Stasis and the Reflective Practitioner: How Experienced Teacher-Scholars Sustain Community Pedagogy

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Drawing on Donald Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner and the classical rhetorical concept of stasis, this article observes the habits and tactics of experienced community-engaged instructors of writing and rhetoric. It suggests that a complete reflective practice, combining reflection in and on action, contributes to sustaining effective programs and practices. In moments of tension or apparent crisis, effective reflective practitioners identify critical stasis points effectively, creating opportunities for positive change. The stases of media, language, repertoire, theory, appreciative systems, and role frames are explored.

"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?"
—Catherine Gabor, "Ethics and Expectations"

"[The] stasiastic conflict is generative, creating an impetus for rhetorical action. Though stasis has connotations of standing still, the result of the confrontation of two opposing movements or forces, it also bears a strong sense of the potential energy of creation and action."
—Michael Carter, "*Stasis* and *Kairos*"

Mature community-engaged courses are not merely instituted; they are calibrated, requiring constant response and change to ensure goals are met, participants satisfied. This active maintenance relies on the work of everyone involved in the learning partnership—students,

civic organizers, administrators, and faculty—but a growing body of research suggests that the academic instructor's role is pivotal in determining whether an otherwise healthy partnership languishes or thrives (Zlotkowski, "A New Voice," Cushman, "Letter," "Sustainable"; Underwood et al.) This dependency is partly the result of the unique demands of such courses, in which pedagogy is understood to encompass logistical and situational decisions that ultimately shape the ongoing relationships between an institution, its students, and its community partners. One way to better understand the instructor's role is by observing how she manages the constraints of her course. The narratives in this volume, like other professional conversations we've had, suggest that experienced instructors in sustainable partnerships describe pedagogical change as an *ongoing* response to the complex relationships and resources entailed in community-engaged learning.[1] Even if a particular course should cease, the underlying relationships and pedagogy are likely to be refined and re-animated in a more robust variation. What makes this possible is the instructor's attention to goals, responsiveness to myriad contextual factors, and pedagogical theory building, a set of strategies evidenced by the teacher-scholars within this collection, best described by Donald Schön as "reflection in and on action." In this essay we will more closely consider the habits and tactics of the reflective practitioner and how they equip her to anticipate obstacles and strengthen her community-based pedagogy. In so doing, we hope to help clarify ways that we all might generate more sustainable community-engaged pedagogies by actively employing what we refer to as *stasis* strategies in our reflective practice.

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Characteristics of a Reflective Practitioner

Experienced professionals in almost all fields share an apparently mysterious quality: they are able to approach challenging new situations and respond effectively, even though they have never encountered the precise tasks at hand. When they experience tension or conflict they are not left standing still; they are able to determine appropriate, even best, responses to the situation. To demystify what happens when seasoned practitioners work, Donald Schön observed them in a wide range of professions, developing the notion of

the reflective practitioner, the person who is able to reflect in action or engage in "reflective conversation with the situation" (*The Reflective* 268). The strategies the experienced professional employs, sometimes without being able to articulate them, include recognizing that there is a new situation or problem, defining the problem and its boundaries, and extending old knowledge through what Schön calls "frame experiments" (*The Reflective* 63).

The frame experiment allows the professional to try out a new response to a puzzling situation even as the situation emerges; it tests a hypothesis. The frame experiment is central to Schön's theory of the reflective practitioner because it acknowledges that knowledge is built in action, not just in the kinds of reflection typically privileged by academics. Further, it suggests that there is a basic pattern most professionals follow as they test old knowledge by adapting, stretching, and altering it to fit new situations. The effective professional begins by noticing a dilemma, framing what he or she will consider as part of the new situation (and thereby eliminating some factors), drawing on previous knowledge and theories while adapting them to address the newness of the situation, and testing the new knowledge in action. This process does not require practitioners to stop what they are doing. Instead they appear to complete this process almost seamlessly.

