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THE STATUS OF SERVICE IN LEARNING

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During the last decade, a number of scholars/practitioners have explored the geographies of our fields, mapped the boundaries, and developed the landscape by building bridges (for example, Sullivan and Porter 1993; Blyler 1993; Forman 1993; and Allen 1992). One of the most important points in this discussion about identity has been the realization that to create a field of our own, we need to create our own major, one that will be independent and not subordinate. Sullivan and Porter (1993) explain that by

> conceiving of writing as a *major,* professional writing breaks with the dominant *service* identity assigned to composition. The development of professional writing as an academic entity signals a key conceptual shift: from the traditional notion of writing as ancillary to some other subject matter (i.e., writing as service to some other set of concerns—whether business, engineering, literature, or rhetoric/composition) to a recognition of writing as a discipline in its own right (i.e., a view that sees writing itself as a specialty area and as a subject of study). (405–6)

As they make a claim for professional writing's independence, Sullivan and Porter highlight *service* as one of the essential terms in the discussion. They link it to "the traditional notion of writing as ancillary to some other subject matter" and recognize that, for the most part, those of us who teach writing have been and continue to be marginalized (and to marginalize ourselves) because of connotations and history associated with *service.*

Yet, even as Sullivan and Porter (1993) long to break from that "dominant *service* identity" in order to get us to change our collective clothes, so to speak, and put on the mantle of respectability (which for them is associated with research), they recognize that what we do, at least to some extent, is indeed *service.* They explain that even with *writing* as a

major, English departments "can continue their service functions and continue to be seen in that service role by some in the university" (406). Thus, despite their desire to cloak our "*service* identity," they do not dismiss it entirely. Service, deeply rooted in the spaces associated with writing, manages to maintain a presence in the landscape even as Sullivan and Porter work to re-map and re-present it.

In this chapter, my intention is not to argue with Sullivan and Porter's goal of achieving disciplinary status. I agree wholeheartedly that writing should be a discipline in its own right and a "subject of study." I disagree, however, that we need to break "with the dominant *service* identity" to accomplish those objectives. For that reason, I begin an inquiry into the concept of "service," a word many members of the profession of English language studies seem to want to keep hidden away like Rochester's wife in *Jane Eyre*. I examine some of the negative and positive connotations of the term when it is used as a modifier, such as those associated with being a "*service* discipline" and with the pedagogy of "*service*-learning," suggesting that we in the field of technical and scientific communication should bring *service* out of the attic, redefine it, and accept it as an integral component of our missions. In particular, I believe that service-learning, when used fully and reflectively, has the potential to enable us to move beyond negative modifiers. By accepting service as essential to what we do, we redraw the lines of the discussion, make the definitions we want to advance explicit, and take an active role not only in creating a curricular geography but also in assigning ourselves a place on the academic map that best represents us. Such an active role might enable us to achieve parity with other disciplines within the institutions of higher learning and avoid the fates of the non-European countries represented by European mapmakers, who were often marginalized, regardless of their actual size or status (Barton and Barton 1993).[1] More importantly, by accepting service as a key pedagogical goal, we revise our notion of scholarship and link practice and theory together in a manner reminiscent of classical Greece and Rome where rhetors worked to serve the public good.

THE FACES OF SERVICE

Use the term *service*, and you get many responses. On one hand, we have large, expansive definitions of service such as military service and service

to country (the Kennedy inaugural speech or the 1993 National and Community Service Trust Act come to mind here), which are associated with volunteerism and duty. Linked to religious and social concepts, those who serve contribute to the public good and make their communities and country stronger (Bellah 1985; de Tocqueville 1974). On the other hand, there is a less expansive conception of service, the kind one expects while eating or shopping. Here, those who serve do so for pay or out of obligation or indenture, and there is little in the way of public advantage. The advantages are almost always private.[2]

