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AT THE NEXUS OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Guided, Critical Reflection for Learning Beyond the Classroom in Technical Communication

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Other chapters in this collection (Grabill or Dubinsky, for example) invite technical communication educators to enrich both the curriculum and the students with service-based learning experiences. This chapter builds on those ideas and extends them in a significant way: I advocate for integrating a reflective element grounded in critical thinking, suggesting how this integration can bridge theory and practice for students in a vibrant way.[1]

Such connections are important—and perhaps essential in a volume that promotes innovative pedagogy. Locating the balance of theory and practice has been one of the most persistent controversies in technical communication as an academic discipline. Educators want to instill students with theoretical perspectives that build critical thinking and decision-making skills and that maintain flexibility and perspective over time. But educators also feel pressure to prepare students with applied, practical skills to ensure immediate, successful entry into the workplace. These can be competing goals and sometimes divide the communities of practitioners and academics. Finding balance becomes especially relevant in a current national culture that places increasing emphasis on work preparedness and accountability for higher education

But before I suggest applications for critical reflection (including several sample cases), I would like to broaden the discussion with regard to learning that takes technical communication students beyond the classroom. To this end, I include a brief description of two additional learning experiences—client-based learning and internships.

CLIENT-BASED LEARNING AND INTERNSHIPS

Client-based learning means that students undertake projects (usually in groups) with "real" clients (commercial or nonprofit) external to the

classroom. The projects might be product oriented, in which students create manuals, Web pages, brochures, or proposals, or they might be process oriented, in which students act as communication consultants to help solve problems or recommend new procedures. Whatever their form, these projects are part of assigned and evaluated class work. Client-based projects afford students valuable workplace contact and can help students at all levels (Wickliff 1997) encounter and internalize genres of workplace writing (Blakeslee 2001).

Internships differ from client-based projects in two ways: 1) in most cases, no formal content instruction takes place: the learning focuses on performance of tasks for an external site—it's an immersion experience; 2) in many cases, these are solitary learning experiences because students typically have more opportunities to take part in individual rather than group internships.

It is interesting to note that studies (not within technical communication) have linked internships to improved employability and starting salary (English and Koeppen 1993) and, in addition, to improved academic performance following the internship (Knouse, Tanner, and Harris 1999). Further, internships can provide an effective transition into the workplace for students from disadvantaged or marginalized backgrounds (Cates-Melver 1999; Mellander and Mellander 1998).

Both experiences clearly benefit technical communication students (hence their popularity with technical communication degree programs). In addition to the benefits previously mentioned, I would add that because these projects are never just writing projects, students develop a recognition of the relatedness of multiple literacies (oral, written, visual, and technological) and the complexities of communication within organizations (see, for example, Tovey 2001; McEachern 2001).

Service- and client-based projects and internships are not the only options for learning beyond the classroom. Other scenarios that work well to acquaint students with workplace values and challenges (and gain value from the reflective practices described later) include cooperative agreements common in engineering programs (see, for example, Wojahn 2001) and mentoring relationships (Kryder 1999).

In any of these learning experiences, students encounter the complex social and political contexts that surround the development of information products. And for more immersive experiences, students are necessarily participants in these contexts. All this immersion creates an opportunity for deeper, multilevel learning and guided, critical reflection in ways that can play a key role in that learning process.

ENCOURAGING CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

Importance of Reflection

When students venture beyond the traditional classroom, they often discover that the work of creating information products for real clients is far messier than the rule-driven advice in many textbooks (for more observations on the relationship between theory and textbooks, see Herndl 1996a). Students can become distracted by the complexity of the experience and struggle to maintain a learning focus. The instructor or faculty advisor can help with this focus by connecting students to useful perspectives about the experience (perspectives I would argue should be critical and theory based). The key to perspective is reflection. In fact, it might be argued that to make any of these experiences a form of *academic* learning, students need time and structure for reflection (Watson 1992). When students are self-aware, they tend to be more exploratory, more receptive to new ideas, and simply gain more insight into the experience. They may also be more willing to be critical (and perhaps even resistant) toward organizational culture and the power structures they encounter—the "dark side of the force" (155) as Carl Herndl (1996a) describes it. I agree with Herndl that this resistance should be an important part of technical communication pedagogy, and in the more practical advice on guided reflection described in this chapter, I point to some ways instructors can encourage students to consider these possibilities.

