Writing Across the Curriculum and Service Learning: Kairos, Genre, and Collaboration

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At a university where I used to teach, a dean was fond of using the phrase "every boat on its own bottom," meaning that every academic program had to be responsible for keeping its enrollments, faculty "productivity," and student approval ratings high, and every academic program would in turn reap financial rewards commensurate with its performance on those measures. Needless to say, there was not a lot of interdisciplinary, interdepartmental, or interprogrammatic cooperation at this university. If every boat had to be on its own bottom, it was difficult to get two people in the same boat.

Writing across the curriculum (WAC) and service learning (SL) have the power to subvert this unproductive ideology. While administrators and faculty of WAC and SL programs could choose to see their movements as two boats, each bobbing along on its own bottom, WAC and SL are actually natural allies. The two movements clearly share some important features: they are both writing intensive in a variety of ways, and they both represent alternatives, sometimes contested but often energizing and invigorating, to traditional patterns of teaching, research, and service in higher education. Given this common ground, WAC and SL should find ways to cooperate, with each movement strengthening the other; this chapter offers guidance that might foster this connection. For WAC and SL to get into the same boat, or even for each to help the other's boat sail better, proponents of both movements must think clearly about what each can con-

tribute to the other. WAC faculty and administrators can tap into the ample energy SL has generated in colleges and universities as a result of the latter movement's responses to an array of political, social, and economic issues in higher education. SL faculty and administrators can benefit from WAC by considering, with the assistance of writing specialists, how the genres they ask students to work with in SL courses and projects help to shape the students as thinkers, writers, and citizens.

Definitions and Origins

SL is built on the deceptively simple, apparently self-evident, two-word phrase that names the movement. In SL courses, students engage in some kind of service, usually in a community or campus organization, that allows them to apply in "real life" settings the principles and practices they learn in their courses. For example, students in a political science course studying immigration policies and practices might spend time with neighborhood immigrant organizations helping members prepare to take U.S. citizenship tests. Students in a management course might put together organizational plans for not-for-profit agencies. Students in an art history class could assemble, install, and curate an exhibition in a home for the elderly.

At some institutions, SL operates solely within traditional curricular units, such as colleges and departments, and service activities are integrated and required in course syllabi. At other institutions, SL is co-curricular, with the service activities organized by a supporting office on campus. Students can then choose to perform service that is related to the course content, but they may not be required to do so.

One of SL's leading proponents, Edward Zlotkowski, offers the following definition: service learning is "meaningful community service that is linked to students' academic experience through related course materials and reflective activities" ("A New Model" 3). A more intricate definition comes from the Commission on National and Community Service. According to this organization, a service learning program

♦ provides educational experiences in which students learn by participating in carefully organized service activities that meet actual community needs and are coordinated collaboratively by school and community-based personnel;

♦ is integrated into the students' academic curriculum and provides the opportunity for them to think, discuss, or write about what they learned during the service activities;

♦ provides students with occasions to use their newly acquired perspectives and knowledge in situations in their own communities; and

♦ enhances the school-based curriculum by extending learning beyond the classroom and helping to foster a sense of caring for others. (Kraft and Krug 200)

Although the term "service learning" may invite deceptively simple definitions, SL programs are complex entities, and their development has entailed untold hours of discussion and deliberation at colleges and universities that have instituted SL options or requirements. The issues that faculty and administrators must haggle over are embedded in two major questions: First, what is "service" in SL? That is, what kinds of activities must students engage in for their work to qualify for SL credit? What kinds of agencies, organizations, or individuals must they serve? And for how long and at what intervals? Second, what is "learning" in SL? That is, what must students do in order to demonstrate that they have learned something from the service? How must students document their work in order to receive SL credit? To whom must students present evidence of their service work, and how will it be assessed, evaluated, and graded?

Taking up the issues embedded in the first question, as interesting as they are, goes beyond the bounds of the present chapter. (I cannot resist, however, offering a fascinating scenario under the first rubric: Suppose a student in a political science SL course proposes for his service to organize and participate in pickets at an abortion clinic and thereby runs afoul of the law. Does that count as service?) Two important issues embedded in the second major question, however, are precisely the focus of this chapter: What kinds of writing, what genres, should students produce in SL courses and projects, and why? What is the connection be-

tween the genres students are asked to work in and the things they learn—about the content of the SL course, about the organization or individuals they are serving, about writing in and beyond academia, and about themselves as citizens?