Because some change is always happening within the community-engaged course, we are frequently challenged to respond immediately to felt tensions. That on-the-spot response often shapes pedagogy in important ways; since pedagogy is an intersection of theory and practice, our intellectual engagement with instructional moments both constitutes present pedagogical approach and alters future pedagogical practice. But it is not only through reflection in action that experienced practitioners refine and adapt their work in response to context; they also reflect *on* action (Schön, *Educating* 26). Even after a course ends and the term passes, effective teacher-scholars return to reflect on the action to change it. In our profession, reflection on action is typically crystallized in published research or scholarship; yet even here reflection-in-action plays a role. We conduct research both because frame experiments did not work effectively, leaving some "messes" to manage (Schön, *The Reflective* 18) that are more complex than can be addressed as we work in the classroom or community setting, or because we hope to articulate what happened in our successful frame experiments so that others might also use our

knowledge. Reflection to develop new knowledge in and after the moment, followed by action, combine to form a complete reflective practice.

The Reflective Practitioner in Writing and Rhetoric Instruction
Teachers of writing and rhetoric are not strangers to this dynamic interrelationship of practice, reflection, and theory or pedagogy building. Just as every course is a shifting plurality of interrelationships requiring active engagement on the part of the instructor, every situation calling for writing or rhetoric is similarly complex and unpredictable; we teach students to cultivate the kinds of attentiveness, awareness, and adaptability that we need as experienced writers and professionals; we teach reflective practice.

In his effort to provide a metatheory regarding the effective teaching of writing, George Hillocks, Jr. suggests that reflection plays a critical role, regardless of the writing or rhetorical theory underpinning the pedagogy. Like Schön, Hillocks suggests that reflective teachers recognize when unusual situations arise, and they use practice to develop working hypotheses, challenging existing knowledge and theories when that knowledge no longer seems explanatory. The reflection process manifests itself in moment-to-moment adjustments in the classroom, formative assessment, summative assessment, and sometimes scholarship. In the classroom, we notice body language, facial expression, and other "audience" responses that help us to adjust as we teach. If a student does not understand instructions and shows it on her face, we try explaining the activity or project another way. If tension arises in a small group, forestalling progress toward learning goals, teachers move to help the group solve the problem and reinvigorate the learning. When the problem the students face is new in some way to the teacher, she conducts an on-the-spot frame experiment. The teacher-scholar builds knowledge through this active inquiry. Our formative and summative assessments and our scholarship deepen and refine these small but critical moments of active theory building.

The Reflective Practitioner in *Community-Engaged* Writing and Rhetoric Instruction
If reflective practice is important to teaching writing and rhetoric, then, its value is compounded when the teaching and learning in these classes move into a community setting. As teacher-scholars in this field are aware, community-based courses are distinguished in large part by their commitment to

action and reflection at all levels and by all participants. Barbara Jacoby and her colleagues, leaders in the field of service learning, indicate reflection's centrality by including it in their definition of the pedagogy (*Service-Learning*, 5; also *Building Partnerships*, 3). Reflection enhances student learning (Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede; Hatcher and Bringle; Rhoads); it facilitates community goals (Peck, Flower, and Higgins); it improves faculty satisfaction (an outcome implicit in our continued conversations about the value of research); it builds disciplinary knowledge (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz). Reflection also ensures that a second key concept, the goal of reciprocity, is attained. Without reflection, students might perform service without the learning or campus and community partners might perpetuate situations in which only one group of stakeholders sees its goals fulfilled.

In addition, reflective practice in community writing and rhetoric instruction mirrors our commitments to Boyerian notions of applied scholarship, activist and participatory action research, and civic engagement. Composition-rhetoric emphasizes pedagogy and application in its building of disciplinary knowledge; community-engaged instruction, with its many layers of action in and out of the classroom, demands the kind of responses Boyer suggested might be called the scholarship of application or the scholarship of teaching (*Scholarship Reconsidered* 23). He argues, and we agree, that not all knowledge is developed in traditional research venues. There is much to be valued in reflection-in-action even without formalizing that knowledge in publications.

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Reflective practice in community-engaged instruction is distinguished from similar practice in a classroom-bound writing or rhetoric course in several ways. The objects and boundaries of our reflection expand far beyond the immediate classroom constraints to include actions we cannot observe and individuals not normally influential in the classroom (community partners and audiences). This expansion requires that the community-based practitioner must become adept at selecting the bounds of a given problem. The interpretive frames through which we look at these problems (experiential and theoretical) expands beyond those available in writing, rhetoric, and teaching practice to include civic and organizational frames, among others relevant to

the community-situated task. Further, in the community-engaged classroom, pedagogical goals are accompanied by equally valued community goals. Reciprocity requires that reflection consider both kinds of ends. In the traditional composition-rhetoric classroom, instructors might nod to ethical constraints, social ends for language, and audiences beyond the classroom, yet community-based classrooms bring those components alive, increasing the possibility for the kinds of unpredictable circumstances that demand reflection-in-action.

