

The Reflective Course Model:

Changing the Rules for Reflection in Service-Learning Composition Courses

Veronica House,
University of Colorado
Boulder

Abstract: Drawing upon concepts from service-learning theorists Sarah Ash and Patti Clayton's DEAL Model for Critical Reflection (2009), this article suggests an innovative approach to critical reflection. Rather than create separate reflection assignments, which can be problematic for a number of reasons described in this article, the author offers composition teachers strategies for embedding critical reflection concepts into composition assignments to create a "reflective course." The author provides models of types of reflective assignments from a first-year service-learning writing course, including a research paper, a proposal letter to a member of the community, and an oral presentation. These models are adaptable to many levels of rhetoric and composition courses, to many genres, and to students working with a wide range of community partners.

How we set up reflection matters. It is, after all, "the hyphen in service-learning" (Eyler 35). The hyphen embodies the philosophy behind the service-learning pedagogy: that the service and learning are not disparate concepts, but rather are intimately connected. Service-learning

courses join the two through reflection. At least, this is what we claim. Why is it, then, that some reflection assignments produce shallow thinking, generalizations, stereotypes, and clichés? To avoid this problem, some service-learning theorists and practitioners have encouraged rigor and depth of analysis through detailed and often complex schema for reflection that students must learn to use. I offer a simpler solution: stop assigning separate reflections. Instead, embed reflection into every assignment – make the entire course reflective.

Composition Studies has given substantial attention to reflection in the teaching of writing, beginning in such foundational works as Kathleen Blake Yancey's book, *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*. Yancey, composition scholars whose work on reflection followed hers, Write-to-Learn scholars, and portfolio scholars who write about reflection refer specifically to the processes students undergo as they articulate and deepen their own writing practices to better understand themselves as writers. These process descriptions "make visible what heretofore was invisible" (Yancey 26). In contrast, critical reflection in service-learning, while similar in its recursive, metacognitive approach, refers to processes by which students articulate and deepen academic, civic, or personal learning in relation to their community-based work. Reflection in this article specifically refers to reflection in service-learning, although I am influenced by current considerations in Composition Studies, specifically concerning metacognitive skill-building and the transferability of skills between contexts and between genres.

A central question in service-learning theory and practice concerns how to create effective reflection assignments that connect community-based learning with academic learning, site-based data collection with traditional research, and writing about community issues with composing documents for or with the community (Hatcher, Bringle, and Muthiah; Deans). Virtually all academic definitions of service-learning include reflection,¹ so practitioners must understand ways to effectively incorporate it into courses. Assessing the products of reflection is equally important, whether it be assigning a grade or generating qualitative and quantitative data about students' achievement of learning outcomes. In so doing, we can aid in the production of a "compelling body of evidence that engaged writing means *enhanced* writing" (Feigenbaum 81, original italics).

As the Associate Director for Service-Learning and Outreach in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder and founding coordinator of the Writing Initiative for Service and Engagement (WISE), which engages about 800 students each year in service-learning composition courses, I provide professional development for writing faculty in service-learning pedagogy. Our senior administration asked me to assess the quality and effectiveness of our instruction. The model for integrating critical reflection into assignments that I offer below, the Reflective Course Model, is one that helps to achieve this dual task. It is easily adaptable to a wide range of composition courses, both service-learning and traditional, and can be used by researchers and Writing Program Administrators to generate data about student learning.

Critical Reflection: Where Are We Now?

Recently, reflection used in service-learning courses came under fire in Ann Feldman's *Making Writing Matter*, in which she discusses "the dangers of reflection" (101). She echoes concerns about the shallow and interiorized nature of reflection assignments voiced by many service-learning scholars inside and outside of Composition Studies. Feldman conflates literacy narratives and reflection essays, lamenting that they "read like diaries" and that "an unspoken pact between teacher and student values highest those diaries characterized by emotionally laden, confessional materials or stories of rebirth and conversion" as the student writes about "what's inside through a process of introspection" (105, 115). Feldman's deepest concern with service-learning theories of reflection is that they only "enhance individual cognitive development" instead of encouraging learning that "emerges from participation in deeply situated experiences" (116). I would argue that such a distinction is unnecessary, and that one need not occur *instead of* the other. In fact, unfortunately, situated experience does not always equate to learning.

The definitional inclusion of reflection in service-learning has grown from evidence that the experiential element of a course does not necessarily generate learning and can sometimes even entrench previous assumptions (Bringle and Hatcher 84; Ash and Clayton, "Generating"). "Experiential learning," Ash and Clayton warn, "can all too easily allow students to reinforce stereotypes about

difference, to develop simplistic solutions to complex problems, and to generalize inaccurately based on limited data” (“Generating” 26). John Dewey famously said that experience can be either “educative” or “miseducative” (qtd. in Bringle and Hatcher 84). If service-learning is to have pedagogical value, reflection (as our hyphen) should help to make the experience in the community educative. When service-learning scholars or practitioners note that students’ written reflections may lack depth, insight, and critical thinking, it does not necessarily mean that the student’s experience was definitively miseducative or can never *become* educative, but rather, that the student has not *yet* learned from it.

Service-learning composition teachers must create prompts and assignments that generate the depth of thinking we hope to see. In other words, certain types of assignments, like some poorly-structured reflection journals, may actually deter students from learning. Chris Anson explains that “journal writing in many service courses may serve the purpose of creating a log or record of experience, but falls short of encouraging the critical examination of ideas” (“On Reflection” 169). Shallowness of thought manifests in *uncritical* reflection that indicates an inability to analyze an experience and its connection to academic concepts.

The above insights and many more like them led to the current wave of reflection scholarship, in which service-learning theorists developed distinctive criteria to distinguish between reflection and critical reflection. Whereas the word “reflection” brings to mind emotional, subjective, non-academic writing, which can be difficult to evaluate, “critical reflection” suggests analytical, evidence-based, intellectually rigorous writing that is appropriate to evaluate (Ash and Clayton, “Generating” 27). Critical reflection can be both retrospective and prospective, asking students to analyze what they learned and to envision how that learning will shape further action (Ash and Clayton, “Generating”).² As service-learning composition teachers we must think about how to scaffold reflective assignments throughout the semester to maximize student learning.³ This article responds to a growing call to examine the nature of student learning in service-learning courses by suggesting a model by which to create and empirically evaluate reflective assignments.

