



Composing an Institutional Identity: The Terms of Community Service in Higher Education

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[W]e didn't use the words *service-learning* or *experiential learning* for several years, consciously, because at Stanford, words count. They can get you in trouble. We did not want our efforts to connect students' service with academics to appear to faculty as some sort of "touchy-feely" exercise, which is what those words would connote in their minds.

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"Touchy-feely" is a devil term in higher education stigmatizing work as unintellectual or unsubstantial. Faculty are often wary of what appear to be trendy programs that will divert students (and their professors) from rigorous scholarship to pursue such ideals as Citizenship or Service. Stanton's experience with service-learning programs at Cornell University and Stanford University has become a case study for service-learning scholars because it encapsulates the complex problem of creating a sustainable identity for this kind of endeavor in academe, a culture that recognizes community outreach as part of the educator's vocation but is still groping for a way to adequately define and reward its institutional role. The overarching importance of his account is that it highlights the problem of communication for curricular innovation. Designations such as *service-learning* or *experiential learning* are curricular metaphors: ways of imagining and inventing an academic experience in extra-academic terms, framing learning as something achievable through acts of service or hands-on collaborative problem-solving rather than traditional classroom methods. These terms set up expectations for our students, ourselves, our colleagues—all who participate in and scrutinize our work.

This essay examines how the rhetoric of community service can both hinder and help efforts to strengthen service-learning institutionally, professionally, and pedagogically. My research draws from an extensive

review of college and university mission statements and other institutional artifacts used to compose and communicate the modern *vocation* of American higher education—its idealized roles, responsibilities, and contributions to society. Service—whether as a sacred trust, a cultivation of civic leadership, a performance of *noblesse oblige*, or a mode of applied learning—has been a core commitment of colleges and universities since the founding of Harvard to train ministers in 1636 (Rudolph, 1977, pp. 27, 100). Exploring what service represents within institutions, in philosophical and practical terms, can enable us to acquire a more sensitive understanding of service-learning's reception and contribution in the disciplines.

Institutionalizing Service: Within and Without

At a time when many colleges and universities are vying to differentiate themselves from competing institutions, it is no coincidence that service-learning programs are gaining administrative attention. Service-learning represents a way to demonstrate institutional generosity and historical ties with the local community, presumably in contrast with the soul-less online and proprietary enterprises that will grant credentials without extending nourishing roots into the communities they enroll. Community-focused programs speak to a felt need in higher education: to make meaningful connections with a public that continues to express doubts about the conventions of traditional institutions, and to engage students in activities that enable them to experience the relevance of their disciplinary studies for understanding and addressing the everyday problems of civic life. Consequently, much is being written these days about “institutionalizing” service-learning, making it a formal part of the curriculum and infrastructure of American colleges and universities so that the programs themselves can be strengthened and sustained and so their pedagogical and social philosophy can making a lasting contribution to academic culture (Bringle & Hatcher, 2000; Deans, 2000; Flower, 1997; Holland, 1997; Stanton, Giles, Jr., & Cruz, 1999; Zlotkowski, 1998). This is a significant rhetorical shift for a pedagogy that typically calls itself a *movement*—something that, by definition, operates outside formal institutions (Stewart, Smith & Denton, 1994, p. 5). The implications of this shift are suggested by the premises and promises of an idealized institutional concept of community service.

The dominant paradigm for community service positions the college or university as a cultural benefactor. Institutions are understood to have superior knowledge, expertise, and resources—in sum, they have the ability to transform surrounding communities and, indeed, a moral obligation to do so. For example, during a 1998 convocation address, Northwood University's president tells students that, as future leaders, it

is important “to ‘pay rent’ back to the community and nation for your chance to make yourselves enterprise successes” (Fry, p. 4), and in a 1999 convocation address, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology president reminds the incoming class to fulfill “the ancient Talmudic principle of *tikun olam*—our obligation to repair our world for the sake of ourselves and our children” (Vest, p. 1). Linda Flower describes this perspective as a logic of *cultural mission* that assumes institutions are responsible for enlightening the public and correcting its apparent deficiencies (1997, p. 97). Because improving conditions near campus—economically, culturally, and aesthetically—is also good for the quality of life on campus, this paradigm has recently been dubbed “enlightened self-interest.” While this title and its underlying premises may trouble some service-learning practitioners (by, among other things, reinforcing attitudes that fail to recognize opportunities for mutual problem-solving), it remains a paradigm that is familiar within American culture, merging the ideals of charity and self-reliance, and it summarizes a public and institutional perspective on community service that will certainly continue to influence the character of newly institutionalized community outreach programs such as service-learning.