As this discussion of the role of reflective practice suggests, community-engaged writing and rhetoric instructors frequently feel tensions between elements of their pedagogy: e.g., between their roles as a supervisor-mentor and grader of student work, between their pedagogical needs and resources, between the priorities of the course and of the community agency, and between institutional time frames and those of the community partners. To help us examine them more closely, we refer to these tensions as *stasis points*.

We are borrowing the term *stasis* from classical rhetorical theory, where it is used to identify a standing point between opposing views from which rhetors may identify the question at issue so that an argument can commence (Kennedy 4). Rhetors become skilled at identifying the nature of the *stasis* to manage conflict productively. For pedagogical analysis, this concept is especially useful because it gives us a way to name common constraints and their potential to be transformed into specific questions and negotiations. It is how practitioners respond to these points in their pedagogy that define their effectiveness and the sustainability of community-based approaches to teaching.

Stasis Strategies of Reflective Practitioners

In an interview regarding his pioneering work in the service-learning movement, Mike Goldstein says, "I suspect many of us in our early years had a guiding theory: that the door that says 'do not enter' was a challenge. We saw closed doors as waiting to be opened" (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz 181). Goldstein and his colleagues typify the transformation of obstructions into gateways, and constraints into resources. Goldstein describes this behavior as a combination of optimism and naiveté. But while such "luck and pluck" lore is consistent with the typical character of a service-learning educator, a person willing to work behind-the-scenes, often without professional compensation,

to advance social justice and community literacy, Goldstein's behavior may be more productively-and actionably-viewed as a strategic approach to pedagogical constraints. In the forty years since Goldstein's early work, educators in long-term community partnerships have consistently exhibited a similar ability to leverage opportunities and resources. We call these "*stasis* strategies": strategies for becoming attuned to a particular pedagogical relationship, assessing potential points of conflict and employing or circumventing those constraints to refine and strengthen our work. Taking into consideration all of the surrounding circumstances and conditions of the rhetorical/pedagogical act, practitioners actively take a position, asserting what they see as the greatest probable truth in the situation, and it is that "truth" to which they respond. Effectively reading the situation is something that takes skill and experience.

To usefully categorize the typical kinds of *stases* encountered by community-engaged educators, we return to Schön and his concept of professional constants-factors that invariably influence professional action, even though their

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precise form will vary according to discipline and situation (270). Schön identifies six main constants: medium, language, repertoire, appreciative systems, theory, and role frames. We will briefly define each of these, explaining how each may become a pedagogical *stasis* point. It is important to note, however, that these constants are inter-influential, that, as with most categories, there are areas of overlap.

Stasis of medium

Media are "the 'stuff' of inquiry, in terms of which practitioners move, experiment, and explore" (271). In that regard, we view media as the tools of the trade-material resources such as technology, funding, paper, and pencils, as well as the available people, projects, time frames, and sites of community work. The *absence* or *limitation* of this "stuff" may also be a medium, especially as it yields a community need that can be engaged by research and teaching, or as it prompts us to retool for further inquiry.

In "Toward a Praxis of New Media: The Allotment Period in Cherokee

History," Ellen Cushman traces the evolution of her courses that merge critical, community, and digital literacies, an approach initially constrained by inconsistent levels of material, disciplinary, and institutional support that, for example, made it nearly impossible to reserve a computer lab for her classes. As she persisted in her pursuit of this resource and others over several years and at three universities, Cushman became more sensitive to the infrastructure needed to sustain such a pedagogy. She also acquired insights into the complex roles technology itself can play in community partnerships: what she initially sought primarily (though not exclusively) as a creative tool emerged as a "space of possibility" for authentic collaboration.

In her most recent project, a partnership between her multimedia writing classes at Michigan State and the Cherokee Nation headquarters in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the rare provision of a mutually accessible file server has opened a conduit for ongoing creative exchange. It is important to note that Cushman moves through the *stasis* partly by negotiating a favorable technology-access arrangement at her new institution, but she *makes use* of the *stasis* to inform her understanding of technology's formative contribution to community-engaged projects. Perhaps most interesting of all is the way a conventional medium, academic text, is transformed by this collaboration. Establishing a digital "public commons" has generated an alternative awareness of the media produced by the students: whereas academic texts are ordinarily perceived as the property of an institution, and as having value solely within that domain, the students in this class now produce texts for public consumption and exchange. In that way, the students' work is a medium for the Cherokee Nation web designers, school teachers, and others who choose to access it.