As David Russell illustrates in his history of writing in academic disciplines, writing across the curriculum was in place at some colleges and universities long before a movement known as WAC coalesced (*Writing*). The same is true for SL. Faculty, students, and campus life professionals were sponsoring community service projects long before the SL movement came together as a recognizable entity. If we propose, as the editors of this volume do, that WAC faculty development workshops in the early 1970s were one spark that led eventually to the birth of the WAC movement, then we can see that WAC and SL have had roughly the same gestation period. According to Allen J. Wutzdorff and Dwight E. Giles Jr., while SL emerged from many traditions in U.S. higher education, "The term *service-learning* first arose in 1964 in connection with the community service programs developed by the Oak Ridge Associated Universities in Tennessee" (107). Wutzdorff and Giles list several "service-learning milestones in higher education" following that date:

- ◆ In 1972 the federally funded University Year for Action program "involved students from campuses across the country in serving their communities." Several SL programs still in operation—for example, those at the University of Vermont, Michigan State University, and the University of Southern California —were established under this program.

- ◆ In the early 1970s, the federal government established the National Center for Service Learning.

- ◆ In 1982 the National Society for Experiential Education, still a national leader in the SL movement, created its Service Learning Special Interest Group, now one of the most active SIGs in the organization.

- ◆ In 1985, under the sponsorship of the Education Commission of the States, "a consortium of college and university presidents who support the educational value of service and make a commitment to foster public service on their campuses" formed Campus Compact: The Project for Public and Community Service.

◆ In 1990 the National and Community Service Act was signed by President George Bush, and in 1993, the National and Community Service Trust Act was signed by President Bill Clinton. The latter established the Corporation for Public Service, a national organization headed by retired General Colin Powell and former U.S. Senator Harris Wofford.

◆ In 1995 the American Association for Higher Education chose "The Engaged Campus" as the theme of its annual national conference, fostering discussion and SL program planning on its members' campuses.

◆ In 1996 SL was included for the first time as a strand at the American Educational Research Association conference (Wutzdorff and Giles 107–8).

Potential Connections

Given that the two movements emerged in roughly the same milieu in higher education, it is surprising that, so far, SL and WAC in general have remained nearly separate entities at both the national and the local, institutional level. There has been, however, considerable convergence of SL proponents and general, first-year college composition programs and some hints of a melding of SL and WAC. The inaugural book published in the American Association for Higher Education's projected eighteen-volume service-learning-in-the-disciplines series was *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service Learning in Composition*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Ann Watters. In addition, a major organizational effort to bring together service learning–oriented composition specialists was launched at the 1998 Conference on College Composition and Communication.

One of the prime movers behind this effort was Thomas Deans, whose book, *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition,* describes a wide range of college composition programs that have incorporated a community-service component. Deans creates a taxonomy of purpose, classifying programs according to whether their courses embody "writing *for* the community," "writing *about* the community," or "writing *with* the community." Though Deans's title suggests his book focuses solely

on college composition courses, he exemplifies two of his three emphases with descriptions of courses that might be seen as WAC offerings.

Indeed, in another document Deans explicitly conjectures about a possible WAC-SL linkage. Writing in the AAHE volume cited earlier, he sees the following potential connections between WAC and SL:

- ◆ Both movements aim to embody pedagogical modes that help students learn course material more effectively rather than simply report what they learn.

- ◆ Both represent "a significant departure from traditional teaching and learning in college courses" ("Writing Across" 29). As a consequence, both have the potential to benefit professionally faculty who teach at institutions that encourage effective pedagogical innovation, or to impede professionally those who teach at places where change is not rewarded.

- ◆ Both are potentially cross-disciplinary, allowing instructors to import whatever disciplinary knowledge seems appropriate into the WAC or SL context.

- ◆ "Both can prompt faculty to adopt new perspectives on the values and conventions of their home disciplines" (30).

- ◆ Both are valued by select faculty and are lauded as worthwhile by administrators, students, parents, and society beyond the university, yet both are devalued within the traditional higher education reward hierarchy.

