis paper was the next step in helping students understand and grapple with the ethical dimensions of service-learning; it can also be viewed as a practice in ethical decision making, such as the one that Chapdelaine and her colleagues present in *Service-Learning Code of Ethics* (19). The steps in their model

My assignments parallel Chapdelaine's principles, conspicuously urging students to consider ethical definitions and decision-making processes, while serving as vehicles for teaching principles of rhetoric and composition.

can be seen as parallel to the tasks in my assignment. The Chapdelaine model has "Identify and define the dilemma" as the first step; I asked my students to "identify the rhetorical situation" for their service-learning project. After identification, the Chapdelaine model requires students to "[a]ddress relevant principles and gather information" (19). My students presented information about the exigence, audience, and constraints of their upcoming writing project. In both my assignment and the *Service-Learning Code of Ethics* model, students then "[p]ropose courses of action" (19) and imagine which one will be the best and why. Finally, I asked my students to address the question: "What can your writing reasonably accomplish in the given rhetorical situation?"; my question parallels Chapdelaine's final step, which asks students to "[e]valuate and reflect on the decision" (19). These similarities demonstrate the ways my early assignments conspicuously urged students to consider ethical definitions and decision-making processes head on, while also serving as vehicles for teaching principles of rhetoric and composition. These assignments distinguish my new course from its initial version, in which the early writing assignments focused almost exclusively on generic academic goals and were largely divorced from both the service-learning project and from ethical concerns.

By midterm, I felt that my class redesign seemed to be working: students were thinking about the thorny relationships between service-learning and ethics, and they were dialoging with our community partner. In other words, the students started off the class with the sense that their actions (in the immediate future) as service-learning participants would be imbricated with ethical and academic expectations. These early writing assignments (and the accompanying discussions) seemed to make a big difference in the students' ability to see the interrelationship among their behaviors, attitudes, and their academic outcomes. I will share two brief examples to support this claim.

Earlier, I described how troubled I was by Lynn and Marc's representation of their community partners, Patrick and Steven. When pressed (in class workshop) about their heavy reliance on pathetic appeals, they defended their actions on rhetorical grounds and ultimately did not change their written product. In the new version of my class, a similar situation arose. One student group wrote formal descriptions of state-wide programs sponsored by our community partner organization. My students gathered data and conducted interviews and compiled sixteen one-page program descriptions that could be included in grant proposals. After submitting their final project to our partner organization, they were told that the language they chose was "too negative" and portrayed Native Americans as helpless, desperate, and desolate. Like Lynn and Marc, these students had represented our community partners as victims to be pitied and served rather than as writers or thinkers working to solve problems. However, when this group presented their project to my class (one month after receiving feedback from the Native American organization), they did not defend their decision on academic grounds or present it as the best rhetorical choice given the target audience. Instead, they openly aired the community partners' criticism of their word choices and explained that understanding audience expectations is a challenge and a lesson of service-learning in a composition class. They admitted that they were disappointed that the community partner would not use their documents, but discussed that disappointment using their earlier definitions of service-learning and ethics as a frame for understanding their discursive miscalculation.

I end this section with an example that illustrates how all students in the redesigned class (not just one group) benefited from the front-loaded reading and writing about ethics and service. I had invited several university adminis-

trators to my students' presentations of their service-learning projects; among the administrators I invited was the professor who had coordinated service-learning partnerships for many years at the university and who served as the director of the Office of Community Collaboration. She commented to me that of all of the student presentations she has seen over the years, these students were best able to articulate a depth of understanding about the complexity of service-learning; she heard them talk about the academic, ethical, civic, and personal achievements and frustrations. Some of the smartest presentations came from students who had some of the harshest criticisms of the service-learning experience; their critical commentary was made possible by their integrated understanding of writing and service. I ended this semester feeling much closer to accomplishing my pedagogical goals as a service-learning practitioner than I ever had before.

A Look Beyond My Redesign

Will all of my future service-learning classes function flawlessly? Surely not. But I move forward knowing how to provide students with common language for discussing ethical quandaries and critiquing service-learning and themselves. With my class redesign I feel well-positioned to guide students to see how larger definitions of *public* and *community* and service have bearing on their writing. This is not a panacea, but it is certainly better than teacher and students struggling with unstated (and sometimes subconscious) expectations.

As I embark on my next iteration of my sophomore composition class, I will be in a position to re-see yet again how to weave together meaningful engagement with community needs/wants, rigorous academic expectations, and explicit negotiation of ethical assumptions. I turn to my continually emerging conception of rhetorical sensitivity to help me shape and sustain a valuable service-learning experience for all participants: students, community partners, and teacher.