To equip her students, and herself, for this praxis of new media, Cushman poses a number of critical questions, such as: For what ends are we developing this project and using these media? What are the ethical and social ramifications intended and realized by this process? (pg #) What material, social, and cultural resources are essential to this work? (pg#) How do we ensure that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to share resources, knowledge, critical awareness, and perspectives on the social problems being addressed? How may we interrogate high-end technologies and produce multimedia texts with all stakeholders? And how can we best provide a flexibly structured inquiry

and problem solving approach to research and curriculum, one that applies knowledge from various disciplines? (pg #)

Stasis of language

Language entails all discourse pervading our work as teacher-scholars, including verbal and written language, symbols of the field, gestures, and other texts. Ultimately, it is how we name what we do. Especially potent are the terms we use to negotiate meaning within our profession, and in our relationships with students and community partners.

Within the profession of community-engaged writing and rhetoric, a persistent *stasis* of language is the tension between the need for a *durable* name, one that consistently identifies our work, enabling us cull our knowledge and sustain our programs, and the need for a *precise* name, one that clarifies our connection to a particular field of inquiry. Precise naming can be an important strategy for attracting grant support and professional recognition, as well as for preserving pedagogical autonomy, assessing learning outcomes, and retaining institutional allies (Hessler "Composing").

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 Although institutional documents and campus brochures are still most likely to call community-engaged instruction "service-learning," there is a discernible retreat from that term within our scholarly discourse. An interesting record of this trend is within the convention programs for the Conference on College Composition and Communication. From 2001 to 2006, panels addressing issues of community-engagement have considerably broadened their terminology, with sessions self-identifying as research or theory emphasizing community literacy and public rhetoric and sessions self-identifying as pedagogy or administration more likely to retain the term service-learning or to name a specific community base. In years when community engagement panels have been topically clustered, they've transitioned from "Service Learning/Community Based Learning" (2001) to "Civic, Public, Community Writing and Service Learning" (2005) to "Activist Rhetorics" (2006). The rise of activism as a term of both pedagogy and inquiry may signal a desire within the profession to re-animate the "radical hope" (Schell pg #) of those who

pioneered service-learning as a transformative intellectual movement. Yet again, the term "activist" may unintentionally reinforce the imbalanced power dynamic-of academic institution as agent of community change-that made "service-learning" seem problematic in the first place. To date, service-learning continues to be the most enduring term for community-engaged higher education; however, the rhetorical fragmentation within the field may be purchasing precision and [academic] cultural capital at the expense of a sustainable identity.

If we choose to continue to re-name our work (as surely we will), we may, as Paula Mathieu has asserted, be better served by seeking out generatively problematic terms, such as "street" (xiii; see also Schell in this volume), that remind us to continue to scrutinize our community roles and relationships. Our naming decisions may depend on such questions as: With which teaching and research traditions, networks, and values am I attempting to align myself, and why? How will my community partners, students, and/or others "outside" my professional discourse community interpret this term? What will be gained, and lost, by this choice of term? What insight or "perspective by incongruity" (Burke) might I provoke by adopting this term?

Within our classrooms, a potentially generative *stasis* is the hazy continuum between our nuanced jargon and its ordinary connotations. When Catherine Gabor detects her students' tendency to default to the rhetoric and roles of *noblesse oblige*, she re-constructs her reading and writing sequence to foreground the study of terms and ideas that reveal a range of possible relationships between them and their partners. She instructs her undergraduate students to compose definition essays that explicate multiple meanings from a single familiar term, such as "community," "ethics," or "public," drawing upon personal experience as well as scholarly sources ("Ethics and Expectations" pg #). Doing so challenges the students to "solidify their ideas and at the same time begin to grasp the fluid nature of meaning" (pg #). To help these writers begin to consider the nature and impact of each term, Gabor has them consider the following: What are the conditions that create the thing you are trying to define? How has your term met/fulfilled the conditions? What kind of evidence can you use to defend your definition? (pg #) As a result of this reflection and revision, Gabor began posing additional questions to herself as well, such as: Who is serving whom and why? Is the

writing invited or imposed? What is the relationship between the student-author and the public audience? (pg #)

Gabor's questions imply a scrutiny of her role as community pedagogue but also that of community partner where, once again, language decisions influence and reflect relationships. These concerns are echoed in Tiffany Rousculp's account of her community discourse as a college writing instructor and co-founder of a multi-site community writing network ("The DiverseCity Writing Series"). Here a *stasis* of language is detected in the Series's published 'zines and anthologies where, Rousculp explains, the introductions composed by the college-based editors inadvertently reinforce a hierarchy their program otherwise tries to diffuse. In seemingly benign but nonetheless revealing ways, the editors established categories and advanced interpretations in ways that may have limited the writers' and readers' expectations.