- ◆ Both are perceived to take time away from content and to lower standards.

- ◆ Both have gained footholds in secondary and postsecondary settings. (29–30)

- ◆ Finally, both movements, Deans notes, are innovating cautiously, perhaps because their pedagogies can be seen as threats to customary and established postsecondary teaching and because higher education has not seen fit to reward innovation readily. "Service-learning seems to be . . . slowly and incrementally building on the personal commitment of early adopters interested in exploring new forms of pedagogy, " Deans writes, "while steering clear of reform that would threaten disciplinary formations or insist on radical critique. This approach of 'service-learning in the disciplines' rather than a pan-curricular reform effort is a

strategic (even if not consciously plotted) and, I think, wise one" (32).

I believe that WAC and SL can combine their strengths to produce a reform effort that would be, if not pan-curricular, at least broader—and eventually healthier for higher education in general—than either movement could generate on its own. Each movement can look to the other for a source of strength.

The Energy of Service Learning

As Deans's work makes clear, SL is not uncontested territory. Faculty and administrators are approaching SL cautiously for the reasons mentioned earlier—curricular and pedagogical innovation is potentially threatening and often not rewarded—plus two more. First, SL usually involves what some educators characterize as "applied knowledge" and therefore may be perceived as anti-intellectual, inimical to the liberal arts tradition. Second, SL can be seen as embodying a variety of vocationalism, one which some faculty are wont to characterize as an unreflective, thousand-points-of-light do-goodism. At many colleges and universities, however, these misgivings are being overcome. SL is both creating and thriving on the good vibrations it produces within almost all populations connected to higher education—students, faculty, administrators, boards of trustees, parents, potential employers of students, and external funding agents. How has SL managed not only to establish itself as a legitimate entity in higher education but also to secure such a luster? What is the source of SL's positive energy?

Service learning is not just a visible curricular and pedagogical movement in U.S. higher education today; it is also a discourse, a set of statements about curricular, intercurricular, and co-curricular practices that coalesced into an identifiable entity in the mid-1990s. SL is, in other words, the product of what Michel Foucault calls a "discursive formation," the set of tacit "rules of formation" that actually produce the "objects" that people in discourse communities talk and write about (31–39). Students and faculty were engaging in academically oriented com-

munity service projects well before 1990, but it was only in the middle of that decade that "service learning" became the unmistakable label for what they were talking about when they referred to these projects.

What social, political, and economic forces from the mid-1990s to the present have enabled service learning to emerge as a definable movement? Or, to put the question in terms of classical rhetorical theory, what has been the *kairos*—the sense of the opportune moment, the right time and place—that the discourse of service learning has capitalized on? Let me outline five forces—five sites where the politics and economics of U.S. culture influence higher education—that service learning advocates have used to legitimize and energize their movement.

Let us call the first force "higher education faculty bashing," the trend among conservative critics in government, the media, and occasionally within the academy itself to fault faculty for living cushy lives inside the ivory tower. It has been more than ten years since Charles Sykes lobbed the first major salvo in this attack with *ProfScam: Professors and the Demise of Higher Education*, and the assault has intensified since then. A more recent compendium of the attacks can be found in William H. Honan's *New York Times* article, "The Ivory Tower under Siege: Everyone Else Downsized; Why Not the Academy?" Though initially focusing on the faculty-bashing efforts of James Carlin, chair of the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Honan's essay effectively draws together critics' views from across the country on the academy's overemphasis on arcane research and specialized publication instead of teaching, the apparently light workload of the faculty, the professoriate's seeming abuse of the tenure system, and its role in contributing to the escalating cost of getting a college degree. Honan quotes James Purley, president of the American Association of University Professors, who senses that faculty are under fire for poor performance in all three of their traditional activities—scholarship, teaching, and service. "It's 360-degree bashing," says Purley (qtd. in Honan 33).