It is one thing for a teacher to ask students to reflect critically on experience; it is another thing for students to know how to do so. Designing effective critical reflection assignments is essential to the success of a service-learning course. Ash and Clayton explain that “a reflection mechanism that is not mapped to learning objectives is often a missed opportunity for maximized learning as well as a hindrance to using reflection products to assess learning” (“Generating” 40). Robert Bringle and Julie Hatcher offered a set of guidelines for designing effective reflection assignments, stating that critical reflection should

- (a) clearly link the service experience to the course content and learning objectives; (b) be structured in terms of description, expectations, and the criteria for assessing the activity; (c) occur regularly during the semester so that students can develop the capacity to engage in deeper and broader examination of issues; (d) provide feedback from the instructor so that students learn how to improve their critical analysis and reflective practice; (e) and include the opportunity for students to explore, clarify, and alter their personal values. (86)

Knowing how to reflect critically is not necessarily innate, but is rather a “learned skill,” which means that students can develop the capacity to think and write critically as the semester progresses (Hatcher, Bringle, and Muthiah, “Designing Effective Reflection” 43). Students should reflect before, during, and after they perform their community-based work, and they can do so alone, in groups, with their instructor, and/or with their community partners (Ash and Clayton, “Generating”). This approach helps students to continuously examine the complexities of their experiences and to understand the social structures that underpin the problems that they see in the community.

The DEAL Model for Critical Reflection

Ash and Clayton’s DEAL Model for Critical Reflection emphasizes the use of critical reflection to teach students concrete ways to develop critical thinking skills and to achieve whatever learning goals are at stake. I will explain the model in detail here, as it influences the Reflective Course Model that I describe in the next section of

the article. Ash and Clayton suggest that we guide students through structured critical reflection in a series of steps and questions proposed by the DEAL Model. Students Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning. During the “Describe” stage, students provide a detailed summary of the who, what, when, and where of their experience in fair detail and as objectively as possible. Poorly structured reflection assignments may allow students to end here, with a mere log of the experience. Clayton is careful to explain that “Reflection is NOT the same as DESCRIPTION although description is a good FIRST step in reflection” (original caps).

In the second stage, students “Examine” the experience “in light of specific learning goals or objectives” that emphasize personal growth, civic learning, or academic enhancement (Ash and Clayton, “Generating” 41). The community work becomes a text that students “read” and analyze alongside academic texts (Bringle and Hatcher). Critical reflection assignments, including double-entry journals and dialogic journals that have been popular in service-learning composition courses, often end at this point, with the synthesis of academic and community-based learning.

The DEAL Model pushes students to a final stage in the critical reflection process, the “Articulated Learnings,” during which students reflect upon the reflection process itself. This metacognitive exercise occurs in a series of four questions: “What did you learn? How did you learn it? Why is it important? What will you do because of it?” The purpose of reflection is to *generate* learning, Ash and Clayton argue, not merely to document previous learning. In other words, students may not yet know what they have learned or may not yet have translated the experience into “learning” when they begin their reflection assignment. More specifically, the learning may arrive in waves during the reflection process as students examine their experiences carefully and critically and then deepen their understanding through the Articulated Learnings. The purpose of DEAL reflections is not only to synthesize community experience and course readings to enhance academic learning; students can also perform DEAL reflections to generate civic learning, which may involve, for example, “exploring how *groups of individuals, organizations, or policies* attempt to accomplish a set of common goals,”

and personal growth, which may address skill sets, assumptions, convictions, or career goals, for example (Ash and Clayton, “Tutorial” 7.1, original italics).

As students develop the skills to reflect critically, they better understand the applicability of course concepts within particular contexts outside of the university. Each time a student reads a new piece for the course, engages in community work, and reflects on the connection between the two, a shift in understanding occurs, and she advances in analytical ability. One of several goals of the DEAL Model is that students learn to be what Donald Schön calls “reflective-in-action,” a phrase that Ash and Clayton adopt (qtd. in Ash and Clayton “Tutorial” 2.7).

When Kathleen Blake Yancey uses Donald Schön’s term “reflective-in-action” in her chapter of the same name, she refers specifically to the composing process. The metacognitive element in her theory asks students to explicitly analyze how they learn to write. In 1998, she made similar arguments about reflection to Ash and Clayton, but she was not discussing service-learning, civic learning, or content knowledge, rather “the process of reviewing and projecting and revising, which takes place within a composing event” (13). The study of metacognition in composition studies, particularly in regard to the portfolio movement, rhetorical genre studies, and transfer theory emphasizes how students think about writing (and genre) and the relationship between thinking and writing. As they repeatedly work with these concepts, they enhance their ability to transfer knowledge or skill sets.

Similarly, with Ash and Clayton’s DEAL Model, over time, as students perform service-learning work in the community or read a new text, they gradually anticipate the DEAL questions, asking themselves, “What am I learning? How am I learning it?...” As students internalize DEAL as a structure of thought, they begin to engage with the world in reflective ways.⁴ In its emphasis on acquisition of critical thinking skills and learning goals, the DEAL Model offers an important compliment to the reflective practice that already takes place in composition classes concerning the acquisition of rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, and writing skills.

Service-Learning composition teachers can build from the DEAL Model to encourage students to move toward a Freirean conception of praxis: “authentic reflection clarifies future action, which in its given time will have to be opened to renewed reflection” (*Politics of Education* 156). Tom Deans argues that we can “cast students as writers and social agents, thus ushering into practice [Freire’s] ‘action-reflection-action’” (45). In a critical pedagogy model, Ash and Clayton’s question “What will I do because of it?” operates not only with the student’s own learning, but urges the student toward social action, so that they “see an act of writing as a form of action and authority in civic life” (Ackerman 113).