Examining these artifacts helped Rousculp and her colleagues reconsider their rhetorical and programmatical interactions: "We analyzed the groups with whom we had partnered, and noticed that through the selection of "oppressed" or "othered" populations (low-income women, the elderly, the homeless, the ill) we were, in fact, making a determination of what diversity meant . . . " (pg#). This critical reflection led to expanded dialogues with community organizations and the establishment of additional all-inclusive writing groups, for as Rousculp explains, "We decided that a truly diverse program was one that honored the complex subtleties of a community, rather than relying on culturally-determined identity politics to select who would be invited to participate" (pg#). Generative questions suggested by this revision include: How might our program's artifacts help us reflect on our community relationships? --On the presence or absence of reciprocity? What terms do we use to define our work, and why? How do people outside our program define us? Does this language welcome or inhibit newcomers to our program?

Stasis of repertoire

A reflective practitioner's *repertoire* is her typical approach to enacting her work-including "cases, maxims, and methods" (265) as well as "examples, images, understandings, and actions" (138). In community-engaged writing and rhetoric, a repertoire might include readings about key concepts such as

community literacy and intercultural inquiry and about core principles such as reciprocity and collaboration; touchstone assignments such as the literacy narrative, community needs assessment, and site orientation; and pedagogical practices such as journaling, class discussion, and portfolio evaluation. The repertoire of civic journalists, such as the undergraduate students in Sue Ellen Christian's service-learning journalism classes, would likely include writing about issues of local significance, adopting the rhetorical stance of journalism-as-citizenship, and maintaining an acceptable level of editorial autonomy.

In "Get Me Rewrite! Five Years of the Student Newspaper Diversity Project" Christian describes a collision of repertoires as her methods and approach-grounded in her training as a newspaper staff writer and college professor-engaged those of secondary school administration. Sustaining a high school newspaper project has entailed acquiescing to the practice of prior review and recognizing that censorship and content decisions are within the purview of the school principal.

She describes her adaptation to the institutional politics and policies of high school journalism as a process of modifying her expectations as well as her position within the project:

> I have learned that a project must fit within the framework of an institution's politics or it may not survive. In response, I have altered both my reporting goals for the On Diversity edition and my role in the high school. In light of prior review, I am more willing to reduce expectations for aggressive or investigative reporting. In addition, my role in the high school has shifted from a project leader who sets a tone and pace for the edition to a facilitator and encourager, a valuable but institutionally silent partner. (pg#)

Continuing the project requires ongoing reflection regarding the extent to which she can maintain her own sense of journalistic and pedagogical integrity in that role. We view this compromise as a *stasis* of repertoire because what is at stake are her fundamental methods and understandings as a professional journalist. Christian's situation also illustrates the inevitable overlapping of *stases*, for she is raising important questions about her professional stance, a

condition we will discuss in a later section on the *stasis* of role frames.

To assess this condition and to identify further adjustments, Christian has formulated a series of questions based on the journalist's repertoire:

> What are the goals of our project?
> How realistic are those project goals?
> Why is this project worth doing?
> Who do I need to involve in this project to make it work better, smarter, more efficiently, more economically?
> When is the most realistic time to make a revision?
> Where is the project going?
> Who cares? (pg#)

The last question, she explains, is crucial: "If the project is not relevant to our community, we cannot fairly claim it is based in civic journalism or in service-learning" (pg #).

Like Christian, other practitioners can activate their own repertoires by looking to common models and examples. Questions to activate repertoire in a community-based situation include: What patterns of interaction, organizational structure, and/or methodology can I detect in this situation? What features of this problem seem familiar or analogous to those I've encountered previously? What maxims would appear to offer some truth regarding this situation? How might I illustrate this problem in order to articulate it to colleagues?