In academe, the word *service* has a long history. Having just completed my annual faculty activity report (FAR), I'm well aware of the three criteria that others use to evaluate me: teaching, research, and service. And I know that at my school, a large, land-grant university, of the three criteria, service is the least valued. To use a common metaphor, academic work is seen as a stool with three legs. Unfortunately, in nearly every instance, service ends up being the shortest leg (Martin, 1977, vii; Mawby 1996, 49), and those who do more of it have less stable places to sit. The concept is accorded far less respect than its sister concepts of teaching and research (Boyer 1990). Many members of the academy see service as subordinate to teaching and research, so that even if they acknowledge that a primary mission of higher education is to serve, they argue that teaching and research, as the means to the end, should receive the most weight. To give an example, what should count is the research that leads to the discovery of a blight-resistant strain of corn or the teaching of how to plant and tend it. The planting and tending, the labor of bringing that plant to bear fruit, have far less weight.

In our discipline, the argument has long been that we don't have a subject of study. Our mission is not to discover new strains of corn or new processes for planting; our mission is to help those who do the discovering communicate their knowledge. Thus, most academics, including many of our colleagues in literature, justify their treatment of us because, for them, we exist in the less expansive mode. Our departments and courses exist because members of the university have a need for us. We are paid, so to speak, to provide others with services they need to do their work that will benefit the community. Returning to Sullivan and Porter's discussion, one can see that implicit in their desire to be rid of the term is the belief that when *service* is used as a modifier, what or who

it modifies is second-rate (as in "Oh, they're a *service* discipline" or technical writing is "merely a *service* course"). Used in this manner, the term *service* falls into the second, less expansive mode; it is pejorative and condescending. Those involved in such work are more servants than equals, providing something necessary, yet something mechanical—a skill that other disciplines see as separate from their endeavors.[3]

SERVICE AS CONDUCT BECOMING A DISCIPLINE

In the military where I spent fifteen years of my adult life, I learned that there are actions or conduct that "become" one. These acts represent what is best about one's profession; they exemplify it, and members are expected to enact them by living in accordance with a code of conduct. So it goes for other professions as well, including that of teaching writing. We must know what is expected of us and live up to those expectations. Clearly, one of those expectations for teachers of professional writing is to teach students how to write well. Doing so is central to our profession; to deny otherwise is to bury our heads in the sand. More important, doing so—teaching students how to write well—is no easy task. To teach students how to write well, we need to understand what we're doing; we need to study both the act of writing and the teaching of the act of writing. We also need to study the effects those acts of writing have on others and use that knowledge to improve our teaching. Our work is a circle involving experiential learning—one that might be best expressed by Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle, which combines concrete experience, through a reflective stage, on to an analytical stage, to a testing step, ending where it began, back at experience. This work, which I've argued elsewhere is like a Möbius loop, is essential to our field (see Dubinsky 1998). We must involve the act and art of teaching writing in the discussion. The strategy, however, is to argue that what we do, our labor, is inseparable from our teaching and our research. Thus, our service is of a piece with our scholarship.

The Service Mission of Higher Education

Rather than deny what has much truth (that we do, indeed, serve as Sullivan and Porter assert) or try to find a way to cloak or cover up that service with some "higher" calling such as study, we need to yoke the two concepts of service and study together. My first reason is that, as I've already stated, not all connotations of *service* are derogatory. Those that

focus on "conduct tending to the welfare or advantage of another" *(OED)* are positive. These definitions seem in line not only with our field's historical role as the discipline responsible for literacy instruction but also with the mission of many institutions of higher learning, which is often associated with the concept of service.[4]

Relying on historical arguments and mission statements from colleges and universities, some scholars have been working to revive the concept of service. In *Scholarship Reconsidered,* Boyer (1990) argues for a redefinition of scholarship (the term associated with *research* that led to the uneven stool and a denigration of the concept of *service* when the modern university system was instituted).[5] He wants to see a broader definition of *scholarship,* one that encompasses what he calls the "scholarship of application" (16), a concept in which "service [is seen as] serious, demanding work requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research" (22).

