Learning Service: Reading Service as Text

Marilynne Boyle-Baise, Indiana University

In this essay, I focus on the service in service learning. I consider what might happen if the term "service learning" was inverted—to learning service. I wonder if such an inversion can help instructors, students, and community partners critically evaluate the service they do. I describe "reading service as text" as a tool for learning service. To read service as text, learners question the goals, values, forms, and assumptions embedded in distinctive forms of service. The guiding questions for this essay are: (1) What does it mean to learn service, (2) how can service be read as text, and (3) how can best practices be reconsidered as standards for service?

In this paper, I consider what might happen if we think of service learning as its inversion: learning service. This change in terminology might spur us—service instructors, partners, and participants—to critically evaluate the service we do. Such an inversion might open more space for us to unpack the notion of service itself, contemplating its suitability as a symbol of our engagement with others. I posed the notion of learning service in an earlier work (Boyle-Baise, Brown, Hsu, Jones, Prakash, Rausch, Vitols, and Wahlquist 17), and I build on that discussion here, puzzling through ways in which "learning service" can expose the assumptions that undergird our actions.

Service learning is growing ever more popular as a means to assist community development, heighten student learning, foster civic engagement, and support social change. These varied aims should alert us to the conceptual diversity of service learning and its function as an umbrella term that embraces a range of perspectives and pedagogies.

Distinctive forms of service have been discussed in the literature for over a decade. These conversations rarely make it out of scholarly discourse and into actual programs, however. Instructors often do not realize that their service practices reflect historical,

ideological, and conceptual choices, and I include myself among these instructors. Partly for my own benefit, therefore, I have focused my research and practice on exploring and clarifying service learning's various forms.

Over the years, I have crafted a space within service learning that I can call home. For me, service learning is a form of community-based education that provides an opportunity to utilize the community as a learning space. In my model, "accompaniment" (Simonelli, Earle, and Story 47), or interacting with community groups on their own terms, is central. Bilateral education, learning *with* and *from* local people, is valued. Shared control, or sharing power with community representatives, is significant (Boyle-Baise, Clark, Epler, McCoy, Paulk, and Truelock 347). Diversity, or cultural, social, and professional difference, is affirmed. I think of these commitments as "multicultural service learning" (Boyle-Baise, *Multicultural* 16).

My intellectual home, however, represents one choice among several options. While this conception of service usually guides my teaching, I participate in other forms of service at other times. For example, I give charitable donations as a form of goodwill and I offer civic service as president of my neighborhood association. For me, as for most people, acts of service vary in intensity and intent. As we serve, wouldn't it be beneficial to understand the aims and ends of our actions? Wouldn't such knowledge help us make informed choices? If service itself were the object of our studies, we might be able to "learn service," developing a rich repository of options to serve.

In the pages that follow, I ask, What does it mean to learn service? How can service be read as text? And, how might principles of best practices be reconsidered as standards for service?

Learning Service

What does it mean to learn service? It means learning that service is not monolithic. It means recognizing that an array of actions take place under the name of service learning. It means tapping into scholarly discourse about what constitutes service learning. It means understanding that service is a choice among multiple options for social action.

Recognizing Conceptual Diversity

Service learning has an intellectual history that stretches back about thirty years (Pollack 52). Its origins are often represented as an uneasy marriage between community development and higher education. This intermingling spawned diverse, often

competing, versions of service. According to Pollack, students could work for cash, credit, or karma, providing people-power for anti-poverty programs, participating in experiential education programs, or volunteering to address social needs (61). For a few years, the internship model balanced community development and higher education needs, but this model collapsed under the weight of Reagan era educational critique (85). When service learning returned to the university curriculum, it had been "curricularized" (218), and was perceived more as a supplement to course content than as a means to practice experiential learning or bolster communities.

So, where does this history leave us? Competing logics, norms and rules for service persist. Over the past decade, multiple conceptual frameworks have been suggested (e.g., Boyle-Baise, *Multicultural* 17; Butin, "Service Learning" 90; Deans 16; Kahne and Westheimer 595; Morton 23; Robinson 144). These frameworks unsettle singular, normative, "best" notions of service learning. Below, I offer a conceptual map of multiplicity within the field. Butin's taxonomy of the four ideal types is central to this project. This article, in fact, can be read as an extended response to his arguments.