Colleges and universities, in documents ranging from convocation speeches to web pages, tend to define their social missions using two key terms: *citizenship* and *democracy*. As is typical with institutional rhetoric, these concepts are rarely defined; rather they function as god terms, rhetorical ideals that generally remain unchallenged or unqualified (Burke, 1969; Weaver, 1970). Interestingly, wherever the academy expresses these civic verities it is common to find contrasting terms of equal intensity such as *customer* and *efficiency*—the terms of the corporate university, the institutional identity many educators are struggling to avoid (Nelson, 1999). Negotiating the borders of democracy and corporatization is the term *accountability*, which conveys negative connotations of public scrutiny but may soon emerge as a rationale for evaluating and rewarding public work. While a thorough analysis of this rhetorical relationship is beyond the scope of this essay, it is important to recognize that community engagement research and teaching have symbolic value to our institutions and to those who want to retain or upset its traditions.

Representative of the interplay of nostalgia, civic mission, and institutional identity is a set of texts published by the college and university presidents of the public service alliance Campus Compact, the “Wingspread Declaration on Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University” (Boyte & Hollander, 1998) and the “Presidents’ Fourth of July Declaration on the Civic Responsibility of Higher Education” (Ehrlich & Hollander, 1999). As implied by the titles, these “declarations” appeal to our democratic mores and intend to revive the democratic spirit of Ameri-

can education. Neglecting civic responsibilities is assigned partial blame for higher education's current dilemma: "The beliefs and practices that universities have espoused, affecting research, teaching, and outreach, are under review, spurred by calls for accountability, efficiency, and utility as well as by questions about the theories of knowledge embedded in prevailing reward and evaluation systems" (Boyte and Hollander, 1998, p. 2). By practicing scholarly detachment rather than engagement educators have failed to demonstrate the relevance of this work and have fallen prey to "the same forces in the society that focus on 'efficiency of means' and neglect continuing discussion about civic purposes and public meanings of our individual and collective work" (p. 4). The urgency of this call to action reflects the concern that colleges and universities are becoming something less than they were—less influential, less respected, less helpful in the public eye.

Institutionalizing service-learning can be a critical strategy for mobilizing students as agents of social change who will also serve as positive representatives of higher education. A program with strong institutional support can sustain long-term reciprocal relationships with community members who share a stake in local problem-solving and continuing education. Within this framework, community outreach is more likely to shift from the social mission paradigm to one Flower calls *prophetic pragmatism and problem-solving*, through which "service" becomes passionate collaborative inquiry into the struggles of community life and how these problems may be better understood and addressed by all community stakeholders—not just the university activist or the client of a social services agency (1997, p. 104). A familiar model of successful institutionalization is the service-learning done through the Community Literacy Center (CLC), a collaborative Flower helped establish over ten years ago. The longevity of this collaborative attests to the institutional savvy of its organizers as well as its unique positioning as an endeavor within and without the formal structure of an academic program. I will discuss this model program in further detail later in this essay. In terms of institutionalized service what makes this model particularly interesting is its integration of scholarship and service into work that simultaneously extends the intellectual and civic missions of the institution. The CLC bridges the university (Carnegie Mellon) and the greater community (Pittsburgh) by operating physically and administratively apart from campus but within a community center (Pittsburgh's Community House) that provides educational and social services (Peck, Flower & Higgins, 1995, pp. 200-201). University students and instructors come to the CLC to engage in collaborative inquiry with community partners. The CLC has an identity that is distinct from its university, yet it also represents the university in important ways, building cooperative relationships beyond campus and gener-

ating academic visibility through scholarly publications and grant funding.