Along these same lines, a diverse group of educators has been working to create situations that require "reflection-in-action" (Schön 1983), involving a pedagogy that has come to be called service-learning, "an expanding . . . movement [that] educates students . . . for the benefit of society" (Henson and Sutliff 1998, 189). With this pedagogy, there is an emphasis on the scholarship associated with what Aristotle called productive knowledge (Miller 1984; Phelps 1991; Schön 1983), which links thought to action and theory to practice.

SERVICE-LEARNING: KEY TO REDEFINING SERVICE

These goals of redefining service and yoking the words *service* and *learning* speak directly to the issue presented by Sullivan and Porter (1993). How can we argue for independence and disciplinarity when one of the most difficult tasks we face as writing teachers is that we are not teaching a "subject of study" only? In nearly every course in nearly every technical communication curriculum I've examined, there is a practical component associated with the subject of study. We don't teach just document design; we teach how to design documents. We don't teach just about desktop publishing; we teach how to publish using tools available on our desktops. Even when we teach "theory" courses, all too often the theory revolves around the acts of writing (our own or those whom we teach or advise). As a result, there is a tension between how much

emphasis we place on that practical component and how much we place on the subject of study.

The question at this point is how to make the argument about service and disciplinarity without giving up or relinquishing the connections, both historical and practical, to the work of teaching writing. One means is to consider the pedagogy of service-learning, which connects service to learning and unites practice and theory. Service-learning is a pedagogy in process and one that hasn't yet stabilized, having, according to one scholar, 147 different definitions (Kendall 1990). Despite the many definitions, there is quite a bit of agreement about the essential dynamics of the pedagogy, much of it codified at a national conference sponsored by the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education in 1991 (Giles, Honnet, and Migliore). The term refers to activities that combine work in the community with education. The "service" component is activity intended to assist individuals, families, organizations, or communities in need. The "learning" involves structured academic efforts to promote the development (intellectual and social) of the student. It also involves testing and reflection (thus, the link to the Kolb cycle presented previously). Although there is still much research to be done, there is statistical evidence that demonstrates an improvement in students' learning and commitment to a concept of citizenship (Markus, Howard, and King 1993; Cohen and Kinsey 1994; Parker-Gwin and Mabry 1998).

The pedagogy of service-learning elevates service's status to that of an equal with learning, one that doesn't have to be hidden away. It yokes two terms (learning and service) together that many have seen as oppositional; learning, the goal of higher education—knowledge for knowledge's sake—is literally tied by the hyphen to service. I argue elsewhere for the essential nature of the hyphen, but suffice it to say that the hyphen introduces an element of reciprocity, which results in a leveling of the legs of the stool (see Dubinsky 2002). The hyphen brings together *learning-by-doing* and *serving* (applying what one learns to one's community/society). One cannot have service-learning without some action, some activity conducted by the learners *for* and *with* other human beings.

Doing, however, is only part of the equation. There is an added dimension of ethical and social growth, fostered by reflection and

conversation, designed to increase the students' investment in society. Consequently, the term service-learning implies both a type of program and a philosophy of learning (Anne Lewis, quoted in Kunin 1997, 155). What isn't readily apparent in the two words that compose the term is the key component of reflection, the glue that not only holds the two words together but also makes the whole far greater than the parts. Service-learning requires that students do more than just serve or learn; they must understand why and whom they serve and how that service fits into their learning (Bringle and Hatcher 1996; Sigmon 1994).

Service-learning, used fully and reflectively, helps students develop critical thinking skills; it also prepares students for the workplace in a more comprehensive way than many other pedagogical strategies because students apply what they've learned by working to develop reciprocal relationships with real audiences. These relationships, which are directed toward change not charity, enable students to meet their citizenship responsibilities (Dubinsky 2002). Service-learning pedagogy enables us to make our courses "a matter of *conduct* rather than of production" (Miller 1984, 23; Miller's emphasis). Students learn skills they'll use in the workplace, and they gain a practical wisdom *(phronesis)* that enables them to be critical citizens (Sullivan 1990).