Four Ideal Types

Butin proposes four lenses from which to view service learning: technical, cultural, political, and post-modern ("Of What Use" 1676-84; "Service Learning" 90-2).

- A technical conceptualization of service is focused on pedagogical effectiveness. It posits that students can learn ideas, content, or skills more deeply through field observation or practical application. A technical perspective focuses on the innovation itself—the quality of placements, the number of contact hours, and the frequency of reflections Typically, reciprocity is seen as an exchange of needs and resources, agreed upon by providers and recipients Typically, reciprocity is seen as an exchange of needs and resources, agreed upon by providers and recipients Typically, reciprocity is seen as an exchange of needs and resources, agreed upon by providers and recipients rather than on the implications of service. This perspective dominates service learning practice and research.
- A cultural conceptualization is focused on meaning making for individual and institutional participants. Students can increase their social awareness, develop their civic responsibility, cultivate their appreciation of diversity, and enhance their sense of commu-

nity. Institutions, in turn, can claim this growth as central to their liberal arts mandate. A cultural perspective recognizes the formative capacity of service, especially its role in developing a tolerant, civic mindset. This perspective also is central to service learning.

- A political conceptualization of service is focused on the empowerment of marginalized groups. Students undertake service as a means to understand, question, and ideally redress inequity. A political perspective utilizes service as a means to invest university assets, including student assistance, in efforts for social change. This perspective is less common. In fact, practitioners may view service as both potentially transformative and potentially repressive. In this more critical political perspective, "service" is criticized as a loaded term that signifies a power imbalance between server and served.
- A postmodern, or post-structuralist perspective is focused on how service can either sustain or disrupt one's view of self. Students examine the ways that service maintains or unsettles their assumptions about service, servers, knowledge, and community. This position, even less less common among institutionalized forms of service learning, is the basis for the view of service proposed in this article.

I find Butin's categories informative, but imperfect. He neglects the influence of charity on service learning, separates cultural and political views, and limits democratic education to cultural meaning making. I propose alternative views below, sketching other major strands in the field. I focus on distinctions in goals for service, in server/served relationships, and in learner outcomes.

Service as Charity

Charitable acts provide immediate, direct social or economic assistance to individuals. Charity, in common usage, means giving by the well-off to the poor—on the benefactor's terms. Service providers tend to see themselves as saviors for the poor, providing something those in poverty lack. However, for some students, charity represents a deep act of faith or an expression of humanism (Morton 25). Students commonly enjoy "doing good," but in this model their assumptions about diversity, poverty, or equity are largely unquestioned.

Charity is often discounted by service learning advocates as a form of volunteerism that lacks the intentionality of learning from service. Yet, charity is a predominant

form of service learning (e.g. Gorham 118; Kahne, Westheimer, and Rogers 45; Rhoads 127), and, to some college students, charity is synonymous with service (Wang and Jackson 45). Similarly, many graduate students with whom I have worked were not aware of options other than charity for engaging with communities (Boyle-Baise, Brown, Hsu, Jones, Prakash, Rausch, Vitols, and Wahlquist 20).

Service for Democracy

Civic engagements offer opportunities for students to participate democratically. Service helps students develop their identities as citizens, hone their skills for democratic participation, and practice civic engagement. The server/served relationship is more equitable than in the charity model. The "served" control the services provided and ideally utilize them to increase their ability to help themselves. The "servers" are learners who increase their social awareness and act to improve social conditions. In a liberal, Rawlsian sense of justice, service learners act in their enlightened self interest; as they assist others in becoming autonomous, responsible citizens, they also create a better community for themselves (Varlotta 458).

Butin's taxonomy locates civic engagement in the technical camp and democratic development in the cultural camp (1679-80), but these categories are problematic. Civic engagement is seen through an instrumental lens, as one among many beneficial student outcomes of service. Alternatively, this thrust can stand alone, as an impetus that teaches the art and craft of citizenship (e.g., Barber 231; Battistoni 31; Boyte 61). Further, cultural views of service reduce citizenship to the acquisition of a democratic mindset—only one of the ambitious aims of public work..