The CLC offers a glimpse at what can be achieved through sustained institutional support. However, the growth of institutionalized community service through, for example, federally sponsored programs such as AmeriCorps and state-wide initiatives such as Governor Gray Davis's call for all of California's public colleges and universities to mandate community service, is prompting concerns that institutions are attempting too much, too fast. The rhetoric pervading these large-scale missions to connect higher education with the community is consistent with that used by the leadership of individual institutions, adopting a moral tone to invoke a service heritage essential to good citizenship. In his formal statement, Governor Davis argues that requiring community service for graduation will instill a "service ethic" that leads students "to understand, as generations before them did, the importance of contributing to their community" (Weiss, 1999). He also frames service as a duty for students whose education is, after all, subsidized by California taxpayers. California's service-learning community is taking advantage of the momentum behind this impending mandate to expand their programs—as has been the case in other large-scale service initiatives around the country. But service-learning advocates also recognize the pitfalls inherent in institutionalized service, not the least of which is the fact that "forced volunteering" is not only ironic but has the potential to induce negative attitudes toward the communities it means to serve.

Educators interviewed for *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice, and Future*, report that the most advantageous institutionalization generally occurs not from without (as from public policy windfalls) but rather from within the institution, through the commitment of individual faculty earned over time (Stanton et al., 1999). This grassroots approach is consistent with the "movement" metaphor used to describe service-learning as a phenomenon within education that garners advocates philosophically as well as pedagogically. In an essay comparing service-learning to a kindred interdisciplinary movement, *Writing Across the Curriculum*, Thomas Deans notes that the strategy of gaining adherents one by one, from department to department, enables WAC to seed itself as useful pedagogy. Deans recommends a "service-learning in the disciplines" approach to institutionalization that builds upon the enthusiasm and successes of early adopters (1997, p. 35). Demonstrating the disciplinary value of service-learning has been a clear strategy for its supporters within the last three years, through intensive publication efforts (such as the American Association of Higher Education's eighteen-volume interdisciplinary series) and leadership roles within disciplinary organizations (for example, the Conference on College Composi-

tion and Communication's National Service-Learning Committee). Institutionalizing within the disciplines could enable service-learning to retain its vital network and movement ethos, thereby defining its own academic role.

Professionalizing Service: A Scholarly Priority

Faculty involvement is essential to any institution's service mission. Yet the term *service* itself has become problematic for many considering whether to deepen their professional service through such opportunities as service-learning. The most vaguely defined of faculty expectations, service may encompass everything from committee work to walk-a-thons. So perhaps it should come as no surprise that service is rarely given priority in hiring, tenure, or promotion decisions. Within the academic curriculum, the *service course* is a departmental contribution to general education, an obligation frequently delegated to low-status instructors. At many institutions, service-learning pedagogies are being used to enliven these required courses (particularly composition and writing-intensive courses in the disciplines), yet while the resultant learning experiences are often quite successful, some faculty are reluctant to participate in what amounts to the ultimate service course—a general education class associated with soft yet labor-intensive learning. While it is true that service-learning can be comparatively “messy” work—inasmuch as instructors and students must adapt to logistical and cultural factors beyond the classroom, rolling up their sleeves (literally or metaphorically) to engage in community problem-solving—the real service stigma derives from the concept of service as an unscholarly or *subscholarly* task.

Elevating the status of service-learning is inseparable from the project of re-framing professional service in all segments of higher education. Successfully defining and rewarding the work of “the service-learning specialist” within individual departments is most likely to segregate this research and teaching from traditionally valued scholarship rather than invite faculty to imagine the disciplinary and interdisciplinary possibilities for activist and experiential inquiry. Furthermore, distinguishing service-learning achievements as separate but equal scholarly contributions reinforces the sense that this field is an educational fad rather than an evolutionary (or revolutionary) development. In his call for a reconfiguration of research, pedagogy, and civic life Ernest Boyer identifies a core problem with the academic concept of service:

[A]ll too frequently, service means not doing scholarship but doing good. To be considered *scholarship*, service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity.

Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities. (1990, p. 22)

The academy's dissociation of service from the field of serious intellectual endeavor can make the term *service-learning* seem oxymoronic. Nonetheless, the professionalized service-as-scholarship Boyer describes is precisely the work of a successful service-learning instructor. He calls this kind of service the *scholarship of application*, a rigorous form of applied scholarship that engages consequential social problems and advances human knowledge through an interactive process of meaning-making, such as occurs when "serving clients in psychotherapy, shaping public policy, creating an architectural design, or working with the public schools" (p. 23).