The DEAL Model moves beyond other service-learning critical reflection models in its adaptation of Critical Thinking Standards from the Foundation on Critical Thinking.⁵ The Foundation’s former director, Richard Paul, says, “Critical Thinking is a systematic way to form and shape one’s thinking.” As Bringle and Hatcher argue that reflection is “a learned skill,” so Paul posits that critical thinking is a *systematic* way of thinking that individuals can learn. Students, especially those from the No Child Left Behind generation, who grew up in public schools that emphasize “teaching to the test,” may enter a first-year composition course never having learned critical thinking or how to do so. Ash and Clayton’s model offers composition instructors who aim to teach and develop critical thinking skills a concrete way to do so. Students “*need a structure and guidance* to help them derive meaningful learning when they are outside the traditional classroom setting, otherwise reflection tends to be little more than descriptive accounts of experiences or venting of personal feelings” (Ash and Clayton, “Generating” 28, emphasis added). Through Ash and Clayton’s model, students engage with ten Critical Thinking Standards (CTSs)—integration, clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, breadth, significance, logic, fairness, and depth—through detailed questions that they may ask themselves as they write and revise. (See Table 1)⁶

DEAL Model Critical Thinking Standards Table

Modified source: Paul, R & Elder, L. (2001). The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking. Santa Rosa, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking. www.criticalthinking.org

Critical Thinking Standard	Description	Associated questions to ask to check your thinking
Integration	Service experience clearly related to the learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have I clearly shown the connection between my experience and my learning?
Clarity	Expands on ideas, express ideas in another way, provides examples or illustrations where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Did I give an example? ▪ Is it clear what I mean by this? ▪ Could I elaborate further?
Accuracy	All statements are factually correct and/or supported with evidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How do I know this? ▪ Is this true? ▪ How could I check on this or verify it?
Precision	Statements contain specific information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can I be more specific? ▪ Have I provided sufficient detail?
Relevance	All statements are relevant to the question at hand; all statements connect to the central point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How does this relate to the issue being discussed? ▪ How does this help us/me deal with the issue being discussed?
Depth	Explains the reasons behind conclusions and anticipates and answers the questions that the reasoning raises and/or acknowledges the complexity of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Why is this so? ▪ What are some of the complexities here? ▪ What would it take for this to happen? ▪ Would this be easy to do?
Breadth	Considers alternative points of view or how someone else might have interpreted the situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would this look the same from the perspective of....? ▪ Is there another way to interpret what this means?
Logic	The line of reasoning makes sense and follows from the facts and/or what has been said.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Does what I said at the beginning fit with what I concluded at the end? ▪ Do my conclusions match the evidence that I have presented?
Significance	The conclusions or goals represent a (the) major issue raised by the reflection on experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is this the most important issue to focus on? ▪ Is this the most significant problem to consider?
Fairness	Other points of view are represented with integrity (without bias or distortion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have I represented this viewpoint in such a way that the person who holds it would agree with my characterization?

In its emphasis on students learning through revision and through reflecting upon reflection, the DEAL Model can enhance writing courses that emphasize metacognitive practices and can enhance the quality of student writing in any composition course.

Refashioning the DEAL Model

In Ash and Clayton's model, instructors, or the students themselves, use the structure of DEAL to facilitate and support critical reflection and, over time, to build capacity for learning through critical reflection on experience with or without support from others. To follow their model in its most intensive form requires dedicating time to teaching students how to fulfill and then revise the stages of the DEAL sequence, as well as teaching the standards of critical thinking. Using the model in stand-alone assignments would often be impractical in a composition curriculum that is already, by necessity, writing intensive and that often includes multiple genres of written, visual, and oral composition. Extensive written reflections could potentially create an undue burden on composition students or could necessitate that the teacher eliminate assignments that contain key learning objectives.⁷ To adapt composition scholar Julie Jung's question on process-description reflection, I ask, regarding separate critical reflection assignments in service-learning courses, *how else might a student's story of community-based experiences get told, and why* (641).

To encourage students to think of reflection not as something that they do occasionally when instructed by their teacher but instead as integral to everything that they write and to the process of learning itself, I do not assign separate DEAL reflection assignments to the course. Rather, in an effort to make the DEAL Model work most effectively in composition courses, I embedded the model's sequence of questions into each writing assignment, making the entire course *reflective*. Utilizing the Reflective Course approach ensures that each formal assignment embodies a type of critical reflection, whether individual, with the teacher, with the community partner, or with the class. The variation and sequencing of what I call *reflective assignments* encourage the deepening over time of students' ability to think and write critically. In other words, reflection does not simply happen in singular moments or activities but through a semester-

long reflective process, fully integrated through all assignments, that promotes critical thinking about connections between theories, values, social action, and writing.

Because studies suggest that reflection should be varied in format and should cover the span of the semester,⁸ I apply **DEAL to composition assignments such as** research papers, community partner interviews, proposal letters, and oral presentations. In the following sections, I will first discuss how I adapted the DEAL model to the first-year service-learning writing and rhetoric curriculum for the Program for Writing and Rhetoric and, next, how composition teachers, researchers, and WPAs can use the Reflective Course Model to assess student acquisition of specific critical thinking skills.

The Reflective Course: Adaptation of the DEAL Model

Six learning goals guide the Program for Writing and Rhetoric's first-year writing curriculum at the University of Colorado Boulder. According to the program's textbook for first-years, students will learn to:

1. develop rhetorical knowledge, analyzing and making informed choices about purposes, audiences, and context as you read and compose texts.
2. analyze texts in a variety of genres, understanding how content, style, structure and format vary across a range of reading and writing situations.
3. refine and reflect on your writing process, using multiple strategies to generate ideas, draft, revise, and edit your writing across a variety of genres.
4. develop information literacy, making critical choices as you identify a specific research need, locate and evaluate information and sources, and draw connections among your own and others' ideas in your writing.
5. construct effective and ethical arguments, using appropriate reasons and evidence to support your positions while responding to multiple points of view.
6. understand and apply language conventions rhetorically, including grammar, spelling, punctuation and format.

In the first-year service-learning writing curriculum that I wrote based on the above goals, I added several service-learning-specific goals, such as the following:

1. develop civic literacy skills through work with a community organization.
2. reflect critically on correlations between theoretical concepts and community experiences.
3. produce writing that effectively responds to or addresses a community need.
4. distinguish individual manifestations of a problem from the systemic, root causes.

To offer an example of how the Program for Writing and Rhetoric's service-learning curriculum works, I will describe my own course below. Like most composition courses, mine combines discussions, writing workshops, and individual conferences. The readings, assignments, and workshops help students to engage with rhetorical situations beyond the limits of the course, to read critically, and to participate in multi-sided arguments through appropriate language and research. Students study the communication strategies and genres that drive academic study, public writing, and engaged citizenship and shape their writing and speaking so that their points are audience-specific, compelling, and supported with evidence.

I urge students in my First-Year Writing and Rhetoric course to understand rhetorical practice and the act of writing as potentially powerful and creative forces for civic engagement. Students choose between several options for partnerships with non-profits in Boulder, CO, and they perform at least fifteen hours of community-based work, distributed over the semester, usually in a one to two hour commitment each week (see Appendix A). They research, analyze, and write about the social issues that the organization addresses in a causal paper. They write a proposal letter to a member of the Boulder community on behalf of the organization, and they produce a document with or for the organization (see Appendices B and C). They also create group Power Point presentations in which they present their work, concerns, and ways in which fellow classmates can become involved.