Service for Critical Consciousness

This form of service goes by various names, including *service learning for social change or social justice, critical community service,* or a *political conceptualization of service* (e.g. Butin 1681; Chesler and Scalera 19; Deans 19; Rhoads 208; Robinson 144). The goal is to raise students' awareness about racism, poverty, and social injustice and to work with distressed communities to make a difference. Server and served should work together, as a coalition, to bring about social change, as defined by those served. Students should increase their grasp of social problems and develop dispositions to challenge injustice.

Butin separates service with cultural intention from service with political intention (1680), but I consider this an artificial cleavage. In order to enact service for social

justice, instructors and students must cross social, economic, and cultural boundaries to work closely with people often unlike themselves. When practitioners and students approach lower income people and their neighborhoods from a capacity-focused position, rather than from a needs-based orientation (Kretzmann and McKnight 5), doors open, and an array of individual talents, local wisdom, and productive skills emerges (Boyle-Baise, "Preparing" 451). From a capacity-focused perspective, service leaders should invite local people to develop and enact service projects, creating local renewal from within communities. Service for social justice, then, is both a cultural and political act of legitimization and mobilization.

When practitioners and students approach lower income people and their neighborhoods from a capacity-focused position, rather than from a needs-based position, doors open, and a surprising array of individual talents, local wisdom, and productive skills emerge.

Butin holds little hope that service can be part of substantive social solutions (1682). For him, a political perspective examines tough questions about power but rejects meliorist notions of making a difference. At question is the extent to which service can be utilized to mobilize communities, foster self-reliance, or increase individuals' ability to participate in society. It is a fair question. As an effort in social justice, service learning should be more than teaching tolerance. Students should be able to both interrogate unfair conditions and act to redress them.

Service for Community Development

Some service learning pioneers entered the field from community bases or outreach-focused campus roles. They perceived service as a tool for community development. The aim was to offer university resources to communities to help them solve their own problems (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz 122-31). Community empowerment, not student empowerment, was intended as the primary outcome of service.

Once at the center of service learning, this strand is marginal in service learning practice today, surviving mainly in service to remote communities as part of cultural immersion experiences (Stachowski and Frey 6-7). Additionally, "service as accompaniment" (Simonelli, Earle, and Story 47), an anthropological notion of community outreach, can empower communities. Through accompaniment, students work with local people on their own terms, developing understandings of local issues from community perspectives. Students should leave sites able to share the concerns of marginalized groups with the larger world.

Community-based-research (CBR), or action research conducted with and for communities, also offers an opportunity for community development. Professors and their students offer investigative expertise to community organizations and hope to ultimately bring about social change through their research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue 5). However, definitions of change depend upon the entity with which one works (Boyle-Baise, Brown, Hsu, Jones, Prakash, Rausch, Vitols, and Wahlquist 19). If researchers work through a social agency, then community development is mediated by that agency, and CBR may result in little more than program improvement for the agency.

Butin does not include community development among his ideal types for service learning, but he has recently argued for the relocation of service learning to Community Studies programs. According to Butin, service learning has pursued the wrong revolution ("Disciplining" 57). Service learning advocates sought to shift the academy toward the community, but instead higher education translated service into normative, technical, instrumental forms. As an alternative, Community Studies programs can provide a place for service to flourish. Students can engage in community-based research and participate in community development as part of their academic studies.

Butin's proposal has allure for me. It returns service to its community development roots and correlates with the place in service learning that I call home. It re-focuses service on community issues, connections, and studies—aspects of service that are often compromised in student-outcome oriented projects. However, this reassignment can ghettoize service as something only community development folks do, and it can thwart a pluralistic view of service as an informed choice among multiple options for public engagement.

Teaching Variety

Once we recognize that conceptual diversity marks service learning, what are we do to about it? We can endorse pluralism, recognizing different service types as appropriate for different aims and ends. We can make choices, recognizing that our selections may either correlate or compete with popular trends. If technical and civic aims hold sway, as is the case at present, and we want to offer a multicultural service learning experience, then we must either merge technical aims and multicultural interests, or teach against the grain.

Additionally, we can match service experiences to course aims. In my own case, I found it difficult to develop critical views of racism or poverty from individually focused service, like tutoring. Students learned more about social conditions when I reorganized service experiences to involve people in lower income neighborhoods as co-teachers and to foster interaction with youth and adults (Boyle-Baise, *Multicultural* 75).