Whereas academe has, in the recent past, underestimated much service and applied scholarship as work wherein knowledge is merely bestowed or utilized rather than generated, Boyer's scholarship of application integrates both as essential for intellectual and social progress. This redefinition must not be viewed as simply a rhetorical maneuver. On the contrary, his assessment of higher education's ability to contribute significantly to the modern world rests squarely on institutional willingness to recognize and reward a broad range of scholarship in which theoretical and applied inquiry are interconnected, not hierarchically or conceptually separate projects. The key term enabling this reconfiguration is *scholarly rigor*, which is upheld through the establishment of standards that make it possible for different kinds of scholarship to identify the intellectual contributions of their work. The completion of the study, published as *Scholarship Assessed* (Glassick, Huber, Maeroff, 1997), outlines a cross-disciplinary approach for documenting and evaluating applied scholarship within a dynamic cycle of discovery, integration of knowledge, teaching, and service—all of which are enacted as forms of socially responsible inquiry. The Boyer study presents an exciting opportunity for service-learning to craft an institutional identity as an intellectual and pedagogical infrastructure for this professional work.

Other professional groups doing intra-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary service, such as the Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) and the sixteen professional associations represented in *The Disciplines Speak: Rewarding the Scholarly, Professional, and Creative Work of Faculty*, have already drawn upon the Boyer study to help institutions assess and reward their scholarship (Diamond & Adam, 1995; Council of Writing Program Administrators, 1998). WPA's "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration" is a noteworthy argument for two reasons. First, in calling for a clear division between "administrivia"

and applied scholarship, it demonstrates how service to the local institution (through, for example, the development of an assessment tool for freshman composition) can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in a professional field of study. Second, the document presents examples of intellectual work that are cross-disciplinary and therefore relevant to faculty doing applied scholarship that ventures outside the conventional scope of professional activity, such as curriculum development and outcomes assessment (familiar work for the service-learning organizer).

While the WPA document accomplishes a redefinition of professional service-as-scholarship, it is only partially useful for the service-learning educator because its intention is to assess service done primarily within the institution rather than service extending off campus. In a recent essay, Ellen Cushman proposes an *activist research* methodology for intellectual work anchored in the community beyond campus and *reaching into* the institution through student learning and the advancement of disciplinary knowledge informed by community research (an inversion of the conventional community outreach concept that has disciplinary knowledge emanating from the institution) (1999, pp. 332-335). In her model, service-learning scholars collaborate with local community members to identify and engage immediate concerns (for example, literacy practices among children) that could be better understood through research (p. 334). The instructor tailors her service-learning curriculum as well as her disciplinary research to advance understanding in a way that is significant as scholarship and meaningful as community-based collaborative inquiry. Cushman explains that such an approach enables research, teaching, and service to be jointly recognized and rewarded, as follows:

The research contributes

- to teaching by informing a curriculum that responds to both students' and community members' needs, and
- to service by indicating emerging problems in the community which the students and curriculum address.

The teaching contributes

- to research by generating fieldnotes, papers, taped interactions and other materials, and
- to service by facilitating the community organization's programmatic goals with the volunteer work.

The service contributes

- to research by addressing political and social issues salient in everyday lived struggles, and
- to teaching by offering students and professors avenues for testing the utility of previous scholarship in light of community members' daily lives and cultural values. (p. 331)

Cushman's model is consistent with the prophetic pragmatism and problem-solving logic used at the Community Literacy Center, but may prove even more useful to individual educators wanting to channel their research and teaching into a civic project apart from an institutionalized program.

Cushman casts these activist researchers as the new "public intellectuals"—scholars for whom "the public" is not merely an audience for popularized scholarship, but rather a local community of people who share an interest in the work and in the outcomes of a social research project. Redefining this role is important because it bears on a conventional notion of professional service in academe. Generally speaking, disciplinary outreach is either the work of under-rewarded groups (such as a department's service course cadre or service-learning team) or the work of celebrated individuals who are attaining visibility outside their scholarly field through coverage in the mainstream media. The latter is the customary figure of the public intellectual, someone such as Stanley Fish or Henry Louis Gates, Jr. who, Cushman notes, has the "implied goal of affecting policy and decision making" through his writing, but typically addresses an exclusive public of educated readers and does so as an expert bestowing knowledge rather than as a partner in inquiry (1999, p. 330). This image of the public intellectual overshadows the socially significant work of scholars operating within the public at large, and unfortunately reinforces the institutional practice of recognizing primarily individual, rather than collaborative, scholarship that speaks *to* or *about* social exigencies without engaging them directly, much less locally.