While we all acknowledge that material conditions such as budgetary and time constraints, tenure and promotion concerns, and community partner logistics influence the sustainability of service-learning as a growing endeavor in Composition Studies, I optimistically submit that conversations about course redesign in the pages of journals such as *Reflections* are vital and equally influential. Echoing Chris Gallagher, I aim to “provide material for teachers

to reflect on and engage [in]" even if my study does not serve as a model for "replicable results" (13). My purposes for recounting my story are to inspire compositionists to take up service-learning assignments-with guidance and support for both academic behaviors and ethical attitudes-and to provide some insight for service-learning practioners who are in the process of re-seeing their own classes.

Notes

1 Although the students here are not orphans, they have been placed in this boarding school because of unsuitable living conditions in their homes (caregivers may suffer from medical or financial hardships as well as criminal problems). Most students do maintain contact with family members but reside at the school for the majority of the calendar year.

2 All names of people and institutions are pseudonyms.

3 Perhaps I perceived silencing happening where the RRS students did not. Perhaps Patrick and Steven were naively buying into a version of the American Dream myth that casts contact with college students as inherently empowering and uplifting. A colleague, Purna Banerjee, helped me think through another possible interpretation: Perhaps Patrick and Steven saw Lynn and Marc as their first audience-the first "ears of privilege," if you will-to which they had access. Once they succeed in compelling Marc and Lynn, the boys moved on to the next group they wanted to impact: the RRS Trustees.

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Appendix A Intermediate Composition Learning Goals, Moramar University

In [Intermediate Composition], students should engage in the following:

- Produce writing assignments that go beyond the length and complexity of those assigned in [first-year writing courses] (a minimum of 35-40 polished pages is recommended)
- Learn key terminology for discussing argument
- Practice analyzing arguments in various forms
- Practice producing arguments in various forms
- Practice analyzing and producing complex texts that go beyond typical textbook genres
- Practice conducting primary and secondary research
- Engage with digital texts and explore digital rhetoric/argument
- Engage with “real” rhetoric. Analyze and/or produce arguments that are current and that have “real” consequences
- Engage in a collaborative project
- Engage issues of oral and visual rhetoric

Appendix B Paper Four Public/Private Argument: Rhetorical Citizenship

Up to this point, we have studied rhetors and citizens of our city, classical rhetoric, and some contemporary rhetorical theory. We have analyzed arguments and written proposals and public discourse. In this essay, you will write about yourself as a rhetorical citizen of our city. Write a seven-page, doubled-spaced paper, in which you define and explain your rhetorical consciousness. In addition to drawing upon the class readings, you might want to develop some of the ideas started in your response journals. If you haven't already done so, begin to reflect upon your emerging understanding of how you function as a citizen of our city, paying special attention to the role rhetoric plays in your citizenship.

In this paper you need to demonstrate how this course has impacted your intellectual understanding of how rhetoric and citizenship are imbricated. You will need to use an argument of definition; that is, you will need to spell out your definition of *rhetorical*



citizenship. You will also need to construct an argument about character - yours.

Write an argumentative paper with a clear thesis and cogent support. Final versions will be evaluated on the clarity of your connections among your personal definition of *citizenship*, your personal definition of *rhetoric*, your own experience as evidence and information from texts that you have read. I will also evaluate the readability and correctness of the writing, and the adherence to MLA format.

You should cite at least three sources, following MLA style. You may use the textbook, the e-reserve readings, or any data you read or collected for previous papers.

Appendix C Lesson Plan Series Focus: Ethics

Part One: The following chart outlines a three-class series of lessons that take students from the general idea of “ethics” to the role that ethics plays in service-learning experiences to the specific conditions of our project that may include ethical concerns and questions. This unit-along with the Definition Paper-represents my efforts to foreground ethical issues.

Week 2, Day 1

In-class Activities

- 1) Discuss Notions of Public, Literacy, Community, Service-Learning, and Ethics:
 - break into groups of 5: each group responsible for investigating one of the key terms above
 - use the assigned reading and/or the internet to come up with a definition of your word
 - present your ideas to the class
 - discuss each term as a whole class - other interpretations, experiences, etc.
- 2) Exercise: Connecting Ethics to Service Learning: as a whole class, answer the questions Tom Deans poses on page 22 of his book *Writing Partnerships*.
- 3) Hand out Assignment Sheet for Definition Paper

Homework Due on this Date

Reading: Public Literacy (by Elizabeth Ervin): Chapter 2 “Four Configurations of the Public Sphere” (13-28)

On Class Website: Tom Deans “Intro to Writing Partnerships”; Bruce Herzberg “Service Learning and Public Discourse”; [Our Campus’s] Office of Community Collaboration Website “Service Learning” Button

Writing: Writer’s Notebook: Create a parody of some public discourse OR write an informal response to Deans and Herzberg



Week 2, Day 2

In-class Activities

- 1) Mini-lecture on Ann Green's "Difficult Stories": point out how students in the article elided the role of race and class in service-learning.
- 2) Encourage discussion on our positions in this class regarding race, ethnicity, class, etc. How is our situation similar and/or different from Green's class?
- 3) In-class Writing: Based on our discussion today or other ideas you have, write and hand in (anonymously) at least two questions about the "Other," about Native Americans, and/or about "Americanism"

Homework Due on this Date

Reading: Class Website: Green "Difficult Stories"

Public Literacy: Chapter 10 "Public Literacy, Community Service, and Activism"

Writing: WN: Respond to Green's article: list at least one thing that surprised you, two things that you learned, and three questions you would like to ask Green before embarking on your own SL experience.