Further, we can outline service options for our community partners. Again, my experience can be instructive. In one instance, when I discussed choices for service with community partners, they were impatient, wanting to get on with the work. They were ready to "put resources on the table," not recognizing that making conceptual distinctions was a resource that I brought to the table. Later, they noted the value of these conversations, reporting that our exchange engaged them in creating a richer framework for the project (Boyle-Baise, Bridgwaters, Brinson, Hiestand, Johnson, and Wilson 11-12).

Finally, we can discuss service typologies with our students. If we have selected a mode of service for them, they deserve to know why. I have been in situations where students do not "get" why they are doing service. In "Preparing Community-Oriented Teachers: Reflections from a Multicultural Service Learning Project," I suggest that for those engaged in service, there is nothing worse than the perception that their efforts are mere busy work (454).

Reading Service as Text

What does it mean to read service as text? Reading service as text is a critical exercise, with service itself the focus of critique. The aim is to identify embedded assumptions and consider alternatives. Reading service as text allows one to recognize distinctive service types, and to deconstruct service efforts in order to identify their elements, interrogate their claims, and question what counts as "good" service—and for whom, when, and why. As Butin puts it, service becomes self-reflexive or self-consuming; students question the ways service works upon them and they critique the learning they consume ("Service Learning" 99). Reading service as text, then, is a tool for learning service that can be utilized by instructors, students, and community partners to deepen our understanding of the service we do.

Asking Questions of Service

In reading service as text, I propose something beyond the reflective activities common to service learning. Reflection reconsiders community experience in order

to learn from it. Reading service scrutinizes service in order to derive its intentions, consider its actions, and imagine its consequences. Reading service can foster writing about service from a stance of critique. The following questions can assist learners in reading and writing critically about service.

- What kind of service is provided? Does this service primarily offer compassion, practice citizenship, develop critical consciousness, foster social change, or bolster community development?
- Who is the server? What is the positionality (i.e., racial, ethnic, gender, class, language preference, age, physical ability, or sexuality) of the server? How do the cultural, social, and economic identities of servers impact the service?
- What is the relationship between servers and served? How does this binary relationship influence service? Is there a way to disrupt this binary?
- What does collaboration mean? Does the university share power and control with the community? Is service *with* or *on* a particular group?
- Who are the partners for this project? Is the partnership culturally, racially, and economically diverse? Are community people and/or social organizations identified as partners?
- Who will develop the project? To what extent will local voices be heard? Do publicly or privately funded organizations actually represent targeted groups?
- How will the project impact the community? Will local people as well as students benefit from this effort? Can unintended, but harmful, consequences result from service?
- How, if at all, does the project address issues of cultural diversity, poverty, and social inequity? Will this project develop greater awareness of social injustice and prejudice? Does this project include plans for action to redress social problems?

Practicing Critique

Universal statements of "best practices" provide a good starting point for the kind of project I propose, offering a provocative way to practice this critical stance. These principles function as extant ideals that can forestall critique by prematurely or

reductively settling questions about what counts as good. I first turn to a critical review of the widely accepted principles developed during the Wingspread Conference in 1989 (Honnet and Poulsen):

1. Engage people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good,
2. Provide structured opportunities for learners to reflect critically on their experience,
3. Articulate clear goals for everyone involved,
4. Allow those with needs to define their needs,
5. Clarify responsibilities of everyone involved,
6. Match service providers and service needs through a process that recognizes changing circumstances,
7. Expect genuine, active, sustained organizational involvement,
8. Include training, supervision, and evaluation to meet service learning goals,
9. Insure the time commitment for service is appropriate, and
10. Commit to participation by and with diverse populations.

A critical read of these principles suggests a managerial, technical bent. The principles focus on means to attain a balanced partnership between educational and social/civic organizations. Reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationships are detailed carefully. Guidelines for work with minority groups are less clear, however. For example, in the explanation of Principle Four, one finds that recipients of service, as well as community service programs and government or private organizations, should define the service needed. This seemingly sensible and inclusive recommendation can nevertheless be questioned: How is need defined by constituents versus by the agencies that serve them? Why does service focus on needs? Can service support local capacities as well?