Students' community work, conversations, and interviews with non-profit coordinators and the organizations' clients deepen their understanding of the social issue they choose to investigate in their library research paper, the Causal Argument, which they begin to write a few weeks after the semester begins. In this "writing about the community" assignment, students first must determine what the local problem is (Deans). They consult with the head of their organization for help in determining a problem, asking questions such as, "what is a main social issue that your organization addresses?" Next, they decide whether they want to focus their library research on three causes that result in the problem (the effect) or three effects that result from the problem (the cause):

Cause A, Cause B, Cause C --> Effect

Cause --> Effect A, Effect B, Effect C

Students substantiate their emotional responses to their community work through careful research that yields balanced and informed written arguments that incorporate multiple viewpoints. They learn that one of the most difficult, but also most important, aspects of formulating a strong argument is in acknowledging, understanding, and integrating opposing or conflicting points of view. The students' ability to perceive a topic from multiple angles is critical in helping them see areas that they need to research further and arguments that they need to tighten or more substantially rethink. Through this process they learn to grasp complex social issues and draw conclusions based on experience and research.

The causal research paper becomes a kind of DEAL reflection in a revision assignment that students perform mid semester, after completing about half of their community-based work. These mid-semester revisions of the paper allow them to synthesize research and reflection on community work and to articulate how their understanding deepened over the semester as they interrogated the cultural and political forces that have led to the problem with which they had been working. Students determine where in the paper they still have questions or where a first-hand account would be particularly useful, and they then conduct interviews with people from their non-profit: volunteers, staff, and the people the organization aims to

help.⁹ Their experiences at the community site and their interviews constitute research that expands and shapes the ways in which they conceive of the social issue that they investigated in their writing. They revise their original causal papers, including substantive quotes and ideas from their interviews that they intersperse throughout the paper. Through this process of inquiry and revision, students challenge or deepen their original ideas and document their learning through written argument. In this assignment, without needing to write a separate reflection, students performed the equivalent of the “Describe” and “Examine” stages of the DEAL Model.¹⁰

The following writing sample, which comes from a student paper on causes of homelessness, serves as an example of how, through the interview and revision processes, the student performs a *description* of research as she *examines* the firsthand experiences she has had in light of that research and synthesizes the two into a unified argument. In her library research, the student found that domestic violence plays a significant role in homelessness among women. She interviewed the director of the homeless shelter with which she was working to determine whether this is true in Boulder. The client testimony comes from a survivor group meeting that my student attended.¹¹ The highlighted portions of the paragraph indicate places of revision:

Violent domestic relationships and a lack of opportunity to turn to relatives or loved ones leave impoverished women with little to no chance to pull themselves out of poverty. Christine McChesney’s study reveals that homeless women are “unable to turn to parents, brothers, or sisters for help because their families are either dead, out of state, or estranged.” Her data indicates that “35% of the women’s natural fathers were dead...[and] 16% of the women were orphans with both parents dead.” While people unfamiliar with the intricacies of problems for homeless women might argue that they should seek help from families, McChesney found that “43% of the mothers in the sample had been runaways or in foster or institutional care when they were children or teenagers” because of physical and/or sexual abuse in the home (Families 4). This data illustrates the reality that relational conflict is a significant factor in triggering homelessness

among individual women and their children. Joy Eckstine, Director of the Carriage House in Boulder, CO,¹² confirms that “60% of the homeless [in Boulder] are women and children [of whom] 65% are victims of domestic violence.” A 2008 Harvard study revealed, “the degrading relationship patterns may lead to loss of social and economic functioning, which in turn may lead to homelessness” (Parker, et al. 12). Many women turn to substance abuse or prostitution to cope with the stresses of losing a home. Roberta, a twenty-seven year old woman who uses services at the Carriage House, confirms,

my step father raped me from the time I was eleven to thirteen. I snuck out with a box of crackers and \$30 to my name, and I never looked back. I had to live on the street. If I went to any friend's house, he'd find me, and he'd kill me. If I went to the police and he wasn't locked up, he'd *really* kill me. As far as I could see it, I could live on the streets and try to make my way any way I could or die at the hands of this man who had already taken so much from me.

Roberta is not alone in her story. Eckstine calls domestic violence “an epidemic in the female homeless population in Boulder.” A study, *The Dynamics of Violence and Homelessness among Young Families*, estimates that “between 30-50% of family homelessness is directly related to domestic violence” (82). Numerous scholars fear that the true figures would be much higher, but many women do not report abuse for fear of additional harm. Clearly, violence is a major contributor to homelessness for women.

As the above passage indicates, the student has successfully reflected upon the academic information that she used in the original version of her causal paper to determine whether it mirrors or differs from what she learned through firsthand experience at the service site. If students see that the information differs, then they address these moments of dissonance between academic study and experience through the personal interviews. They ask questions of their non-profit coordinator or the organization's clients to get the information they need, carefully planning those questions out ahead of time.

In this revision phase of the causal paper, students perform critical reflection individually as they formulate their interview questions and determine which significant experiences and interchanges would enhance their research, with me as they address my comments and questions on drafts, and with their community partners as they ask questions about and integrate responses into the previous version of the paper. This process provides a means for students to assimilate knowledge and critical thinking skills that are integral to their intellectual growth. The research paper becomes the reflection piece that students (and we teachers) can critique using the Critical Thinking Standards Table. Students can use the Table's questions as they revise their own writing and as they peer-review classmates' drafts.

One student who worked at the Carriage House had, in his first draft of the Causal Paper, made uninformed comments and sweeping generalizations about homeless people based on his first experience serving lunch. Because several of the shelter's clients declined to take an apple with the rest of their food, my student drew two conclusions: "homeless people do not care about nutrition" and "despite what many people think, [homeless people do] not seem hungry." In comments to his draft, I encouraged him to delve deeper into the issue, asking particularly the questions associated with the Critical Thinking Standards accuracy, depth, and fairness. Based on those CTS questions, he formulated interview questions for his volunteer coordinator. In the interview, he learned that because of a lack of dental care, many of the shelter's clients' teeth are so damaged that they cannot eat apples. What was initially a miseducative moment became educative through his reflection with the volunteer coordinator and his subsequent revision of his Causal Paper, which included *description* and *examination* of new research on lack of affordable dental care for homeless individuals.