TECHNICAL PROBLEM SOLVING OR SERVICE

To implement a pedagogy integral to creating an identity, one that creates relationships with people outside the academy and expands our classrooms beyond their traditional walls, we need to think about what we are doing and why. One of the key issues to resolve is whether we consider our work technical problem solving or service. Both have advantages, as outlined in a recent exchange between Johnson (1999) and Moore (1999), in which Moore is an advocate for "instrumental discourse," arguing that many technical communicators coming out of academic programs are held in low esteem because their communication *skills* are insufficiently developed, the same complaints made about the engineers in the early twentieth century (Kynell 1996). Moore's focus on instrumental skills, however, is the very focus that plays into the hands of those who want to belittle service. *If* what we do is defined by the job market only, if our work is measured by comma splices and the ability to use certain desktop publishing programs, then we are defining

ourselves narrowly and not acknowledging the scope of what we do. If, however, we construct a definition of service so that we not only produce graduates who can use their skills for business and industry but also produce graduates who desire sincerely to use those skills to meet the community's needs and who have a desire to "share the common experience of learning about humans as they wrestle with technology in everyday situations" (Johnson 223), we are then embracing a version of service expansive and beneficial to society.

One key issue we need to consider concerns the attitudes we adopt and encourage students to adopt when we choose projects designed to help others. Although anxious to do good work, it is all too easy to adopt a charitable attitude that, while often well-intentioned, demonstrates that those doing the work feel superior because they have the answers to solve problems. Kahne and Westheimer (1996) describe this situation in terms of two competing models—charity and change—arguing that although both models may work, only the latter one enables people to work *with* others, to effect change and understand the underlying social issues and individual responsibilities. Linda Flower (1997) echoes this point. Drawing on John McKnight's (1995) analysis of social service policy, she explains that "community service has often rested on notions of philanthropy, charity, social service, and improvement that identify the community as a recipient, *client,* or patient, marked by economic, learning, or social deficits" (37; italics added).

For that reason, one of the key components of any service-learning project must be the underlying notion of the type of relationship that will exist between the class and the "client." Rather than encourage a "client" relationship, which is hierarchical, I encourage students to work *with* their organizations as partners. Although more complicated and requiring more of a commitment from the organization, students, and teacher, changing the relationship from a "client-consultant" to a three-way partnership changes dynamics that have a major effect on the outcomes in terms of the way students view problem solving and their roles as problem solvers and community members. Rather than going into a relationship with the assumption that the organization is the "problem" and the university will provide the answer, students understand the importance of working together with people to meet a need (McKnight 1995).

To illustrate, I describe how I learned to make the distinction between client and partner, between technical problem solving and service. In my earliest attempts to integrate service- learning, I emphasized to students the learning and the advantages that would accrue. The projects, following a model advocated by Huckin (1997), included an initial proposal, progress reports, the project itself (for example, Web sites, newsletters, annual reports), a reflection report, and an oral presentation to the class. We began the term working with seven clients, ranging from the New River Valley Free Clinic to the YMCA at Virginia Tech. By term's end, we had met most of the needs outlined by the clients, producing products that would be used. Students applied what they learned in class about issues such as audience analysis, design, and layout. They walked away with an item for their rèsumès and, in some cases, a product they could include in a portfolio. But there wasn't much the students could say in their reflection reports about service other than statements about how they felt good about "helping" and how much that "helping" would help them later in life. Nor could I say much. I didn't get to know the clients well. Although I spoke with all of them on the phone throughout the term, I never even met two of them face-to-face. In all but one case, neither the student teams nor I formed partnerships or learned much more about the organizations, the people who worked for them, and the people they served other than what we needed to know to complete the projects. The relationships were truly consultant-client relationships, with one exception, and that exception led me to reevaluate my pedagogy to focus more on the area between service and learning.