As a second example, Principle Ten seems to affirm diversity. Upon closer reading of the explanation of this principle, one finds that people from diverse backgrounds should be "welcomed" to participate in service programs. Every effort should be made to remove disincentives, such as transportation problems or conflicts with family and work responsibilities. Relevant questions are: Do invitations extend to ground-floor involvement in the creation of service efforts? Do invitations include joint leadership among community insiders and outsiders? What is a disincentive according to those

"served?" Can the experience of being labeled as a service recipient itself act as a disincentive to participation?

A similar critique can be conducted with Jeffrey Howard's primer for faculty, "Principles of Good Practice for Service-Learning Pedagogy." Howard places service squarely within the technical, academic outcomes camp. The principles are as follows:

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for service.
2. Do not compromise academic rigor.
3. Establish learning objectives.
4. Establish criteria for the selection of service placements.
5. Provide educationally sound learning strategies to harvest community learning and realize course objectives.
6. Prepare students for learning from the community.
7. Minimize the distinction between students' community learning role and classroom learning role.
8. Rethink the faculty instructional role.
9. Be prepared for variation in, and some loss of control with, student learning outcomes.
10. Maximize the community responsibility orientation of the course.

Let's examine this document from the vantage point of multicultural service learning. Principle 1 suggests that academic learning, not service to communities, is valued. Yet students expect service, as well as learning, to count for part of their course grade and do not see the two as mutually exclusive. Community partners also judge students on the quality of their service (e.g., showing up on time, taking responsibility), not on the quality of their academic learning (Boyle-Baise, Clark, Epler, McCoy, Paulk, Slough, and Truelock 350-1).

The worry with Principle 2 is that service learning will be perceived as academically "soft." Faculty are enjoined to insist that students master academic material and incorporate field learning into their studies. An alternative view is that community engagement should not be compromised by course requirements.

Principle 3 suggests that learning objectives should specify academic and civic outcomes. This directive limits faculty choice of service types, however, and seems to exclude community partners and participants from project design.

Finally, Principle 6 states that faculty should prepare students for community work by teaching them skills for learning from experience: reflective listening, seeking feedback, and acuity in observation. Learning about the community itself—its local history, ethnic composition, focal issues, or real concerns—is not mentioned.

Reading Issues of Diversity

In this section, I "read" service learning in relation to diversity, the central concern for this issue of *Reflections*. I begin with a focus on us, the readers of and writers of this volume. Then, I probe several issues that can help us understand the actions we take in the name of diversity.

First, when we "do" service learning, we practice particular kinds of service, and all service efforts are products of ideological choices. This special issue is no exception. It privileges cultural, political, and social justice views of service. In calling for discussions of diversity, equity, positionality, and agency, *Reflections* invites inquiry into the ways students make meaning by interacting with people unlike themselves and in how students develop critical consciousness or move toward advocacy as a result of service learning; service learning is envisioned as a means for learning about difference and working toward equity.

Scholars and practitioners who are searching for discipline-specific discussions of service may not be drawn to this special issue. They might dismiss the work as part of a familiar litany about transforming the academy to address diversity, rather than about utilizing experiential learning to augment the academy. As Zlotkowski argues, as long as service learning is recommended for its moral and civic benefits, most professors will support its place in the academy but insist it has little to do with their discipline (126). Zlotkowski urges scholars to find ways that service can enhance academic study, asking us to recast service learning from a cultural to an academic project. Readers and writers of *Reflections* should critically read both calls for service, figuring out where the twain can meet.

Second, when we engage in service learning, we construct and reconstruct relationships between servers and served. The notion of reciprocity—typically defined as an exchange of needs and resources, agreed upon by providers and recipients—shapes our thinking about these relationships. Yet the concept of reciprocity can reinforce dichotomous, power-imbalanced categories of giver/receiver and server/served. A critical read of service, however, should unsettle these binaries. As examples, students might

examine the variety of identities that servers and served actually inhabit (Henry 45). Or, students might consider an "enriched view of reciprocity" (Henry and Breyfogle 29) that balances power as partners act collectively. Or, students and partners might ponder the idea of "shared control" as a symbol of dispersed responsibility for service efforts (Boyle-Baise, *Multicultural* 13).

Perhaps norms for reciprocity need to be replaced by logics of relationships. Recently, in regard to a service project, my community partners described their commitment as "all about relationships." In other studies (Bringle and Hatcher 505; Dorado and Giles 25-6), researchers found that community partnerships are like relationships that need to be nurtured and sustained. A critical read of service should compare and contrast service for reciprocity or service as relationship.