The second force emerged partly as a reaction to faculty bashing and partly as a proactive effort to reconnect the academy's research and teaching to its service mission. Let us call this force "the New American Scholar/New American College movement,"

adopting the phraseology of its progenitor, the late Ernest L. Boyer, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Boyer's 1990 book, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate,* gained considerable national attention for its attempt to reorient the academy's emphases from the traditional triumvirate of research, teaching, and service to a new, four-part view of faculty scholarship: the scholarship of discovery, or what was traditionally referred to as research; the scholarship of integration, or activities that foster inter- or multidisciplinary approaches to inquiries; the scholarship of application, or efforts that specifically aim to point scholarly agendas toward solving consequential, social problems; and the scholarship of teaching. In a series of later articles, Boyer called on colleges and universities to weigh these four emphases equally. He envisioned an institution that "celebrates teaching and selectively supports research, while also taking special pride in its capacity to connect thought to action, theory to practice" ("Creating" A48).

The third, fourth, and fifth forces that have energized SL and allowed it to coalesce as a distinct movement are all implicit in Boyer's calls for a "new American scholar" and "new American college." Let us call the third the "redefinition/integration of service movement." At scattered colleges and universities across the country, efforts are underway both to integrate community service in the institutions' mission statements and to describe explicitly how a faculty member's community-service efforts should be rewarded in salary, promotion, and tenure deliberations. A highly visible leader in this movement is Portland State University, which has moved to fully integrate community service in its mission statement; organizational structure; and hiring, promotion, and tenure processes, and has worked explicitly to involve student organizations, campus publications, faculty governance, and the Portland community into its service orientation (Holland). The fourth force is the general movement in intellectual and academic circles around the world toward "inter- or multidisciplinary inquiry," a movement that Boyer aimed to encourage in his "scholarship of integration." A highly visible proponent of this movement is Jerry Gaff, a senior staff member for the American Association of Colleges and Universities. In a 1991 study of colleges and universities undergoing general-education

curricular change, Gaff found that most of the institutions whose academic leaders perceived that their curriculum had improved significantly required students to take a core of interdisciplinary courses. The fifth force that has energized service learning is the desire among the "clientele" of colleges and universities—students, parents, and vocal employers of college graduates—for higher education to be more strongly "experiential." An experience at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, New York, reveals an interesting manifestation of this force. When the administration of this institution surveyed employers of their graduates, asking them what recommendations they would offer to make the education offered by Hobart and William Smith more valuable, the respondents did not find fault with any of the traditional liberal arts emphases of the curriculum, but they almost all called for students to participate in more internships in their undergraduate years (Cooke).

Clearly, each of these forces helped the discourse of SL secure a foothold, both within U.S. colleges and universities and among that portion of the population that pays attention to higher education. SL visibly involves faculty and students in projects that both they and outside observers view as significant to the public good. SL links the academy to the community and to the society at large. If SL is made integral to the mission of a college or university, its faculty will be rewarded for engaging in academic service projects. As Zlotkowski ("Service-Learning Colloquium") points out, SL courses and projects are among the very few productive avenues for interdisciplinary cooperation on college and university campuses. By their very nature, SL projects are experiential. In short, SL is doing what the critics of higher education are asking colleges and universities to do.

Genres of Writing in Service Learning

WAC and SL programs could easily cooperate because extensive writing sits at the center of each movement. SL courses could be labeled as writing intensive at institutions where such labels denote the WAC requirement; likewise, if WAC courses involved students performing extensive and useful community service, the

courses could be designated as SL. But for the WAC-SL connection to be productive—that is, if faculty teaching courses throughout the curriculum hope their students will comprehend the course content, apply the course material and principles in valuable service projects, and learn something about the nature of effective writing—then faculty teaching SL courses might think in more sophisticated, more pedagogically focused ways about the genres they ask students to work in as they write about their service experiences and how those genres embody different kinds of learning.

Those scholars who have investigated possible linkages between SL and college composition—for example, Deans and Paul Heilker, whose work is described later—have seen the connections in terms of the *purposes* of student writing in a service-oriented course. I want to suggest that *genre* offers a more productive perspective for faculty and administrators who are designing writing intensive SL courses—in other words, for those who are looking for how SL and WAC might collaborate. As the final section of this chapter argues, genre theory holds great potential for explaining how students learn to "behave" as functioning, intellectual adults in the discourse communities they encounter in college and beyond it. When instructors decide to require students to produce writing in a certain genre, they are making a decision, perhaps unconsciously, about the scope and range of rhetorical activity they want the students to engage in and the type of discourse community in which they want students to gain experience as writers. I hope that instructors of SL courses would make these decisions consciously and that WAC specialists could provide theoretically sound guidance to help them.