The team that opened my eyes took their project further than the others and helped me to understand the value of service. This team worked for Managing Information with Rural America (MIRA) in Christiansburg, a nearby town. MIRA,"a grantmaking initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Food Systems/Rural Development program area, . . . seeks to draw upon the reservoirs of strength, tenacity, and civic commitment in rural communities and to help rural people use technology (electronic communications and information systems) as a tool to meet current and future challenges" (MIRA 2002); and the mission of this local chapter of MIRA was to make information accessible online. They asked for our help to create a newsletter; the team was asked to design it, write the first issue, and convert it to HTML.

Although their project was not different in kind or scope from the other projects, the advantage this team had was the energy of the larger team they joined. Most teams worked for organizations understaffed and desperate for help. In many cases, they did not have the expertise or the personnel to create the Web site or design the brochure. Thus, they asked for help and were glad to take it. They didn't have the time to supervise or, in some cases, even advise students. Thus, they were good candidates for client projects but not good ones for service-learning partnerships.

Although I didn't realize it at first, the team working with MIRA had a different situation. They became members of a larger project or team, a diverse group of local people interested in enhancing information exchange. They needed our student's expertise and help, but they wanted to work with these students, considering them as team members rather than consultants. In essence, they sought volunteers because of their expertise, and they expected that these volunteers would come to believe in the idea of the project.

Although the MIRA team had some internal problems and although working as part of a larger team had complications in terms of meeting deadlines, the students began to see that because they were involved in a dialogic, reciprocal relationship, they were learning more than just how to apply their technical skills. Because they framed their project in terms of the relationships they developed with the organization's members, they (and I) began to see a distinction between technical solutions and public action. Like the other teams, they did good work, but their approach and the assumptions they made about the organization and the people it served were different. They turned their work into service; no longer was it an act of experts providing solutions. Instead, they joined with others to solve problems that all of them could see. As one of the students put it, "My involvement with the service-learning project changed my outlook. My work with MIRA [Managing Information with Rural America] has had a profound impact on my commitment to volunteerism and has solidified my plans to become an active member of my community." For this student, service did not displace care; rather, service became a form of caring about the problem, the people, and the solution that he helped implement by "restructur[ing] the relationships of service around the Latin roots of the word—'feeling with' . . . [turning]

service from an act of charity or authority into an act of empathy that grasps an essential" (Flower 1997, 99).

GROWTH OF SERVICE-LEARNING IN PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

When implemented in a manner similar to the one described previously, service-learning is an attractive pedagogy and a philosophy, one growing rapidly in all fields of education, at all levels. The term itself can be traced back to a group of pioneers in the late 1960s (Stanton, Giles, and Cruz 1999); and the "movement" based on the term began rather modestly in a variety of locations across the country by people with varied backgrounds. What brought them together were their beliefs that learning doesn't happen just in a classroom and education involves more than just knowledge for knowledge's sake. These individuals began grassroots organizations that have grown rapidly. Two—the Campus Outreach Opportunity League, a student-led advocacy group started in 1984, and Campus Compact, an organization of institutions of higher learning begun by the presidents of Brown, Georgetown, and Stanford Universities in 1985—have assisted the spread of service-learning, as has the creation of the Corporation for National and Community Service.[6]

Although service-learning traces its history back to the mid-1960s, until 1997, little had been written about service-learning and courses whose subject was communication. The first few articles centered on work done in composition and advanced composition courses (Crawford 1993; Mansfield 1993; Herzberg 1994). Then, Cushman (1996) expanded the concept by talking about how working in and for the community can help to mold rhetoricians who are agents for change. Her work was followed by other articles in journals in composition studies and business and technical communication that acknowledged not only the practical value of this pedagogy in terms of how it can improve students' ability to apply what they have learned but also its value toward increasing their sense of civic responsibility (Bush-Bacelis 1998; Dubinsky 2002; Haussamen 1997; Henson and Sutliff 1998; Huckin 1997; Matthews and Zimmerman 1999; Shutz and Gere 1998). These articles outlined methods for implementing this pedagogy, its problems, and its benefits. Although problems can range from students' failing to take service

seriously and copping an attitude toward skills and the workplace to having difficulty learning to speak *for* the organizations they're working with, the benefits, when service-learning is implemented fully, are clear. Students, working with community partners to create Web sites, write promotional or informational materials (newsletters, fact sheets, brochures, annual reports), become more committed to their communities and believe that they are better prepared to write effectively.