Third, in many service learning contexts, we tend to emphasize student empowerment, leaving community empowerment behind. Our interest in diversity cannot be purely abstract, conversational, or theoretical; we must be dedicated to learning about and with neighborhoods as the basis of our work. We can only tap into local capacities if we know what those capacities are. Like many practitioners, I have found it quite challenging to learn about and with a community from close up rather than from afar. Certainly, most existing statements of best practices do not call for such effort, often using "community" as an umbrella term to account for participants and agency leaders. Yet without such effort we risk exploiting the community in the name of student learning.

When we do service learning, we tend to emphasize student empowerment, leaving community empowerment behind.

Statements of best practice have homogenized our thoughts and constrained our capacity to envision interesting intersections. In what ways might we create and enact service that empowers both students and communities? As a case in point, I offer a service project in which I participated, the Banneker History Project. High school youth helped to reconstruct the history of a once-segregated school in their town. In so doing, they learned to differentiate between explicit and implicit racism, to construct and write history, and to educate their fellow citizens. Both students and the school alumni with whom and for whom they wrote were empowered. The neighborhood benefited from public interest in its history, and students benefited from public recognition of their work (Boyle-Baise and Binford 310). An error that almost upset this effort is also revealing, however. I was invited to facilitate the project

by well-respected civil rights leaders, and assumed that they were acquainted with the African American constituency for the project. These leaders were not reared in the school's neighborhood, however, nor were they alumni of the school. Fortunately, the daughter of a school alumnus helped me locate an elusive, scattered and aging group of Banneker alums. Her assistance saved the project from disregarding the community it intended to serve.

Reconsidering Best Practice

What does it mean to rethink best practice? It means devaluing any one approach to service as best. It means pluralizing the kinds of service we can do. It means moving from principles of best practice to questions of critical regard. It means considering carefully what it means to do service in ways that affirm diversity and foster equity in the context of the service relationship.

Pluralizing Service

Citizens choose different kinds of service at different times for different reasons, and multiple venues for service should be respected. Charity and volunteerism, for example, should not be denigrated as less than ideal. Critical questions can be raised for any effort to serve, and when citizens, students, and instructors choose to serve, we should do so with some knowledge of the aims, logics, norms, and means of the task in mind.

Critical questions can be raised for any effort to serve; when citizens, students, and instructors choose to serve, we should do so with some knowledge of the aims, logics, norms, and means of the task in mind.

Just as there are different forms of service, there are varied definitions of good. Indeed, what counts as "good" can be a fruitful topic of discussion among instructors, students, and community partners. Extant principles can serve as a reference point, propelling consideration of what is worthy for a particular time and place. In order to raise questions about good service, however, participants need to situate their service among a set of alternatives, then analyze their experience according to criteria for the chosen type.

As I noted earlier, I have defined a place within service learning that I call home. I value multicultural service learning as a form of community studies that affirms diversity, builds community, and questions inequality. I stand by this form of service, and I do not hesitate to advance it. But my choice should be transparent, not opaque. My

students and community partners should be able to choose to go down this path with me. Or, I should be ready to adjust my views as a result of our collective negotiations.

Teaching Service

Recently, I conducted a graduate seminar in which a focus on learning service opened a space to interrogate the service itself. In the seminar, the students and I examined ideas at the core of community engagement. Together, we puzzled through Walter Parker's idea of idiocy as self-centered withdrawal from public life (2-3). We asked: Can service learning combat idiocy? We studied Rhoads' notion of positionality as the impact of one's role, identity, and standpoint on service (17). We asked: What views do I bring to service? We contemplated aspects of community partnership, such as otherness, mutuality, community building, and shared control (Boyle-Baise, *Multicultural* 13; Rhoads 105). We queried: What does it mean to share power with community partners?

We studied service learning's roots. We considered contested, alternative meanings for service as a resource for social needs, as a tool for citizenship education, or as assistance with grassroots work (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz 16-32). We asked: What are the competing moral and political commitments that undergird interpretations of service?