Students in SL courses at colleges and universities throughout the country are currently producing writing in many of the traditional genres of academic writing. The most frequently assigned genre in SL courses, and that which most explicitly embodies the student reflection that most SL definitions call for, is the journal entry, in which students write a variety of personal responses to their service experiences. A subgenre of the journal entry is the reflective paper, which emerges from conflating and adapting several journal entries. A typical use of the personal journal and reflective writing in an SL course can be found in the syllabus for Political Science 536, Public Human Resource

Administration, at the University of Utah. Administrators of the Lowell L. Bennion Community Service Center at the university awarded this course an SL designation because students could, in lieu of taking one examination, work for three hours a week at LifeCare Services for the Elderly in Salt Lake City and then complete two writing projects: "a regular journal of one's experiences and impressions" and "a 6–8 page paper about the nature of your service, what you learned from the experience, and implications for public administration as you see it" (DiPadova 3–4).

Clearly, the personal journal and any reflective papers that might be produced by fleshing out the journal entries represent adequate genres through which students can ponder their service experience in writing. But some faculty members who have worked to connect SL and first-year college composition question whether these genres necessarily elicit critical reflection on the part of students, and their caution about the personal journal and reflective essays are worth noting in the WAC arena as well. In groundbreaking work involving first-year writing students doing service with Boston's poor, Bruce Herzberg's students at Bentley College would regularly write journal entries, reflecting on their service activities. In these compositions, according to Herzberg, students would report that "homelessness and poverty were just abstractions before they met the homeless and the poor, but now they see that the homeless are people 'just like themselves'" (58). The inherent problem of the personal journal entry as genre, says Herzberg, is that it does not encourage students to view poverty or homelessness (or whatever social phenomenon is the focus of their service) in a larger perspective. "Here, perhaps ironically, is a danger," Herzberg writes. "If our students regard social problems as chiefly or only personal," as the genres of the personal journal entry and reflective paper tacitly encourage them to do, "then they will not search beyond the personal for a systemic explanation. . . . Writing personal responses to community service experiences is an important part of processing the experience, but it is not sufficient to raise critical or cultural consciousness" (58–59). Similarly, Linda Adler-Kassner reports that students writing about SL experiences as part of a first-year writing course in the University of Minnesota's General College (an academic unit that admits underprepared

students and helps them succeed in college) produced journals that were "often dominated by students' complaints about their sites or client communities or their realization that 'this could happen to me'" (552; also qtd. in Heilker 74).

The personal journal and reflective essay are certainly not the only genres of academic writing that students in SL courses are producing. A recent essay by Paul Heilker that urges connections between SL and general, first-year composition implies a taxonomy of additional genres intrinsic to such projects. Heilker proposes a hierarchy of five purposes for student writing projects, and one can readily detect genres of writing in current SL courses implied by each of the purposes. The first, again, is the personal journal and the related reflective paper. Heilker rehearses the problems inherent in this approach that Herzberg and Adler-Kassner raise. A second genre would be the academic research paper. Such a paper, Heilker explains, "construes the experience of doing community work as *research*—research to be used as a work consulted or a work cited for a term paper or as a basis for criticizing an author's treatment of a given topic" (74). Third, students could write analytic essays, papers that critique "the systemic inequities and injustices that make service work necessary in the first place" (74). The genre inherent in Heilker's fourth option actually comes from Adler-Kassner's teaching at Minnesota's General College. Heilker cites Adler-Kassner's call for SL writing courses to elicit stance or position papers in different disciplines. These projects, Adler-Kassner maintains, would "'concentrate on developing students' acumen with academic writing' and see service-learning experiences as good places 'to start helping [them] frame their ideas in a form that is more acceptable to the academy'" (qtd in Heilker 74). Heilker saves his strongest recommendation for "a fifth form of service-learning in composition, one that enables students to understand writing as social action. In this version," Heilker writes, "the students actually complete essential writing tasks for the nonprofit agencies in which they are placed" (74). I refer to these papers as "working documents" in the communities beyond academia.