This recent acknowledgment of service-learning in our field is linked, in part, to an understanding that we've been practicing forms of experiential learning for several decades. Huckin (1997), for instance, states that although he hadn't heard about service-learning prior to 1997, he knows of many colleagues who had been employing project-based learning as far back as the early 1980s. It is also linked to the idea that our field has roots in classical rhetoric and the work of rhetors in classical Greece and Rome involved a commitment to the polis, to society (Dubinsky 2002). Quintilian, for instance, talked about "ideal orators" willing to put their knowledge and skills to work for the common good, who revealed themselves "in the actual practice and experience of life" (quoted in Whitburn 1984, 228).

The growth of service-learning has led to a resurgence of the importance of service. In 1999, *Technical Communication Quarterly* devoted an entire issue of the journal to redefining the "service" course, talking in terms of radical new pedagogy (David and Kienzler 1999), multiple literacies (Nagelhout 1999), and situated learning (Artemeva, Logie, and St-Martin 1999). The combination of service-learning and a willingness to redefine the very course often used to illustrate our menial status points to a grassroots effort in our field to slow down or even halt the attempts to make a "conceptual shift" away from *service*. They also illustrate reasons why even those among us calling for a new identity do not choose to throw away the old clothes altogether.

REEXAMINING WHAT WE DO

The debate over the word *service* is old, tracing its roots in some ways to a separation between what is useful and higher knowledge, one highlighted by arguments such as Boyer's to redefine scholarship and Sullivan and Porter's to redefine the field of professional writing by breaking from a "*service* identity."[7] It is a debate whose time has come.

One point of focus (Ronald 1987) is to examine our relationships with those to whom we teach these "mechanical skills" in answer to one of the questions members of our discipline often ask when discussing the nature of our work: "[Are we] helping students get jobs and promotions or [are we] helping them become critical thinkers who can change and improve their professions?" The question seems directed at some of the issues embedded in the debate surrounding service. If all we do is help students get jobs, then perhaps all we do is provide something that, while necessary, is menial. If, on the other hand, we help students become better citizens, then perhaps there is substance to our discipline.

When such questions are asked, few consider the possibility that such a question might be a false dichotomy. Regardless of how you see the question, if we're "helping," then we're being of service. By "helping," we provide not only added value but also essential knowledge and skills that students, stakeholders, and society need. We provide a procedural knowledge that helps students get jobs and that gives them the tools to improve their workplaces and their organizational cultures.

By arguing for the value of "procedural knowledge," by making a case for pedagogies such as "service learning" and for the value of "the scholarship of application," we can begin to create an environment in which those who teach these courses don't have to feel like "factory workers." Yet, these arguments will be incomplete unless we explicitly address the tacit nature of the way others and we view "service."

David Russell (1991, 71) says, "Tacit traditions have remained tacit because academia had no shared vocabulary, no institutional forums for discussing discipline-specific writing instruction." Although he isn't talking about the concept of "service" per se, he is talking about the issue of literacy, which is a goal of our "service courses." The concept that teaching writing is a service to enable the other departments to focus on the "important" tasks of teaching their content areas is such a tacit tradition. It will remain tacit as long as the underlying debate about what *service* means is left unaddressed.

CONCLUSION

My immediate reason for addressing this topic is that I've been asked to develop a writing program to serve the needs of the many departments

that believe they produce knowledge that benefits society. They see their primary mission as contained within my university's motto of "*Ut Prosim*" or "That I May Serve." They believe that the production of knowledge is separate from the rhetorical acts involved in such production. They see the service they do as essential and the service of those who teach writing as menial. In essence, they see a significant distinction between their kind of service and ours. What is worse, as evidenced by my brief poll, many of my departmental colleagues agree, perpetuating or extending what one scholar has called a "disciplinary Maginot Line" (Lanham 1983, 16).