About two months into the semester, as students are completing their Causal Paper revisions, they propose and enact a writing project that addresses a particular organizational need determined by them and their organization's service-learning coordinator or director. Like the revision of the Causal Paper, the Proposal Letter assignment represents a type of reflection between the students and

their supervisors, and, often, the proposal grows out of the learning generated in the Causal Paper. This unit is about applied knowledge and critical thinking skills and seeks to ward against what Paul Feigenbaum calls one of the “traps” of progressive pedagogy in which critical teachers “*impos[e]* social visions rather than creat[e] dialectical opportunities for reflection and action” (10, original italics).

To this point, students conducted research on their issue and worked with their non-profit partner; next they must determine how they can use writing and rhetorical skills to address an encountered problem. Within this contextualized assignment sequence, the metacognition that the reflective element of the research assignment encourages should generate action. As an example of how the assignment scaffolding works, let’s return to the student who, in the process of revising his Causal Argument, learned about the Carriage House clients’ need for dental work. For his Proposal Letter, he wrote to twenty-four dentists in Boulder, explained the issue, and requested that they partner with the homeless shelter to provide one free day of dental care each year. Through this assignment, students apply the rhetorical strategies that they have studied, such as how to tailor an argument to a particular audience using rhetorical appeals, and study how the genre of the proposal letter is used to enact localized change. The Proposal Letter assignment helps reinforce genre theory’s “notion of genre as response to [a ...] rhetorical situation” (Devitt 88).

The Proposal Letter is a critical exercise in transforming students’ new knowledge into action and takes students through the process similar to a DEAL reflection. They must “Describe” and “Examine” a problem as they write their proposals to convince their audience to help. They answer Ash and Clayton’s “Articulated Learning” questions, “What did you learn [i.e., what is a main problem that your organization has]? Why does it matter?” Students must figure out a need that their organization has and why it matters with their community partner, not on their own, because if they do not address an appropriate need, the assignment is not only a waste of time but it could potentially be detrimental to the organization. They ask their community partners if anything similar has been proposed in the past. If so, what was the outcome? Is there anyone to whom they

should *not* write? Once they decide on the need and its significance, they can devise how to fill that need by determining the appropriate audience for their plan of action, what they want this person to do, what specific steps the person would need to take, and what financial costs would be involved. The Proposal Letter *is* the student's tangible answer to Ash and Clayton's "What will you do because of it?" The individual assignment embodies the DEAL sequence.

In recent years, I have added to the assignment so that the Proposal Letter becomes part of a larger writing project that students undertake with the community partner. For example, during the fall of 2011 in a first-year writing course called Food, Sustainability, and Community, several students chose to do their community-based work with the Family Learning Center (FLC) in Boulder. This is a non-profit whose mission it is to educate and aid lower-income, predominantly Latino Boulder families. The families told an FLC staff member that a chief concern is their inability to access healthy, affordable food. With the leadership of a University of Colorado Boulder graduate student, Corrie Colvin, students determined to work with twenty FLC elementary-aged children on a nutrition project. Part of this work entailed maintaining and harvesting food from an FLC garden that some former students helped to create during the previous semester. The students would hold cooking classes with the FLC children, using produce from the garden.

My students ran into two problems during this project. First, by early November, the garden was no longer active. The FLC staff and students wanted my students to continue the healthy cooking classes but had no money to purchase food. Second, my students and the staff wanted a way to capture the lessons and the recipes for the children and their families but, again, lacked funds to print a cookbook. My students determined to write their proposal letters based on this project idea. One wrote to a committee on campus that provides funding for student projects; another wrote to Whole Foods to ask for donations of food; yet another wrote to the campus print shop to ask whether they would cover the cost of printing copies of a cookbook for the children's families (see Appendix C). My students were able to secure enough funding to cover the cost of food and printing, and the cookbook project began.

After studying the genre of “the cookbook,” students worked with the FLC children to transcribe favorite recipes from the kids’ families and stories about those recipes. My students then found ways to make these recipes healthier by reducing fat, adding extra vegetables, or making other adjustments, and they cooked the altered recipes with the kids while teaching them about nutrition. They took pictures of the cooking classes and of the garden. Employing visual rhetoric, students interspersed these pictures, along with drawings of food and gardening that the children made, throughout the cookbook, which my students produced for each child in the program.¹³ The “writing with the community” project supplemented academic course research and readings on food studies issues such as hunger and poverty, food insecurity, big agriculture and government subsidies, and childhood obesity and poverty.

This project is another example of a reflective assignment that inherently includes critical reflection and that exemplifies all elements of a DEAL reflection. The assignment embodies the questions of an “Articulated Learning” that follow from the first Causal Paper, which serves the purpose of the “Describe” and “Examine” elements of Ash and Clayton’s model.

A third type of assignment, an oral presentation, becomes an oral reflection with classmates. Oral and visual rhetorics come into play, and students speak to yet another kind of audience—their classmates—incorporating critical reflection in their Power Point presentations to the class. In the last month of the semester, students are assigned groups based on the theme of their work: education, poverty, community gardens, etc. They may have worked in a variety of organizations that address a similar or related societal issue, but each student will come to the group project with different experiences and different research topics. First, they must reflect critically within the small group to determine how to synthesize their different work into a unified narrative to present to the class. They discuss together the interesting aspects of their research, the eye-opening experiences that they had with their non-profit, the problems that they uncovered, the ways in which the community work substantiated or differed from their research, and the actions that they can encourage their classmates to take to enact change. Once they complete this small-

group reflection, they present that reflection to the entire class via the presentation. Like the Proposal Letter, the Oral Presentation is a reflective assignment, moving students through the stages of DEAL, culminating in the final question: “What will [we as a class or you (classmates) as individuals] do because of it?”

Composition teachers can adapt composition assignments to a service-learning model to make them reflective. The three genres that I discuss above are merely examples; certainly teachers could adapt the reflective assignment approach to a wide variety of genres. To take the concept even further, each assignment can represent elements of the DEAL Model so that the course structure becomes a form of macro-reflection that maps to particular learning goals and that moves students through the Describe, Examine, and Articulated Learning questions. As in any well-designed service-learning course, critical reflection is an integral part of both the learning and writing processes, themselves, but the Reflective Course Model eliminates the need for separate reflection assignments.