Creating Meaningful Reflection

Meaningful reflection can take many forms and can take place at any point during the learning experience—and in fact should occur throughout it—with perhaps a special effort toward summative reflection at the end. Written reflection is especially important because of the reinforcing links among thinking, learning, and writing. For service- and client-based learning, students can reflect individually through journals or assigned writings; as groups, they might formally reflect on their experience in, among other possibilities, a summative piece that accompanies the final project. For internships, a journal is important, as is a final summative paper and, as suggested later, an internship seminar.

To avoid journals or other reflective writing that simply record a descriptive chronology of activities, instructors can provide prompts that

encourage informed, critical thinking. These prompts can be part of formal assignments or be more informal suggestions. Guided reflection might include the following possible questions.

General questions:

What classes prepared you for this experience?

What previous life experience prepared you?

What should you have known before you went into it?

What are your initial impressions about the client or site?

What has surprised you about the experience?

How did this project/internship fit into your personal or civic goals? Your value system?

Would you recommend this experience to another student? Why or why not?

What kinds of problems did you encounter? How were you able to solve them or work around them?

What types of communication skills are important to be successful in this internship?

What are some key things you've learned from this experience?

Questions specifically for service- or client-based learning:

What is the goal of your project? When it's all done, what should it accomplish?

How did your group divide the work? Was it successful? How would you do it differently?

How did your project change over time, in terms of expectations or schedule? Why do you think this happened?

What do you think about your relationship with the client? What were the challenges? What seemed to go well?

How would you describe your client's workplace?

Questions specifically for internships:

Describe the hierarchy of people around you. How long did it take you to figure it out?

What forms of communication are used at your site, and how do you think they influence the organizational culture?

What seems to work particularly well at this site? What seems problematic to you?

Were there any mentors for you, and how did they work with you?

Do you think your contributions are valued? Why or why not?

What would you change about this site if you could?

How do people work together? Are there teams? How do they divide up work?

Do you now have any concerns or observations about work-related issues such as telecommuting, work/home distinctions, physical commuting, others?

Written reflection encourages introspection by individuals and small groups. It may smooth the course of the project or internship, contribute to a higher quality product, and provide a useful record of thoughts and activities. But written reflection still has limitations and is not the only option for meaningful reflection. Students can also gain a great deal of insight by interacting with each other and the instructor. To this end, I would argue for regular large group discussions, guided by an instructor as a complement to both service- and client-based learning as well as internships.

Creating meaningful discussion seems fairly straightforward—even unavoidable—with many service- and client-based projects, as they exist within the structure of a class, and students find these projects engaging. Yet, this type of interaction is probably more rare with internships. Internships can be solitary, isolating learning experiences. Students frequently have little status at their sites and may have little contact with other students. An internship seminar significantly reduces this isolation. Here, interns from a variety of sites meet regularly with a faculty advisor to discuss their impressions and concerns. A seminar also provides an opportunity for an instructor to introduce critical perspectives.[2]

Bringing Theory into the Reflection: Sample Cases

Once students are involved in a well-structured service- or client-based project or internship and have participated in ongoing reflection, they are prepared for more critical analyses of their experiences. The instructor is vital in this process. Probably, the easiest way to illustrate the role of the instructor—and for that matter, the value of introducing more theoretical perspectives—is to look at several sample "cases" that represent common student comments and reactions to these experiences. (I have drawn these cases from real student experiences.) Each case suggests how an instructor might steer somewhat vague observations (or complaints) into focused (and perhaps revealing) critical thinking. In these cases, I make no attempt to provide a detailed review of the various

theoretical perspectives: given the variability of these experiences and the differing interests of instructors, such an attempt would be well beyond the scope of this chapter. Rather, what I provide is more analogous to signposts—directions that invite further exploration.

It is also important to note that discussions aimed at enhancing awareness and critical thinking may not actually solve problems that students may be experiencing. Instead, I think reflective practice provides students with new perspectives. Although it is not always possible (or even desirable) to "operationalize" some of the more abstract discussions suggested later, students may be able to use insights to alter their communication or project strategies.

For each case described, I present a brief narrative and a series of questions that can serve as general prompts for critical reflection. These activities are followed by a discussion relating the prompts to a case and some suggestions for additional resources.