Week 3, Day 1

In-class Activities

Guest Speaker: Community Partner from the local Native American Organization

Our guest speaker will:

- 1) Introduce and answer questions about the Five Writing Projects
- 2) Read and answer all of the anonymous questions about ethnicity, subjectivity, "otherness," ethics, local and national Indian history, etc.

Homework Due on this Date

Reading: Class Website: Official Report on Indians in [Our State]

Writing: WN: Free write on your expectations for your SL project; feel free to include questions you want to ask our speaker as well as an explanation of which group you think you would like to join.

Part Two: As I explain in the body of my article, in addition to foregrounding "ethics" in the first few weeks of my class, I also emphasized the importance of ethical considerations as students prepared to write the formal reflective paper ("Rhetorical Citizenship Paper"). During Week 12 of the semester I asked them to read a chapter from Maxine Greene's *Landscapes of Learning* and address the ethical issues she brings up.

Lesson Plan for First Day of Rhetorical Citizenship Unit

Writer's Notebook Prompt (homework due on this day):

Pick a paragraph from Greene's text and copy it into your Writer's Notebook. Explain why you picked this passage: Was it tough to understand? Did it raise questions for you? Did it make the whole article clear? Did it remind you of something else?

- 1) Reread your Writer's Notebook entry and add to it: why do you imagine we are reading Maxine Greene's chapter in a service-learning composition class?
- 2) Get into groups--groups should accomplish four things:
 1. have everyone share their selected passage
 2. discuss the passages and find one that the whole group is interested in
 3. imagine connections to service-learning/issues related to service-learning
 4. elect a spokesperson and go over what s/he will say
- 3) Reports from groups, questions/comments from peers
- 4) Class discussion of Greene's claim that educated people are obligated to be "wide awake" to the moral and ethical issues of the day - and must act on them.

Appendix D Paper One Defining a Key Term

Big Terms

In this paper, you will define one of the key concepts that we have been discussing in class. You can choose from one of the following terms or suggest one of your own (you will need to get my approval):

Community, Ethics, Literacy, Public, Service-learning

How Do I Write a Definition?

Isn't a definition just the true meaning of the word? Don't I just look it up in the dictionary and I'm done? NO! Definitions are hotly contested, especially when it comes to big terms like the ones listed above. Consider that Elizabeth Ervin came up with five dilemmas of defining *public literacy*, and she came up with four different definitions of *public sphere*.

There are several questions you can ask yourself as you construct a definition:

What is it? What genus or species or named class does it belong to?

What is a volunteer?

What are the conditions that create the thing you are trying to define?

Can a volunteer be paid?

How has your term met/fulfilled the conditions?

Is compensation to volunteers really "pay" or just reimbursement for expenses?

You don't have to include your own experience (see below for options), but you can ask: How has my experience impacted my understanding of this term?

(Some examples in this section are taken from Andrea A. Lunsford and John

Ruszkiewicz' Everything's an Argument, 3rd edition)

Evidence

You will offer a definition and then explain/defend it by using the kind(s) of evidence that you feel best make your case. What kinds of evidence can you use?

Class readings, Your own research in the library and/or on the Internet, Your personal experience,

Interviews, Things you have read for other classes, Things you have read in the newspaper

Appendix E Paper Two Rhetorical Analysis Paper

Overview

This paper is meant to be a transition from your individual definition writing to your collaborative community service writing. Now that you have selected your community-based writing project, but before you begin writing with your group, you will complete an analysis of the community-based rhetorical situation for your group's writing project. The basic purpose of the paper is for you to analyze the rhetorical situation and explain the kinds of rhetorical strategies that will be effective for your group project.

Specifics

In this paper, you will need to do several things (not necessarily in this order):

- Identify the rhetorical situation for your group's writing project:
- What is the exigence or urgency? (most of Chapter 3 deals with urgency)
- How is the situation alterable?
- Who is the audience (s) - will you address them and/or invoke them? (see Chapter 4 for more on audience)
- Can the audience reasonably be persuaded/affected by your writing? As Ervin asks, what might your audience "regard[] as logical, true, fair, correct, and compelling [?]" (40).
- What are the constraints of the rhetorical situation? (see Chapter 4 for more on constraints, especially pp. 41-42) - listing the constraints might help you formulate a list of questions to ask our community partner.
- What needs do you think your writing meets?
- What makes your writing project the most effective of many possible actions?
- What can your writing reasonably accomplish in the given rhetorical situation?

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