Assessing the Reflective Course

Based on Ash and Clayton’s work, I have students use questions from the CTS Table as they revise their own, and offer feedback on peers’, *reflective assignments*. I also use the CTS Table to guide my comments on papers. The CTS Table provides a way for composition teachers and students alike to answer Yancey’s question, “Is a reflective text ever inadequate, and how would we know that?” (148). Ash and Clayton have also developed “DEAL Model Critical Thinking Rubrics,” grounded in the Critical Thinking Standards, which students and faculty may use to evaluate critical reflection assignments based on numerical values assigned to each Critical Thinking Standard (See Rubrics 1 and 2)¹⁴.

Rubric 1 : DEAL Model Critical Thinking Rubric (excerpt)

Modified source: Paul, R. & Elder, L. (2001). The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking. Santa Rosa, C.A.: The Foundation for Critical Thinking. www.criticalthinking.org

		(2)				(3)				(4)							
CT Set A		(1)				(2)				(3)				(4)			
<i>Integration</i>		Provides no clear connection between the experience and the learning	Provides minimal and/or unclear connection between the experience and the learning	Provides adequate and reasonably clear connection between the experience and the learning	Provides thorough and very clear connection(s) between the experience and the learning	Misclassifies the learning and/or inappropriately shifts from one category of learning goal to another; fails to keep the discussion specific to the learning	Discusses learning that is relevant to the category of learning goal, but much of the discussion is not related to the learning	Discusses learning that is relevant to the category of learning goal and keeps the discussion reasonably well focused on the learning	Discusses learning that is relevant to the category of learning goal and keeps the discussion well-focused on the learning	Consistently makes inaccurate statements and/or fails to provide supporting evidence for claims	Makes several inaccurate statements and/or supports few statements with evidence	Usually but not always makes accurate and well-supported statements with evidence	Consistently makes statements that are accurate and well-supported with evidence	• <u>Academic category:</u> Inaccurately identifies, describes, and/or applies academic concept(s)	• <u>Academic category:</u> Accurately identifies, describes, and applies appropriate academic concept(s)		
<i>Relevance</i>		Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways								
<i>Accuracy</i>		Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways								
<i>Clarity</i>		Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways	Only occasionally provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Usually but not always provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways	Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways								

Modified source: Paul, R & Elder, L. (2001). *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*. Santa Rosa, CA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking. www.criticalthinking.org

Rubric 2: DEAL Model Critical Thinking Rubric [holistic version, excerpt]

CT Score 1	CT Score 4
<p>Does nearly all of the following:</p> <p><i>Integration:</i> Provides no clear connection between the service experience and the learning being articulated</p> <p><i>Relevance:</i> Misclassifies the learning or inappropriately shifts from one AL category to another; fails to keep the discussion specific to the learning being articulated</p> <p><i>Accuracy:</i> Fails to provide supporting evidence for basic claims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic ALs: Incorrectly identifies, describes, applies an academic principle(s) <p><i>Clarity:</i> Consistently fails to provide examples, to illustrate points, to define terms, and/or to express ideas in other ways</p> <p>Consistently makes typographical, spelling, and/or grammatical errors</p> <p><i>Depth:</i> Fails to address salient questions that arise from statements being made and/or over-simplifies when making connections</p> <p><i>Breadth:</i> Ignores or superficially considers alternative points of view and/or interpretations</p> <p><i>Logic:</i> Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that don't follow from the line of reasoning presented</p>	<p>Does nearly all of the following:</p> <p><i>Integration:</i> Makes clear the connection(s) between the service experience and the learning being articulated</p> <p><i>Relevance:</i> Describes learning that is relevant to AL category and keeps the discussion focused on the learning being articulated</p> <p><i>Accuracy:</i> Makes statements that are accurate and well-supported with evidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic ALs: Accurately identifies, describes, and applies appropriate academic material <p><i>Clarity:</i> Consistently provides examples, illustrates points, defines terms, and/or expresses ideas in other ways</p> <p>Makes very few or no typographical, spelling, and/or grammatical errors</p> <p><i>Depth:</i> Thoroughly addresses salient questions that arise from statements being made; avoids over-simplifying when making connections; considers the full complexity of the issue</p> <p><i>Breadth:</i> Gives meaningful consideration to alternative points of view and/or interpretations and makes good use of them in shaping the learning being articulated</p> <p><i>Logic:</i> Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that consistently follow very well from the line of reasoning presented</p>

To measure and document learning in reflective assignments, students and teachers can use the numerical values assigned by Ash and Clayton in their rubrics to evaluate a student's writing either holistically or for particular skills associated with each standard.¹⁵ In this way, the Critical Thinking Rubrics provide students a formative tool to deepen critical thinking skills and provide instructors a summative tool to assess quality of ideas.¹⁶

As a promising area for further research, I am now gathering students' reflective assignments to assess for quality of critical thinking skills. I anticipate that Ash and Clayton's rubrics will allow me not only to document individual instances of learning but also to document skills pre- and post-revision. Data can track a student's critical thinking from a draft before the application of the Critical Thinking Standards to a draft after the student uses the CTS questions. The change in numerical value quantifies learning. Data can also track skills that a student demonstrates in the final draft of multiple assignments to show not only the transferability of skills but the increase in skill level over time.¹⁷

The rise in service-learning's popularity in Composition Studies over the last two decades parallels the call, both by practitioner/scholars of service-learning and by skeptics of the pedagogy, for evidence of its effectiveness in teaching writing. Practitioners of service-learning need to be able to demonstrate qualitative and quantitative impacts on student learning. The Reflective Course Model provides a means for designing service-learning composition courses that generate data and for assessing those data as evidence of critical thinking. In *reflective courses* in which every assignment incorporates critical reflection, service-learning students can learn to move beyond platitudes and to think and write critically about the social issues with which they are engaged.

Veronica House is Associate Director for Service-Learning and Outreach in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder where she teaches a wide range of composition courses. As founding director of the Writing Initiative for Service and Engagement, she created the first

service-learning Writing and Rhetoric courses for first-year students at CU and has coordinated a transformation of the Program for Writing and Rhetoric's curriculum, which now integrates service-learning throughout its lower- and upper-division courses. Her teaching and engagement interests include food studies and environmental justice.