CASE ONE: "I'M CONFUSED": ADAPTING TO THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Description

A group of students in a software documentation class have undertaken a client-based project. Their client, a small technology start-up, has developed a software product designed to facilitate small business accounting. At this point, the students have met with one representative of the company and have had a week to familiarize themselves with a prototype product. They've just had a second meeting that involved more people from the company, including midlevel managers from both the development and marketing areas of the company. What seemed like a clear-cut documentation project now seems complicated. The marketing and development people disagreed on the target audience for the product and even on the functionality of the product itself. During class after the second meeting, the students express confusion.

Prompts and Discussion

A common response from students in the early stages of a service- or client-based project (or an internship) is a certain amount of confusion. Often the project seems clearest at the very beginning. But once students start working in earnest with clients to pin down audience, purpose, research requirements, design goals, and other matters of substance, a

certain amount of disorientation and frustration sets in. When frustration happens, it is useful to engage the large group of students—not just those expressing confusion—in a discussion that might take any or all of the following directions.

Culture and Community

Perhaps the confusion arises from misunderstandings, particularly about each other's priorities. How might students describe their impressions of the culture at the site? What are the commonalities that bind the people in this workplace together? Can they speculate about their values? Their priorities? Where might students' values and priorities overlap? Where do they differ? (See, for example, Deal and Kennedy's classic text, *Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life,* 1982.) Drawing on qualitative or ethnographic research methodology, how might students try to understand local culture? How might they see their roles as participants/observers? What might be problematic about that view? (See, for example, Campbell 1999; Herndl 1991.)

In this particular case, the students initially had little feel for the culture of the company. But a few conversations with employees revealed that, until recently, this company had been a software consulting group, and its attempts to market its own products was relatively new. The development side seemed to resent the rapid growth of the marketing side. In individual writings and class discussion, it became clear that the students identified with the software developers. With that awareness, and, as a result of a discussion that continued over several class periods, the students developed a strategy that basically followed the software developer's interpretation of the product and the marketing department's interpretation of the target market. In this case, the "other" was the marketing department, and students had to learn to trust marketing's expertise, even when they didn't share all of its values.

Power and Hierarchy, Gender

From a related point of view, perhaps the difficulty arises out of the relative power positions of the students and the clients. How might individual people at the work site view this new, short-term relationship? What is the power hierarchy at the site, both formal and informal? Where do students or interns fit in this hierarchy? How does one move around or within the hierarchy? How might gender play a role, particularly in perceptions of authority or power? How are power hierarchies created

and maintained? (See, for example, Flynn 1997, on feminist theory/gender issues; Baker and David 1994, on power issues.)

The students found issues of power particularly engaging in this case. Part of the reason that the students "liked" the software developers was that they seemed to appreciate the effort involved with producing effective documentation. The marketing manager seemed comparatively dismissive. The students gravitated toward the area where they had most status. Also, the students found it difficult to identify the balance of power between the two departments. Despite class discussion on this issue, as well as some efforts at the site to clarify it, the students never did determine clearly who had the final say in decisions regarding their documentation project: thus, they proceeded with the two-pronged strategy described previously. The students, as a group and during class discussions, did not feel that gender played a significant role in this particular project.

Discourse and Models of Communication

The theme of culture brings up another question: Is the source of the confusion actually language? Do they—the "other"—actually know what the students are saying? How does the concept of discourse community apply here? Are communities and cultures defined by their discourse, or do they define their cultures (thereby creating insiders and outsiders) with language? Do communication models help shed some light? In terms of a Bakhtinian dialogic, is there an understanding that follows the utterance? Or what is the interference here between sender and receiver? How might students know if somebody actually understands? (For an excellent discussion of all these issues, see Gregory Clark's *Dialogue, Dialectic, and Conversation: A Social Perspective on the Function of Writing,* 1990.)

The students in this case, who purposefully chose to work mostly with the software developers, did not feel there was a significant gap in communication, either in terms of style or discourse. A class discussion about the students' choice to stay on relatively familiar turf was particularly interesting: their alliance with the software developers became an actual choice (whether it was wise or not is debatable), rather than an unexamined drift. In "The Overruled Dust Mite: Preparing Students to Interact with Clients," Lee-Ann Kastman Breuch (2001) directly addresses this issue—by presenting a case where students, pleased with their design approach, simply do not hear the direct wishes of their client—

and discusses the causes and complications involved in communication breakdown. This article might be good preparation for students beginning projects beyond the classroom (especially for students in technical communication degree programs).