To build programs in technical communication, achieve parity in institutions devoted to research, and circumvent the Maginot Line, the tacit tradition linked to the pejorative term of "service" needs to be brought out into the open for examination and discussion. We need to "see" that the forces that produced the universities and colleges many of us teach in are the same forces that created the need for our courses. We should wear the mantle of *service* proudly as we demonstrate the value of service to the university. We need not hide our relationship with service to claim disciplinarity. Instead, we should examine what James White (1985) calls "invisible discourse" (the implicit expectations that are part of a culture). To build and maintain programs ecologically balanced, one of our goals should be to make visible the expectations about service that our stakeholders and we hold.

I've begun to do just that by establishing a dialogue with members of other disciplines responsible for curriculum development. These discussions are playing a role in the redesign of our "service" courses, in which we're negotiating how we can integrate service-learning. By taking the lead and using service-learning pedagogy in my service courses and then publicizing the results through conversations, the Service-Learning Center, workshops, and university newsletters, I'm opening up a dialogue about the reasons for elevating service, which include "1) the civic, moral, and cognitive development of students, 2) the improvement of the quality of life of the community as a result of university work, and 3) the campus's contribution to democracy" (Bringle, Games, and Malloy 1999, 199).

Integrating service-learning into our curriculum and working to become reflective practitioners, while also encouraging students to

reflect on the work they do and the situations contributing to that work, will add to our status. When we engage in service-learning, we engage in problem solving, and as Harry Boyte (1993) says, "Problem-solving . . . is not a narrowly utilitarian term" (63). We are offering a rhetorical education that has larger purposes. By asking students to go out into the community, we enable them to develop skills and insights by focusing on real problems of real people. They learn, by working in semester-long reciprocal relationships with organizations in the community, that our society isn't perfect and that there are many ways to effect change. Specifically, they learn that the skills we teach them, when applied with care, can cause things to happen, particularly when they see that most nonprofits depend on grants and funds that come through donations (often solicited via letters or newsletters) to keep them alive. They learn to become rhetoricians for change (Cushman 1996). Consequently, they learn the value of writing well, and they apply what we teach far more enthusiastically.

In every class I've taught in which I've integrated service-learning, even earlier ones when I failed to achieve a balance between service and learning, students have overwhelmingly found the projects valuable and asked if there would be other courses with that teaching and learning strategy.[8] For these students, the theoretical became practical because it was related to life. That said, the task of implementing this pedagogy isn't easy; finding the balance between service and learning is as difficult as finding the balance between theory and practice or workplace and academe. For teachers to bridge the gaps successfully, they must be aware of the need for balance between service and learning and of the potential problems associated with this need. In essence, they need to read teacher's stories such as those by Matthews and Zimmerman (1999) and Huckin (1997).

To maintain integrity and continuity of purpose, we also need to encourage our colleagues in disciplines such as communication, computer science, and graphic arts that become part of technical or professional communication programs to contribute to this dialogue about the social contexts for literacy and our obligations to students, stakeholders, and society. We should answer what service is, decide whom we serve and why, and determine what those answers mean to us and to those we serve. Once answered, we can define, develop, and defend the concept

of service to argue effectively for our place in the academy. Doing so will enable us "to provide for an education for citizenship" (Newman 1985, 31), teach the process of deliberation and judgment essential to such an education (Sullivan 1990, 383), and empower students to effect change in their communities. If we accomplish those goals, we have served truly and expansively, and we'll have a unified vision of our discipline that is practical in the fullest sense and valued because of the ethical and political dimensions associated with it. Our colleagues in literature and other disciplines will see that the work we do extends beyond comma splices and forms; they'll see that our service not only teaches the skills they value but also enables students to function more fully in their workplaces.