Because the intellectual work of service-learning has only recently begun to gain attention within the disciplines, faculty venturing into service-learning expect mainly to enrich their teaching while continuing to conceive of their scholarly activity in very different terms. Although not all scholars will be attracted to Cushman's portrait of the public intellectual, it does raise important considerations for the way academic ideals frame and constrain our disciplinary work, and it invites us to seek out civic applications that were previously overlooked. Service-learning provides an opportunity for faculty to become familiar with community concerns pedagogically, and through this experience begin to recognize opportunities for community research in their disciplines. For example, the Management instructor whose students are engaged in developing project planning documents with a local non-profit agency may begin collaborative inquiry into the way such documents affect interpersonal communication between full-time staff and part-time volunteers. Service-learning can help the academy refine its understanding of the reciprocal nature of community-engagement, including an awareness that Boyerian applied scholarship will require not just community interaction but *community*

interdependence—an interdependence that is as intellectual as it is material (Cushman, 1996; Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Teaching Service: To Hell with Good Intentions?

A central concern for service-learning pedagogy is the way students and their teachers should position themselves in relation to the community being “served.” Institutional rhetoric and policy that configure service as a social mission or moral duty encourage students to view their work as *charity*—even when their work is called *learning*. Charity has become a dubious term in the service-learning literature because it points to civic action that reinforces customary beliefs and power relationships between privileged institutions (and their representatives) and the general public. Colleges and universities have programs of community *outreach*, community *leadership*, and community *service*—all of which connote that the institution is the primary agent of change while the community beyond campus is the passive, lucky recipient of that change. While these programs often do good work and have good intentions, they can give students an incomplete understanding of complex social problems by, for example, defining community needs in terms of what students have to offer (Eby, 2000, p. 4) and replicating social inequities (Herzberg, 1997, 58-59; Flower, 1997, 96).

In his infamous statement opposing the paternalism and presumptuousness of America’s educational outreach organizations operating in “underdeveloped” areas, Ivan Illich describes the summer service of college students in Mexico as a “benevolent invasion” (1977, p. 315). Reminding educators that “the road to hell is paved with good intentions” he explains that such missions are typically far more beneficial for the student than the community, and operate through arrogance and naivete. “The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can, and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants ‘develop’ by spending a few months in their villages” (p. 316). The fact that service experiences are more likely to transform and enlighten the student than the community is not a reason for abandoning this work; however, it is a justification for critically examining and revising institutional expectations for service-learning pedagogies (Eby, 2000).

In his study of the three basic models of service-learning pedagogy (writing *for* the community, writing *about* the community, and writing *with* the community), Deans explains how the aims and outcomes of each model are shaped by the institutional relationships that sustain them (1998, p. 23). When a student’s service centers on producing documents on behalf of the community, her work is generally structured by the instructor’s relationship with a contact person at a non-profit agency, and her texts are

produced to help the agency address a community need defined by the community agency. Experiencing local concerns from the agency's point of view and generating documents in the agency's discourse can broaden the student's perspective as it trains her in workplace writing practices (1998, p. 103). Yet one risk of this approach is that although students are encouraged to reflect on their community experience they may not have an adequate opportunity to examine the wider range of factors contributing to the conditions they observe. In contrast, the "writing about" approach focuses student research and writing on the social context itself. The primary institutional relationship in this model is between the instructor and the community site contact person, who makes it possible for students to undertake a community service experience that fits within their academic schedules (1998, pp. 135-136). Social inquiry is conducted mainly in the classroom, where students are encouraged to use academic discourse and reflective essays to critically examine the community concerns engaged at a service site. While the writing, research, and service varies greatly among the institutions using this model, a common goal of this approach is "critical thinking"—a buzzword in general education curricula describing something as ambitious as sustained social critique or as modest as the assignment of an analytical report or journal entry. The service experience is constructed as both an extension of the classroom and a text for critical writing and thinking.