An informal survey of syllabi for upper-division writing intensive courses, both in English departments and throughout the curriculum, suggests that SL courses are already incorporating

projects that elicit all of these genres. Examples of researched writing, drawing on both traditional "library" research and field studies, are abundant. For example, Ruth Overman Fischer and Victoria Rader of George Mason University created linked courses involving first-year composition and introductory sociology. As part of the course, GMU students worked as tutors in an elementary magnet school, which enrolled primarily African American and Hispanic students, for two hours each week. At the end of each day, according to Fischer,

> students wrote field notes of the day's experiences. They noted their observations of what had gone on in the classroom, their reflections on and analysis of these observations, and questions arising out of these observations and reflections. The field notes thus provided a context for students to instantiate sociological concepts and reflect critically on their experiences in the elementary classroom. . . . Their questions ultimately led to topics for their research papers dealing with some aspect of education as a social institution.

At Indiana University, Joan Pong Linton, in a sophomore-level English course called Writing for a Better Society, had students do a minimum of two hours a week of community service, then complete a series of assignments "leading up to a research paper that extends traditional library research to the practical world of service." The research paper was to "focus on a social issue (e.g., promoting the arts in the community) or a problem (e.g., implementing inclusion practices in the public schools). In addition to [consulting] published work, the students do interviews and, in some cases, surveys." In Linda Simmons's political science SL course at Northern Virginia Community College, students wrote dialogues involving characters, "imaginary or real," who converse about "how government impacts the site where students serve, how the site is governed, and [what] problems or solutions [the students perceive] at the site. The dialogues are documented as an essay would be. They usually show an awareness of different points of view—and some real creativity on the parts of the authors." A fascinating example of analytic writing embodying a systemic social critique in an upper-division SL writing course can be found in the work of Deborah Minter, Anne Ruggles Gere,

and Deborah Keller-Cohen, whose students undertook careful critical analyses of the social conditions underlying the lives of students they were tutoring in an after-school literacy program. In addition to reading widely in both literacy theory and literary representations of literacy acquisition, the students wrote weekly, integrative journal assignments and, ultimately, a "research paper of their own design . . . that directly engaged with the topics or issues raised in their reading, writing, tutoring, or class discussions for this literacy course" (670).

Although SL courses can provide students with ample opportunities to produce writing in academic genres such as the journal, the research paper, and the analytic essay, I believe the most distinctive and effective melding of SL and WAC occurs when students undertake "real world" writing projects that address the needs of agencies or individuals they are serving. In these projects, which I refer to simply as "working documents," students go beyond writing about service—certainly a good end in itself—by actually doing service with their writing. As the following section of this chapter makes clear, because genres emerge in response to rhetorical situations, such projects can teach students how to produce the kinds of writing that "do business" in settings outside the university and, in some cases, how to create innovative, hybrid genres for new rhetorical situations.

Three examples of working documents from different SL courses show the potential of these genres to introduce students to rhetorical activity beyond the boundaries of the university. In Civil Engineering 420 (Traffic Engineering) at the University of Utah, another Bennion Center–approved course, students conduct actual studies of traffic congestion in Salt Lake City and then learn to write technical reports that they then submit to governmental bodies and local organizations that are petitioning for new roadways and traffic patterns (Martin). In a course entitled Writing Nature: Thinking and Writing about Nature and Identity, sponsored by the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University, students at two points in the course have the option of writing "academic essays," based on interviews or library research, or "comparable Community Service Writing projects"—actual documents produced for the not-for-profit agencies where students were doing their service work (Ross). At

DePaul University, I regularly teach an upper-division writing intensive course, primarily serving education and English majors, called Topics in Writing: Tutoring in City Schools. In this course, students spend two intensive weeks learning to conduct writing tutorials and run writing groups, then tutor for three hours a week for the remainder of the term at a Chicago public high school. Their major written work is a sequence of four papers, each on the same subject, called an Inquiry Contract, which I have described elsewhere (Jolliffe, "Discourse," *Inquiry and Genre*). Students keep a journal throughout the experience, and the first paper in the contract is reflective. The second involves research and is primarily informative in purpose. The third involves a systemic critique and is exploratory. The final paper is a working document—a text that addresses an audience beyond the academic community, dealing with a real problem involving urban education that the students have uncovered in their work as a tutor. For this final project, I have had students produce written work ranging from a parent's manual for establishing a summer reading program for high school students, to a teacher's guide for working with hearing-impaired students, to a Web page for parents of teenage girls who have psychologically influenced eating disorders.