Appendix A: **How To Approach a Potential Community Partner About the Reflective Nature of the Work They Will Do With Students (Sample Introductory Letter)**

Dear Michael,

I am an Instructor in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado Boulder, and I am writing to propose an opportunity for CU students to work with Transition Colorado this semester through a service-learning writing course. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates educationally meaningful work in the community with instruction and reflection to enrich the students' learning experience and help out your organization. Below, I provide an overview of the course and course goals, as it may help you to determine whether you would like to work with my classes and how to best utilize my students.

Course Description:

My sections of first-year writing and rhetoric are service-learning sections based on the theme of Food and Sustainability, which is why I think your organization might be a great match for students. In the course, we read *Fast Food Nation* and excerpts from other texts about food and sustainability like *Omnivore's Dilemma*, and we watch the documentaries *Food, Inc.* and *Fresh*. We use all of these texts as models for how writers investigate and write about a social issue. In this course, students' writing assignments and readings will help them to substantiate their emotional responses to their "fieldwork." Equally important, their community-based work with Boulder-based non-profits like Transition Colorado, and their conversations with you and other community coordinators are also research that will allow them to engage with the academic world in a new way. All of these voices and texts will expand and shape their understanding of the social issue that they have chosen to investigate in their writing. The community work localizes the issue for them and allows them to relate research and theory to lived experience.

Course Goals:

I have added several service-learning-specific goals to the standard goals for a first-year writing course:

1. develop civic literacy skills through work with a community organization.
2. reflect critically on correlations between theoretical concepts and community experiences.
3. produce writing that effectively responds to or addresses a community need.
4. distinguish individual manifestations of a problem from the systemic, root causes.

What Will Students Need?:

There are 40 students in the two sections of the class, and they will be choosing between at least 5 organizations. If you are interested in working with students, it would be helpful if you could let me know the maximum number of students you can accept, what kinds of things they may do if they choose your organization, and any other general information you want them to know. As you think about what my students can do for you, please keep in mind that they are first-years and do not have the knowledge or capability to do difficult writing tasks such as grant writing. Freshmen would do better with assignments such as a newsletter (or a column in a newsletter), a letter to someone in the community, or webpage construction. They can also do work that you would traditionally have a volunteer do as long as it is *educationally meaningful* and ties to the reading and research that they are doing in class. Because the students are only required to do 15 hours of community-based work for the course, please let them know up front if you would require more of their time.¹⁸

Service-learning involves more for students than just working for 15 hours at your organization, and for you, it would involve more than simply assigning volunteer hours. This is why I want to let you know up front what the needs are on my end. The work that students do with you must be educationally meaningful, in that it should connect to the research and readings that the students are doing. Reflection on the connection between the work and their research is key in

helping them deepen their understanding. Sometimes, this reflection will need to be with you or another Transition representative.

There are two assignments for which students will need to reflect with you:¹⁹

Students begin the course with a Cause/Effect paper. It is a research paper centered on a social issue they're working with in your organization. I'd like them to be able to ask you what a key issue is that you are dealing with so that they can then research causes and effects of the issue. Toward the end of the semester, after they have worked about 12 hours with you, I'll assign students to revise their research papers based on their community experiences. For these revisions, **they will need to conduct an interview with you** or another representative from Transition Colorado.

Students will also spend a part of the semester proposing and then enacting a writing project or a project that involves writing that they will determine with you or your organization's volunteer coordinator through a "reflective" conversation or series of conversations. Here is an example from a previous student: One student, Lauren, volunteered with an animal rescue organization. She and her volunteer coordinator determined that the organization was not effectively promoting animals ready for adoption. Lauren's proposal letter urged the head of programming at a local news station to include a "Pet of the Week" segment in the 5:00 news, featuring an animal from the rescue site that is available for adoption. My hope is that through this process, they will learn to identify problems and determine how to use writing as a means of problem solving.

Timing and Logistics

Because service-learning's effectiveness depends on a student's consistent work and reflection over an extended period of time, **the student will need to work with your organization all semester long, not just in a few multi-hour days.** Usually this means that they spend 1-2 hours with your organization each week. If this is a problem, please let me know. They will need to begin work by September 9 and will complete work by December 12.

If this sounds interesting to, and you would like to discuss this further, I'd like to come meet with you at your organization, give you a copy of the syllabus and assignments, which we can discuss more in person, and talk through some of your ideas for how students could best serve your organization's needs. I can also give you several examples of student writing projects generated for a community partner.

Thank you so much for your time. Please let me know if you would like to work with my students or if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Veronica House

Appendix B: Sample Student Proposal Letter

March 16, 2009
REI Boulder
1789 28th St.
Boulder, CO 80301

Dear (REI manager's name),

I am writing you to propose an opportunity for you to share your love and passion for the outdoors with the local community. I am a CU student and a volunteer for the Snowboard Outreach Society (SOS), a non-profit organization devoted to spreading the joy of the outdoors to Colorado's underprivileged youth. Their mission at SOS is to build character and self-esteem in children through outdoor activities such as skiing and snowboarding in the winter months and rock climbing and hiking during the warmer months. Since the founding of SOS in 1993, the organization has grown rapidly with the increased participation of youth, volunteers, and many of Colorado's beautiful ski resorts. Due to the ever-increasing involvement, the children who participate in SOS programs are constantly in need of equipment.

I would like to propose a plan that would allow the loyal members of REI to give back to their local communities through you and share their enthusiasm for outdoor recreation with the less fortunate. As you know, REI has over 3 million active members across the country, who each get an annual dividend check of typically 10% for their purchases, redeemable for merchandise, cash, or check. I am proposing that you add onto these redemption options and allow members to donate their dividend checks (or a portion of them) to non-profit organizations. In this case, the REI members of Colorado could chose to donate their dividend check to SOS, while members nationwide could do the same for their local organizations. This opportunity would allow REI's members to add to an already impressive donation record of your company. As an REI member myself, I would love the opportunity to be able to donate to non-

profit organizations who are focused on promoting something I am passionate about, the outdoors.

As REI's president and CEO Sally Jewell states, "REI recognizes that today's youth will be tomorrow's stewards of the environment. REI is committed to providing opportunities for young people to experience the joys of outdoor recreation and learn how to care for open spaces and our shared public lands." This proposition is an opportunity not just for SOS to benefit from your generous members, but for similar organizations across the country without any loss to REI's sales profit. Colorado could be the first state to promote the dividend donation program and further support one of the most beautiful states in the country. REI is known for their community involvement, and this would be a great opportunity to help others experience the joy of the great outdoors.