CASE 2: "THEY KEEP CHANGING THEIR MINDS": DEALING WITH SHIFTS AND SLIPS

Description

Students in a document design class have undertaken a project somewhere between service- and client-based learning. They are working with a county sheriff's department to create a "handout" for crime victims. In the past, the sheriff's department has handled this information informally, relying on officers, public agencies, or department counselors to acquaint victims with their rights. Now, they would like to enhance consistency with a document. The students quickly determine that a one-page handout will not be sufficient and begin design work on a compact brochure. As work progresses, word spreads about the project through the sheriff's department and among relevant agencies and nonprofit groups. The students' liaison with the department passes on the numerous requests for enhancements. As the weeks progress, the brochure has become a small book, with chapters for victims of different types of crimes, and the focus begins to shift from informing victims to concatenating department information. As the end of the semester approaches, the students realize their project is perhaps hopelessly far from completion.

Prompts and Discussion

Nearly all communication projects experience shifts in standards, content, schedules, budgets, personnel, and expectations. These changes can be frustrating for interns and occasionally catastrophic for students working on service- and client-based projects, as they work within the time strictures of a finite class. These strictures can become complicated (but not impossible) difficulties to resolve. In these situations, guided reflection might focus on any of the following categories.

Constructive Processes

Perhaps change results from the interaction of larger forces. Why do people change content or design? Who are the stakeholders for the resulting product? Do they have the same interests? How does this project

encourage (or even force) negotiation among the stakeholders? How does the process of negotiation work? How long does it take? What other factors affect it? Given all these constructive processes, do communications professionals record, refine, or invent truth? (Scholarship on social construction is helpful here; see, for example, Bruffee's [1986] classic essay, "Social Construction, Language, and the Authority of Knowledge" or the essays in Blyler and Thralls's [1993] *Professional Communication: The Social Perspective*.)

What is the larger context of this project (for instance, industry, non-profit sector)? Are there other information products like it? Do these serve as models or something to be avoided?

In this case, the students encountered a latent and undiagnosed communication vacuum. In the written reflection and in the small group and class discussions, students displayed an initial enthusiasm for their project that, over time, became disillusionment and even fear. They did not want to do this poorly, and the increasing, shifting demands for the project seemed to remove it from their control. Discussion helped the students diagnose the situation: the students determined that the project had caused the sheriff's department and other agencies to really think this process through for the first time. They did not have any consensus or models to present to the students; rather, the students, with the clock ticking, had become observers of a vital constructive process—a situation familiar to professional communicators.

Intertextuality, Multiple Literacies

Perhaps students can see these changes as related to a natural development of ideas over time. Why might ideas change over time? Where did the ideas for this project originate? What actual forms have they likely gone through (from hallway conversations to email to phone calls to memos to presentations to reports and so forth.)? Are these ideas likely to continue to appear in different media, in different forms over time, even after the project is completed? What types of literacies might people require to track this idea over time (such as oral, written, visual, or technological)? How might professionals know when to freeze change, at least for the purposes of completing one information product? (For a study on intertextuality in a corporate setting, see Hansen 1995.)

Here, the students have encountered a fragmented communication strategy. Crime victims gained information from different people in

different ways. As the sheriff's department moved toward some level of consistency for the sake of the project, they uncovered many existing inconsistencies—and even some reluctance to move toward consistency. In class discussions, the students noted that, as the means of communication shifted from primarily oral to written, the sheriff's department seemed to want to add information for every possible contingency. The students realized that, in the past, crime victims received information on a case-by-case basis, with the information varying according to individual circumstances. The brochure, as a static document, really required a different approach: here, shifting modes of communication required a fundamental shift in communication strategy. (This shift was another issue that slowed the project.) As a result, the students worked with the department liaison to identify information that might be common to all crime victims: even this proved problematic.

In the end, the students could not create a brochure that met the original goals. Realizing they were facing a dynamic information situation—and running out of time—they recast the project and produced a highly useful brochure for victims of property crimes.