One innovative SL program immerses student writers in situations in which the real-world genres of working documents need adapting to meet challenging rhetorical goals. Courses offered by Carnegie Mellon University at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh establish working teams consisting of CMU students, staff members of the literacy center, and center clients ranging from troubled, inner-city high school students, to single parents, to underemployed workers (Peck, Flower, and Higgins). Because the center proposes to help its clients learn to use literacy to inquire critically into the dynamics of the conflicted situations they find themselves in, to work for social justice, and to foster "genuine, intercultural conversation" (205), CMU students have collaborated in producing hybrid genres that give voice to the different stakeholders in these situations. For example, a group of teenagers at the center believed they were subjected to an overly rigid suspension policy at their high school and were concerned about "the rising rate of out-of-school suspension among Afri-

can-American males" (210). The CMU students served as mentors to these teens in the Whassup with Suspension project that allowed students to write about their frustrations with the suspension policy, and then brought in teachers and administrators to respond to the students' writing. Eventually, after considerable conversation through "uncharted territory" (211), the teenagers, aided by CMU students, produced a "hybrid text": "an eight-page newsletter which denounced mindless authoritarianism by adults, illustrated feelings of both students and teachers involved in suspension disputes, and gave a series of dramatic scenarios for understanding how suspensions occur" (212). The Whassup with Suspension newsletter eventually became required reading for teachers and students at an inner-city Pittsburgh high school. The CMU students and their partners at the center learned a valuable lesson about the ways genres not only emerge from the rhetorical demands of a situation but also give shape to the action of the situation itself.

Genre Theory: What WAC Can Contribute to SL

As do many faculty members experienced in the WAC movement, I frequently conduct instructional development seminars, either for new teachers of college writing courses or for faculty members across the curriculum who want to incorporate more writing in their courses. If WAC and SL move toward more cooperative ventures, I imagine WAC specialists will be increasingly called on to lead such events. I sometimes try to stimulate a discussion in these seminars by taking an overly simplistic view of the teaching of writing: All we do as writing teachers, I suggest demurely, is (a) give students something to write about, (b) tell them what kinds of papers to produce as they write about this content, (c) teach them appropriate writing processes, (d) help them understand how they did, and (e) set them to work on the next task. *Voilà!* As simple as that! Each of these tasks, of course, requires great professional savvy, and the not-so-hidden complexity of, and interrelations between, these five goals and responsibilities are what motivates vigorous discussion in the seminars.

The WAC movement has made great progress toward leading faculty in a wide range of disciplines to see the connections between these five tasks and unpack their curricular and pedagogical implications. WAC professionals have helped their colleagues understand that what they ask their students to write about is influenced by the type of papers they teach them to write; likewise, how they teach students effective writing processes, assess their products, and set them to work on other projects is also constrained by this interaction of their discipline's domain of subject matters and its conventional written products. As David Russell's essay in this volume points out, dozens of naturalistic studies show that the "most crucial choice of tools" for students learning to write in courses across the curriculum and within the disciplines "is that of genre." Effective WAC/WID faculty should, according to Russell, direct students to write in genres that "bring students into contact with the uses of facts and concepts in their (students' and professors' and professionals') worlds." The choice of genres, he suggests, governs, at least in part, the students' motivations for writing, the identities they form through writing, and the processes they employ to write successfully (p. 287).

As the previous sections of this chapter make clear, faculty teaching SL courses can draw from a broad menu of genre options in creating writing projects for their students. But it would help SL come together as a rigorous academic movement if its faculty and administrators would think carefully and consciously about *why* they ask students to produce writing in some genres and not others. Just as WAC can benefit from the energy and good vibrations of SL's timely emergence in higher education, so SL can benefit from WAC's developing expertise in genre theory.