Stasis of theory

In any given field, certain theories are considered best knowledge; it is to those theories that practitioners turn to make sense of experience. Schön sees theory as bifurcated: the first branch is "theory," something one applies to predict and control a situation and its outcomes; the second is "overarching theory," which offers explanatory language to the practitioner (273). We see "theory" as similar to the concept of praxis, the intersection of theory and practice or even pedagogy, which sometimes offers us tools to predict outcomes and to modulate the situation of the class. "Overarching theory" encompasses the metalanguage we apply when we discuss writing, rhetoric,

and pedagogy in the abstract without immediate practical application: theories of activity systems, discourse, ethics of care, epistemology.

Productive *stasis* points in overarching theory usually occur when the meta-language ceases to explain effectively the phenomena it addresses. In the field of composition, cognitivism came to a critical point when scholars recognized it did not account for social dimensions of language. In community-engaged pedagogy, theory rarely exists without some application. One of the most cited examples of a *stasis* in this area is highlighted in Bruce Herzberg's article "Community Service and Critical Teaching." This piece suggested that community-service pedagogy, in theory and practice, was not the same as critical pedagogy, that we could not assume that community service would always lead to the development of critical consciousness in the Freirean sense. In "Genre Analysis and the Community Writing Course" Tom Deans recognizes a theoretical *stasis* point within the field and sees it as an opportunity to energize his pedagogy. He avoids stagnating his practice by updating his theoretical knowledge to represent the best knowledge of the field, adding genre theory to still useful older theories of rhetoric.

Questions raised by reflective practitioners attuned to theoretical stasis include: Is the present situation explainable in terms of my operating theories? In what way does the problem I sense diverge from the predictions I made based on pedagogy? Does my present theoretical system represent the best knowledge of my discipline?

Stasis of appreciative systems.

As professionals approach unique situations, they apply a value system that allows them both to perceive the problem and evaluate it. This constant in reflective practice Schön calls an "appreciative system" (272-73). The objects of appreciation include the approaches adopted in a given situation, the products of the situation, and even the problem-solving process itself. Because dominating theories often imply or suggest value systems, appreciative systems are likely to emerge in part from overarching theory as well as from cumulative cases. For example, most feminist theories value equality-a feminist practitioner, referring back to her overarching theories, will apply that value of equality as she examines the action in her classroom.

In community-engaged instruction, some of the most cited standards used in evaluating ongoing situations are reciprocity, democracy, and engagement. The discipline itself shares some common values, while each practitioner might employ them with greater or lesser emphasis in evaluating her own practice in context. For instance, David Cooper and Eric Fretz make their own appreciative systems clear early in their article on the Service Learning Writing Project:

> Reflecting on the 13-year history of SLWP, we recognize a number of foundational ideas that continue to animate the Project. They include a consistent emphasis on encouraging democratic discourses and practices within our classes, a search for pedagogical methods that connect theory and practice, and efforts to reinvigorate the practice of teaching the Humanities as important and necessary cultural work in the public interest. (page)

Cooper, Fretz, and their colleagues at Michigan State invoke civic, democratic values as those they return to as they determine on an ongoing basis whether their pedagogy is what it should be.

Conflicts in the appreciative systems have caused temporary pause, until the practitioners turned those moments into opportunities. Early in the history of the SLWP, the involved practitioners noted a tension between "a venerable strain of discourse in American Studies" that rested on "the putative claim for a national purpose based on a unifying civic culture articulated through shared democratic discourse" and the postcolonial theories and concepts that called this discourse into question (page). Instead of abandoning historical civic discourse, however, these practitioners saw the tension as productive, an opportunity to engage students in critical discourse about American primary texts and traditions. While the notions of civic culture, citizenry, and civic ends had to be adjusted to address postcolonial critique, thereby altering the appreciative system, the overarching commitment to community concerns as they intersect with politics and government was unchanged.

Questions the Michigan State group asked of their situation included questions of *method*: "How do we introduce our students to the rich history of

civic life in the United States?" "How do we re-shape the everyday work that happens in our classrooms and provide opportunities for our students to actively participate in the public life of institutions?" (page) They also include questions of *products* as we can see implicitly in the move from having students produce public service announcements, brochures, newsletters and other documents that would have "a direct impact on the lives of people in mid-Michigan" to having them create issue booklets and facilitate public forums on related issues to training them to create lobbying materials and lobby local legislators. In other words, which of these products would best embody the civic values to which they ascribe? Finally, Cooper and Fretz even apply civic principles to their own *problem setting and solving* processes as they have committed to listening more to their own students' voices as the program is re-instantiated over time.