We studied distinctive forms of service, such as multicultural service learning (Boyle-Baise 16) and service as accompaniment (Simonelli, Earle, and Story 46). We asked: Where does our community work fit and why? We considered the value of community-based research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, and Donohue 5) and asked: Where is the community in community-based research?

Additionally, students participated in the development of the service project. They took part in initial conversations with community partners. Once it was determined that community-based research was appropriate to our partner's aims, students helped create a survey instrument. They tested it with a sample of the parents our partner hoped to reach. Back in our seminar, we theorized from practice, comparing our efforts to ideals for community-based research.

I published an article with students from this seminar that includes their reflections on learning service (Boyle-Baise, Brown, Hsu, Jones, Prakash, Rausch, Vitols, and Wahlquist 19-21). All of the students reported that as a result of the course, they broadened their understanding of service, clarified their personal views of service and situated themselves in service.

Relocating Service

As I noted earlier, Butin has argued that service learning has been universalized, temporized, and institutionalized—all means of making it widely appealing and generally acceptable. He makes a case for "disciplining" service learning: finding it an academic home within Community Studies programs where immersion programs and local inquiries are the norm ("Disciplining" 57). Only then, he argues, can the transformative potential of service learning be realized.

Butin's proposal is intriguing. Service as community studies becomes a means to learn *about*, *with*, and *from* communities, instead of a way to act on them. Approaching the community as a learning space legitimates experiential knowledge, values local wisdom, and empowers local people as knowers. I consider these aims vital to my field of teacher education. Teachers from a range of backgrounds need to know more about the places students call home, and community studies can help them gain what Peter Murrell calls community teacher knowledge, "knowledge of the culture, community, and identity of the children and families" they teach (Murrell 52).

However, the community studies perspective is not necessarily superior. I continue to endorse a pluralistic approach to service, as a pedagogy that can be enacted in diverse contexts in various ways and for different reasons. That said, in both my scholarship and my experience, I have found it all too easy to emphasize the academic community, where I am an insider, and de-emphasize (or misconstrue) local neighborhoods, where I am an outsider. If we undertake community partnership, that partnership needs to be something more than an abstract notion or a phone call to secure service placements. The meaning of partnership needs to be high on the list of the critical questions we ask of service.

Service need not be done blindly. It need not be restricted, perhaps by default, to technical forms. By learning service, instructors, students, and community partners can freely, knowledgeably and collaboratively select from a range of service options. Sometimes our service will be consonant with community studies, other times it will not. From this stance, service remains ideologically rooted, conceptually diverse, and pragmatically messy, but we can know more of what we do.

Works Cited

Barber, Benjamin. *An Aristocracy of Everyone: The Politics of Education and the Future of America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Battistoni, Richard. "Service learning and civic education." *Education for Civic Engagement in Democracy*. Ed. Sheilah Mann and John Patrick. Bloomington: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 2000. 29-44.

Boyle-Baise, Marilynne. *Multicultural Service Learning: Educating Teachers in Diverse Communities*. New York: Teachers College, 2002.

---. "Preparing Community-oriented Teachers: Reflections from a Multicultural Service-Learning Project." *Journal of Teacher Education* 56 (2005): 446-458.

--- and Paul Binford. "The Banneker History Project: Historic Investigation of a Once-segregated School." *The Educational Forum* 69 (2005): 305-314.

---, Betty Bridgwaters, Leslie Brinson, Nancy Hiestand, Bev Johnson, and Pat Wilson. "Improving the Human Condition: Leadership for Justice-Oriented Service Learning." *Equity and Excellence in Education* 6 (in press).

---, Rhondalynn Brown, Ming-Chu Hsu, Denisha Jones, Ambica Prakash, Michelle Rausch, Shelley Vitols, and Zach Wahlquist. "Learning Service or Service Learning: Enabling the Civic." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 18 (2006): 17-26

---, Joni Clark, Bart Epler, William McCoy, Gwen Paulk, Nancy Slough, and Chris Truelock. "Shared Control: Community Voices in Community Service Learning." *Educational Forum* 65 (2001): 344-353.

Boyte, Harry. "Civic Education as a Craft, Not a Program." *Education for Civic Engagement in Democracy*. Ed. Sheilah Mann and John Patrick. Bloomington: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, 2000. 61-72.

Bringle, Robert and Julie Hatcher. "Campus-Community Partnerships: The Terms of Engagement." *Journal of Social Issues* 58 (2002): 503-516.