First of all, of course, SL faculty and administrators must recognize a principle of genre that some WAC movement theorists have been promulgating for the past two decades—that genres are not simply empty shells into which "contents" can be poured willy-nilly. Instead, genres are psychological and social meaning-making templates that help writers understand rhetorical situations and that give shape to their intellectual work within them. Carolyn Miller first affirmed this principle in her 1983 article, "Genre as Social Action": "A rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or form of the dis-

course but on the action it is used to accomplish" (151). In a more recent review of genre theory, I have elaborated on the principle somewhat:

> [T]he concept of genre forms a kind of linchpin in an intellectual community's processes of generating and disseminating information. As she investigates a subject matter appropriate to her field, a scholar typifies and recognizes a recurrent rhetorical situation, and she produces a text that instantiates one of the field's preferred genres, a textual form that requires her to invoke certain *topoi*, create an exigence, effect an appropriate style, and achieve a recognizable purpose. In turn, the genre not only allows the scholar to report her research, but its conventions and constraints also give structure to the actual investigation she is reporting. (Jolliffe, "Genre" 283)

I maintain that this dual thrust of genre—its ability to help writers recognize recurrent rhetorical situations and its power to shape and constrain knowledge work—holds as true for student writers performing community service as it does for scholars writing articles for academic publication.

Russell's important 1997 article "Rethinking Genre in School and Society" supports this position and offers a rich perspective on how genre affects student writing and learning, a perspective that could profitably inform the growing SL movement. Drawing on activity theory, Russell develops a framework, which he calls an *activity system*, for analyzing writing and learning situations (such as a WAC course). He displays his exemplary activity system as a triangle, with "subject(s)," or the "agent(s) whose behavior" is being analyzed, at the lower left juncture; "object/motive, followed by outcome," or the "raw material or problem space" that is "changed and shaped over time," at the lower right; and "mediational means," or "tools in use" (including textual tools such as genres), at the apex (510–11). In a WAC course, to use Russell's framework, the students would be the subjects, the subject matters and knowledge work of the discipline would be the object/motive followed by outcome, and the genres students learn to write in would be one of the mediational means, part of the tools they are using to change and shape the disciplinary content. Drawing on the work of Charles Bazerman, Russell charac-

terizes genres as "forms of life" that "regularize and stabilize" an activity through "routinized tool use within and among (sub)groups" (513). In other words, regular use of genres helps writers both establish their own identities and clarify the knowledge work they are engaging in.

Russell proceeds to describe how activity-system analysis can explain the phenomenon of students learning to write in academic contexts such as WAC or SL courses. An initial phase of learning involves what Russell calls *appropriation*. When newcomers to an activity system—such as students learning to write in a new genre in a new discipline or profession (to them)—the new ways they use these tools called words are encountered at the level of conscious actions. Through continued interaction with others in the activity system, the ways of using the tools (say, the introduction, methods, results, discussion [IMRD] structure in science writing) become a routine operation, often unconscious (516). Russell adds that as they learn to appropriate the discipline's genres, some students may also "appropriate the object/motive and subjectivity (identity) of the collective, of a new activity system" (516).

In a university, Russell continues, a student's "[e]xpanding involvement" leads him or her to become "an active participant in one or more activity systems, to maintain and perhaps transform that activity system" (528). The student positions himself or herself to "make a difference," "to recognize, appropriate, participate in—and perhaps transform, in ways large or small—the genres that operationalize some of these disciplinary/professional activity systems, the kinds of writing that help make these forms of life (and, eventually, the student's life) work" (529). When students become so inscribed, so enrolled, in such an activity system, Russell maintains, they "throw them*selves* into it through the reading/writing of its genres, to make a difference as well as make a grade" (534).

Here certainly is brain food for faculty and administrators developing SL courses and programs. The individuals, organizations, and agencies that students encounter in SL are distinct activity systems comprising agents, objects, motives, and outcomes of action, and mediational means, including relatively system-specific genres. How do the faculty and administrators planning

SL programs hope that students will *inscribe themselves* in the SL activity systems? Do SL faculty and administrators hope that students will observe these activity systems and simply reflect on what they perceive? Do SL faculty and administrators want students to see these activity systems as sources of objective, relatively distanced research and study? Do SL faculty and administrators want students actually to *participate* in the activity system? Any of these would be justifiable goals for an SL course or program, but they should be goals that SL faculty and administrators consciously and explicitly agree on. WAC-oriented genre theory would help SL faculty, administrators, and their students address these goals consciously and purposefully.

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