CASE 3: "I DON'T LIKE MY CLIENT OR MY GROUP MEMBERS": CONFLICT AND COLLABORATION

Description

In a Web design class, a small group of students are creating a "community bulletin board" Web site for a neighborhood association. The association represents a diverse urban neighborhood, one that has made great strides in developing a new sense of community. They view the Web site as an essential communication vehicle both for the residents of the neighborhood and for external audiences. The student group undertaking this project is talented. Two members have significant professional experience in Web site development. Rather quickly, however, the instructor notices that the group seems to be falling behind other groups in the class (who have similar projects). While sitting with the group, the instructor observes long silences, stiff body language, and a general lack of engagement. Group members insist they have no problems within the group. Several weeks into the project, a representative from the neighborhood association contacts the instructor and voices concern about the progress of the project and the responsiveness of the student team.

Prompts and Discussion

Some level of conflict is inevitable in technical communication projects beyond the classroom, simply because these projects require high levels of coordination, real deadlines, and strong personal attachments to ideas, designs, and written work. This conflict may well turn out to be the most challenging area for the instructor. And it can be delicate. If the conflict lies primarily within a student project team, the instructor can intervene in various ways, from quick encouragement to reorganizing or even dismantling the group. However, if conflict forms between the students and site, the instructor has less control, sometimes fewer options, and many more variables to manage. It may be best with external conflict for the instructor to act as an intermediary between the site and students—or, in some situations, as the students' advocate. (Given the potential liability issues, an instructor should not hesitate to terminate a project if relationships really go awry.) However, through large group discussion, students can gain insight into collaboration that may serve them well in the future.

(Re)organizing the Project Team—Small Group Dynamics

What are some ways to organize a project team (strong leader, democracy, specialized functions, subteams, and so on.)? How might different projects fit best with certain ways to organize? What roles might individuals assume within a small group? What effect might individual team members' skills have on team organization? Does a team have to keep the same organization throughout an entire project? Why might a team reorganize during different phases of a project?

In this case, the instructor decided, even though most groups were functioning well, to spend some extra time reviewing small group dynamics and models for team organization. After class, some members of the student team approached the instructor and asked for help. They noted that the two students with the most experience constantly disagreed and that this disagreement was not only slowing their progress but also effectively silencing the other students. The instructor met with the students and reviewed their team organization. One experienced member had assumed a role as a central coordinator, a "boss," without a real mandate from the rest of the group. The instructor asked the students to work from the material on small group dynamics and develop an alternative structure within the group. This they did, dividing the

project into discrete steps and assigning responsibility for each stage to a different student.

Conflict

Much has been written in technical communication scholarship about conflict and collaboration. It is probably one of the stronger areas of the field. Many resources exist, but what I have found most useful for this immediate purpose derives from one of Rebecca Burnett's (1993) many works in this area, "Conflict in Collaborative Decision-Making." It is useful to ask students to focus on the nature of the conflict:

- Is the conflict based on how to do things (procedural conflict)? How long has this gone on? At what point does this cease being a useful type of conflict? How might people get past this type of conflict?
- Is the conflict based on personalities (affective conflict)? Is this an appropriate type of conflict for a professional project? Is this a common type of conflict? Is it a productive or useful type of conflict? How might people get past this type of conflict?
- Is the conflict based on real issues with the project (substantive conflict)? In other words, is the conflict over the content of the project, its design, strategies, and such? Why is this a more useful type of conflict? What might be a negative consequence of no substantive conflict? Can this develop into other types of conflict? What is the best way to manage substantive conflict?

Here, the students were able to determine that they were mired in procedural conflict (with a touch of affective conflict). The battle for power between the two experienced members manifested itself in continual disagreement about how to proceed with the initial stages of the project. This simple diagnosis was useful for students, and they were able to move beyond it once they reorganized.

The conflict that began to develop with the association was a little more problematic. The association representative had high expectations for the group (perhaps unrealistically high) and, with the group's initial inability to move forward, had all but dismissed the group as developer of their Web site. It became part of the group's project to rebuild this trust through real progress and better responsiveness. (And it was also a learning experience for the instructor, to establish carefully defined expectations between sites and students.)