Butin, Dan. "Of What Use Is It? Multiple Conceptualizations of Service Learning within Education." *Teachers College Record* 105 (2003): 1674-1692.

---, Ed. Dan Butin. "Service Learning as Post-modern Pedagogy." *Service-Learning in Higher Education: Critical Issues and Directions*. Ed. Dan Butin. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005: 89-104.

---. "Disciplining Service Learning: Institutionalization and the Case for Community Studies." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 18 (2006): 57-64.

Chesler, Mark and Carolyn Scalera. "Race and Gender Issues Related to Service-Learning Research." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* Fall (2000): 18-27.

Deans, Thomas. "Service-Learning in Two Keys: Paulo Friere's Critical Pedagogy in Relation to John Dewey's Pragmatism." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 6 (1999): 15-29.

Gorham, Eric. *National Service, Citizenship, and Political Education*. New York: SUNY, 1992.

Henry, Susan. "'I Can Never Turn My Back On That': Liminality and the Impact of Class on Service-Learning Experience." *Service-Learning in Higher Education*. Ed. Dan Butin. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. 45-66.

Henry, Susan and M. Lynn Breyfogle. "Toward a New Framework of 'Server' and 'Served': De(and Re)constructing Reciprocity in Service Learning Pedagogy." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 18 (2006): 27-35.

Honnet, Ellen Porter and Susan J. Poulson. *Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning*. Wingspread Special Report. Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, 1989. 21 June 2006 < http://www.johnsonfdn.org/principles/html>.

Howard, Jeffrey, ed. *Praxis I: A Faculty Casebook on Community Service Learning*. Ann Arbor: OCSL Press, 1993. 21 June 2006 <http://www.morgridge.wisc.edu/manual/pdf/principles.pdf>.

Kahne, Joseph and Joel Westheimer. "In the Service of What? The Politics of Service Learning." *Phi Delta Kappan* 77 (1996): 593-599.

Kahne, Joseph, Joel Westheimer, and Bethany Rogers. "Service-Learning and Citizenship: Directions for Research." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* Fall (2000): 42-51.

Kretzmann, John and John McKnight . *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 1993.

Murrell, Peter. *The Community Teacher: A New Framework for Effective Urban Teaching*. New York: Teachers College, 2001.

Morton, Keith. "The Irony of Service: Charity, Project and Social Change in Service-Learning." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 2 (1995): 19-32.

Parker, Walter. *Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life*. New York: Teachers College, 2003.

Pollack, Seth. "Three Decades of Service-Learning in Higher Education (1966-1996): The Contested Emergence of an Organizational Field." Diss. Stanford University, 1997.

Rhoads, Robert. *Community Service and Higher Learning: Explorations of the Caring Self*. New York: SUNY, 1997.

Robinson, Tony. "Dare the School Build a New Social Order?" *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 7 (2000): 142-157.

Simonelli, Jeanne, Duncan Earle, and Elizabeth Story. "Acompanar Obediciendo: Learning to Help in Collaboration with Zapatista Communities." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 10 (2004): 43-56.

Stachowski, Laura and Christopher J. Frey. "Student Teachers' Reflections on Service and Learning in Navajo Reservation Communities: Contextualizing the Classroom Experience." *The Community School Journal* 15 (2005): 101-120.

Stanton, Timothy, Dwight Giles, and Nadinne Cruz. *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1999.

Strand, Kerry, Sam Marullo, Nick Cutforth, Randy Stoecker, and Patrick Donohue. "Principles of Best Practice for Community-Based Research." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 9 (2003): 5-15.

Varlotta, Lori. "Confronting consensus: Investigating the philosophies that have informed service learning's communities." *Educational Theory* 47 (1997): 453-476.

Wang, Yan, and Golden Jackson. "Forms and Dimensions of Civic Involvement." *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* 11 (2005): 39-48.

Zlotkowski, Edward. "Does Service-Learning Have a Future?" *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* Fall (1995): 123-133.

Marilynne Boyle-Baise teaches Social Studies and Curriculum Theory at Indiana University, Bloomington. She is the author of *Multicultural Service Learning: Educating Teachers in Diverse Communities* (Teachers College Press, 2002) and many articles on service learning and teacher education.