Stasis of role frames

The role frame combines the institutional or professional position one occupies with the stance one takes relative to institution, client, and task. What characterizes practitioners' roles in professional situations? Professionals' role frames will be heavily determined by the theories and the appreciative systems they use. The practitioners we are discussing here are teacher-scholars who define their teacher roles sometimes as mentor, guide, authority, coach. Some define their scholarly role as activist researcher, participant, collaborator, or cultural studies expert.

In "Between Civility and Conflict: Toward a Community Engaged Procedural Rhetoric" Hannah Ashley activates and adjusts her role frame when she recognizes a conflict in how she defines that frame and how she performs within it. While she previously felt it was her obligation to help students recognize injustice and hegemonic social structures (largely as she defined them), she recognized a tension between her own value systems and those of her students, even a tension between how she saw her role in relation to particular students. Seeing this as a pedagogical opportunity, Ashley now asks herself what is at stake in each situation in which she or her students resist something or in which they want to make change. Applying the "whiteliness" stance as a test of her intentions, Ashley helps to reposition herself relative to her students and social institutions. Where before she questioned the utility of helping an already strong and powerful organization like the

Catholic church while valuing projects aimed at gay and lesbian rights issues, after reflection Ashley recognizes her own personal investments in each of her responses. She sees herself as better able now to help her students do the same, examining their own stances and investments in particular positions.

Practitioners who observe a tension in their role frames might ask: Is my own vision of my role consistent with the way I execute that role? Does my vision of my role match my institutions'? If it does not match, is it more important to try to alter my institutional role description or to alter my approach? Do others in the project seem to see my role in the project differently than I do? Do others behave toward me as though my role is something other than what I perceived (endowing me with more or less authority than I thought I had, for instance)?

Multiple Stases

As Schön recognizes, professional activity requires dealing with complex contexts and problems. Rarely is there just one point at which practitioners can and should change direction. What these *stasis* strategies offer community-engaged writing and rhetoric instructors are approaches to various aspects of pedagogy. To manage the messes before them, the experienced practitioners in this volume framed the problems and addressed what seemed most important at the time, but they often ultimately had to attend to more than one of the *stases* we discuss here to fully address the issues at hand.

We have highlighted the way in which Ashley directed her attention to her role frame. However, it is important to note that to assess her role, Ashley actively employed theory. It was not so much that she felt a *stasis* of theory, but that the theory helped her to evaluate the tension in her role. Ashley was also reconsidering her appreciative system, which informs her sense of her role. She valued critical consciousness and its development in students and herself and brought that value to each teaching situation. When it appeared her students were not being equally critical, she began to ask herself what was wrong. And in that process, she seemed to identify her stance as the most productive *stasis* point. All of this is to say that situations are typically more complex than a single *stasis* strategy can fully address, but that one will typically emerge as most critical.

The End's the Thing

An important lesson we have derived from these experienced practitioners is that, while we each try to sustain present programs, partnerships, and courses, what we really want to keep constant is a commitment to the goals we know can be achieved through these pedagogical projects: critical consciousness, community collaboration, the development of knowledge beyond academe, and increased civic engagement, among others. Programs inevitably grow and change, partnerships between institutions may survive for years but only so long as the arrangement is mutually beneficial and feasible. A collapsed or radically transformed partnership may not be the sign of an unsustained service-learning effort; rather, it may have been the incubator for a more suitable one. Likewise, when we discuss "institutionalizing" service-learning, we desire institutional dedication to *goals* attainable through community-based pedagogies, not necessarily the permanence of each course or program. And that is why it is so important that we pay attention to the practices of reflective practitioners and their methods of refining and strengthening pedagogy. Without vigilant commitment to moment-by-moment readjustments over large spans of time, what gets sustained might actually do more harm than good.

Note

1 During one of Rupiper Taggart's dissertation interviews, Garry Hesser claimed the reason he is now seen as a service-learning pioneer and a model practitioner is because he was just in the right places at the right times. Even then, the statement seemed overly humble. His attentiveness to the field and to his institutional context seemed central to the success of his service-learning efforts. Understanding the expert practice beneath that humble statement in part prompted this study.

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