I thank you for taking the time to read my proposal and appreciate any and all feedback you have on my ideas. I will follow up in one week, but your timely response is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

(student name)

Appendix C: Student Email for Family Learning Center Project

Dear Diversity and Student Services Committee:

I am a student in Dr. House's 1150 course, and my research has centered on trying to understand the eating habits among lower-income families. I am engaged in a service-learning project at the Family Learning Center in Boulder. I am asking you for \$200 for the completion of our project. I work with children from low-income families. Usually, such children do not get enough nutrition or proper education about healthy eating. My team, which is made up of me and seven other students, is writing a recipe book with the help of the Center's children. Our goal is twofold: to teach the children to cook and appreciate nutritious food; to provide busy parents with healthy, quick and affordable recipes that the children have helped put together.

The Family Learning Center is an after-school program located in a small daycare. Instructors, together with the students, have planted a little garden to introduce sustainable and healthy ways of getting food. It is fascinating to see the children's interest and participation in the garden work. They enjoy the experience of growing food and look forward to trying all the vegetables and herbs.

We use a lot of garden-grown ingredients while cooking together. The children anticipate our meetings and enjoy preparing their meals. Most of them are not open to the idea of trying new foods or eating vegetables, but in the process of cooking, they happily add greens and herbs to their dishes.

Because of their socio-economic status, these children have very little money available for nutritious meals. We have counted that \$1 to \$1.50 per child per meal is a realistic allocation. On any given day, about 12-20 children might participate in the project. As the temperatures get colder, our little garden is not producing sufficient vegetables. Our team has started to carry the full cost of these meals. The \$200 provided would cover our expenses for the remainder of

our scheduled project and allow us to design meals, which are based upon these children's realistic budgetary restrictions, and print up the recipe book.

We would like this project to be positive and inspiring. The children are engaging in hands-on food preparation, and they're excited to see their efforts being rewarded. The education they are receiving is far more than theoretical; this is knowledge they apply to improve their diet and the health of their families. Once complete, we plan on selling the book and using these funds to raise additional money for the Family Learning Center. This project will sew seeds of pride and civic duty in these children, and empower them to realize that they can have a positive impact their communities. We hope you will consider supporting our efforts and make an investment in the health of these children.

My contact information is (phone number and email).

Sincerely,

(student name)

Notes

- 1 See, for example, definitions from the following organizations: Learn and Serve America, the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse; The Corporation for National and Community Service. A google search of several dozen college and university websites reveals the inclusion of reflection in their definitions of service-learning.
- 2 Kathleen Blake Yancey discusses “retrospection” and “projection” in similar ways concerning the act of composing in *Reflection in the Writing Classroom* (25).
- 3 The practice of scaffolding assignments is helpful, not only in service-learning courses, but any time students need to learn how to learn in unfamiliar ways or any time the concepts in question are complex and need to be built further over time.
- 4 Ash and Clayton’s research does not directly address the question of transfer. A study to determine whether students carry the reflective practices to areas of their lives outside of the classroom would be useful. Ash and Clayton seem to rely on Schön’s theory of “reflective transfer,” although they do not mention his term specifically (97).
- 5 Ash, Clayton, and Atkinson also adapt Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy from *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, which organizes cognition into a series of levels that range from lower to higher order thinking.
- 6 In their Critical Thinking Standards Table, Ash and Clayton have added “Integration” to the nine standards from the Foundation on Critical Thinking.
- 7 Several studies suggest that the nature of reflection is more important to the quality of learning than the number of

reflections assigned (Mabry 1998; Hatcher, Bringle, and Muthiah 2004).

- 8 See Mabry, 1998; Bringle and Hatcher, 1999; Eyler and Giles 1999; Hatcher, Bringle, and Muthiah, 2004; Ash and Clayton, 2009.
- 9 Causal Paper interviews do not count toward the fifteen hours of required community work.
- 10 This revision can also provide an opportunity to study the constraints of the “research paper” genre, as students determine what was left out of the original paper and which other genres may better capture the new learning that they acquired at their site. See Mary Jo Reiff’s wonderful assignment description for genre analysis in “Moving Writers, Shaping Motives, Motivating Critique and Change: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing” (159-162).
- 11 The client’s name is a pseudonym chosen by my student.
- 12 The Carriage House changed its name to the Bridge House in November, 2011.
- 13 I would like to thank one of the anonymous readers at *Reflections* for an astute question concerning whether language played a role in this project, and whether the cookbook was bilingual. The short answer is “no,” but I am in discussions with a professor in the Department of Spanish about using language majors to help with translations in a second edition of the book.
- 14 The rubrics are excerpted here. For more information on the rubrics or on Ash and Clayton’s work, please contact Patti Clayton at patti.clayton@curriculumengagement.com.
- 15 In the DEAL Model Critical Thinking Rubrics, Ash and Clayton have added categories of “Integration” and “Writing

Quality” to the Foundation on Critical Thinking’s standards.

As the project develops, I plan to use comparison groups. I might assess writing of service-learning students who are taught to use the Critical Thinking Standards and those who are not in order to determine the effectiveness of the Standards. I may also assess writing of service-learning students who are taught to use the Critical Thinking Standards and non-service-learning students who are taught to use the Critical Thinking Standards in order to determine whether service-learning students illustrate deeper levels of learning.

- 16 A team of researchers at Montclair State University implemented the DEAL Model in several courses across disciplines and found it “a rigorous tool that can be used to document and assess student learning in service-learning courses” (239). See Lenore M. Molee et al. “Assessing Learning in Service-Learning Courses Through Critical Reflection” in *Journal of Experiential Education*, 33(3). 2010. pp.239-257
- 17 See Ash, Clayton, and Atkinson as an example of this sort of research.
- 18 Much service-learning literature agrees that fifteen hours is the minimum number required for students to make meaningful, sustainable connections between community work and personal, civic, and academic learning. My students complete a minimum of fifteen hours of on-site work that does not include the partner interview or the time spent on the Proposal Letter assignment for the organization.
- 19 I have found it important to cover all of the expectations up front so that the partner never takes on more than she has time for. In our meeting, which will happen if she responds to my letter with interest, I give examples of the kinds of writing students will do during the semester and reiterate the kinds of questions the students will need help in answering. We also discuss whether the partner would like to visit a class or two. This can be either to discuss the organization during the phase when students are making choices about where to work or to help lead a discussion

about the partner's area of expertise. While we look over the syllabus together, I ask whether the partner has any suggested readings that she would like me to add. Even with long term partners, we always meet before each semester.

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