CASE 4: "I DON'T LIKE WHAT'S GOING ON HERE": ETHICS AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Description

A technical communication student has become an intern for a large annual arts festival. The internship description defines the intern's responsibilities as primarily to "aid in the design and creation of promotional materials." One of these projects is the "Director's Update," a newsletter prepared for festival participants and sponsors. The intern works directly with the director to produce the newsletter. The director compliments the intern's work and asks the intern to take on additional communication-related projects for the director. The intern is flattered and enjoys preparing press releases and presentations. But the responsibilities begin to shift, and the intern finds herself making appearances at meetings and even press conferences in the director's stead. More troubling, the director asks the intern to slightly misrepresent information—about the director's activities, about some details of the festival organization. The level of misrepresentation seems relatively minor, but the intern is distinctly uncomfortable and confused by the course of the internship. She approaches the faculty internship advisor for help.

Prompts and Discussion

Less frequently than in the other "cases," a student may be dissatisfied with a site's (or fellow student's) general approach to the project, to the handling of specific situation, or to treatment of an individual. These types of issues—when they are not better described as conflict or quickly handled as potential liability problems—require an exploration of ethics and social responsibility. This exploration may be intensely personal for students, as they compare personal values with those of organizations, individuals within the organizations, or other students. It may not be advisable to make these individual situations part of general group discussion, but addressing these significant issues is important.

Much of the groundwork for a discussion of ethics and social responsibility might originate from a conversation about culture, such as that suggested in Case One. Beyond that, however, an instructor and student might explore some of the following issues.

What are "ethics"? Do professions have standards for ethical behavior (for example, the Society for Technical Communication)? What happens when individuals find themselves in situations where they are asked to violate either personal or professional ethics? Or to stand by and watch others act in ways that appear unethical? What is the duty of the individual to act? What are the options for action? This area has also received a good deal of attention in technical communication (see, for example, Faber 1999; Markel 1997; and the *Technical Communication Quarterly* special issue on ethics, volume 10, issue 3, 2001).

A further goal here might be to show that a sense of social responsibility is not simply (or only) an artifact of the liberal university environment: What do we mean by social responsibility? To whom is it owed? Why is it owed? Is it optional? How is social responsibility part of personal value systems? Is it also part of ethics? In this regard, Donna Kienzler's (2001) article, "Ethics, Critical Thinking, and Professional Communication Pedagogy," provides useful guidelines. She combines critical thinking and ethics and asks students to evaluate situations by applying four related activities: identifying and questioning assumptions, seeking input from diverse voices, connecting with the relevant communities, and becoming actively involved. This approach helps students clarify the problem as well as understand their values and sense of responsibility.

In this case, after some investigation and negotiation, the faculty advisor removed the intern from the site (and completed the internship with related activities within the university). But the advisor also asked the student to write reflectively about her experience with the internship, using some of the questions listed previously as prompts. What bothered the student most about this situation was finding herself in a position where she was "in over her head," where she was not sure about boundaries and consequences for her actions. This misrepresentation of information violated her own values, but she was more troubled by how she had felt personally compelled to follow the directives of her site supervisor. She wanted to do a good job and meet expectations—and she appreciated the praise from the director. This experience caused her to reflect, in a way Herndl (1996a) describes, on the power of organizational hierarchy and convention to subvert personal responsibility. Reflection allowed the student to both explore her discomfort with the situation and broaden the experience into observations on the nature of compulsion and resistance.

CONCLUSION

In general, guided, critical, written reflection and discussion invite students to process these project and internship experiences with an eye toward

- generalizing their learning, so that they can turn these specific experiences into frameworks for understanding future experiences,
- connecting their learning to larger ideas—in essence, seeing how a theoretical lens (whether feminist, rhetorical, social, cognitive, or one of many others) sheds light on real experiences—and
- appreciating the centrality of communication in human culture—in all its forms and complexity, in all kinds of workplaces and all types of work.

Service- and client-based projects and internships provide many practical learning opportunities for students. But I would argue that they can provide even more: when combined with opportunities for guided reflection, students can gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical basis of technical communication, which in turn might allow them to maintain and sharpen a critical, thoughtful perspective about their lifelong work experience. In this way, service- and client-based learning and internships can foster significant intellectual growth.

Currently, the Internet offers significant potential for service- and client-based projects and internships that might be global in scope, greatly enhancing the cultural learning integral to these experiences. But this enhancement will also pose interesting new challenges. As the Internet (or a successor technology) becomes the workplace of the future and as geopolitical boundaries fade in professional communication, learning opportunities that give students critical, self-aware experience with issues like culture, power, and ethics will become only more important.