As discussed earlier in this essay, the Community Literacy Center is a well known example of Deans's third service-learning model, writing *with* the community. The institutional relationship typical of this approach pairs an academic department or disciplinary program with a community service organization. The coordinated efforts of the two organizations enable academic and community participants to join collaborative problem-solving projects such as Community Problem-Solving Dialogues (CPSDs) that require a new kind of discourse (called a *hybrid discourse*) to effectively communicate the diverse perspectives at the table. Student work is centered at the community organization, where they perform not service but *inquiry*, developing texts alongside others mutually invested in the outcome of the work (Deans, 1998, p. 180; Flower, 1997, pp. 104-112). In terms of service-learning pedagogy, the distinctive feature of this kind of program is its more thorough replacement of the charity paradigm with that of *reciprocity*, wherein knowledge and expertise are continually exchanged, and every participant is encouraged to be conscious of her roles as teacher and learner, giver and receiver (Cushman, 1996, p. 16; Stanton et al., pp. 3-4). As a guiding pedagogical and social principle, reciprocity is the current god term of service-learning rhetoric, presiding over descriptions of an ideal civic pedagogy.

Of course, once any pedagogical concept or model attains such status it must also attract greater scrutiny. In this case, the main disadvantage of a reciprocal “writing with” pedagogy is that it may not be a feasible approach for institutions whose service component is poorly organized or under-supported (in terms of faculty, site contacts, and other resources), or for solo instructors unable to shoulder the logistical and administrative burdens of this approach. Also, a rhetorical pitfall worth considering is that by casting *charity* as something to be avoided in service-learning pedagogy, service-learning advocates risk detaching their mission from a rich tradition of institutional outreach that is in many respects nurturing the development of service-learning programs.

The challenge to the would-be service-learning instructor is not to find a way to make the “writing with” model fit within her pedagogy, community, or institution, but to develop an approach that makes sense within those environments. Successful models abound, and tend to be those that cultivate rich disciplinary and community experiences suited to their particular environment (Deans, 1998; Morton, 1995; Zlotkowski, 1998). Keith Morton notes that service-learning pedagogies often fail to achieve their academic and civic goals when instructors allow a gap to widen “between the content and outcomes of our teaching, on the one hand, and the type of service in which we engage on the other” (1995, p. 31). Because one clearly desirable outcome for service-learning is academic scholarship, it is worthwhile to consider how the discovery and application of disciplinary knowledge may be achieved within any model. This reflection is a preliminary step in cultivating service-learning as applied scholarship—aligning pedagogical and professional work with its disciplinary reward system. The following examples briefly illustrate this *service-learning-as-applied-scholarship-in-the-disciplines*:

- English scholars at Carnegie Mellon University team teach a seminar in Community Literacy and Intercultural Interpretation in which students join faculty and inner-city teenagers for collaborative inquiry into multicultural discourse and community problem-solving.
- Students and faculty in the Nursing Program at the University of Pennsylvania work with other local citizens to research and develop health improvement curricula and peer education activities.
- Educators in such fields as Agriculture, Community Development, and Organizational Management engage in *participatory action research*, another form of applied scholarship that involves students and instructors in (often writing-intensive) projects that address local community needs and

generate research and artifacts usable by both town and gown.

It is significant that such approaches are often named *inquiry* and *action research* rather than service or experience even though social change and collaborative problem-solving are hallmarks of this work. This rhetorical emphasis redirects our attention from the cultivation of students-as-citizens to that of students-as-scholars. While a danger of student exploitation clearly exists, service-learning principles and practices can enable students to experience and reflect upon the interconnectedness of the academy and the community—and their contributions to both (Connor-Linton, 1995, p. 110).

Conclusion: Redefining the Institution

In this essay I've attempted to trace some of the key terms and ideas emerging from the pursuit of civic-engagement in higher education, explaining how this rhetoric is sometimes at odds with itself as educators work to realize their own ideals of community cooperation. As Lillian Bridwell-Bowles points out, the pupil most transformed by service-learning is likely to be the institution itself which, through collaboration with its neighbors and stakeholders, may at last realize a clearer purpose and audience for its work (1997, p. 27).

What other outcomes might we expect for an institution schooled by a radical democratic or experiential pedagogy? One worth cultivating is *democratic deliberation*, collaborative problem-solving through rhetoric that is not merely persuasive but “*dialogical* (to encourage the give and take among deliberators), *inquisitive and informative* (to bring about mutual understanding), *accommodative* (to assure that those understandings are incorporated into public debate), and *critical* (to promote critical awareness of the deliberative process)” (Burns, 1999, p. 129; emphasis added). By blurring the boundaries between campus and community, service-learning alters the identity of the institution, which is no longer self-contained and selectively “reaching out” to community audiences, but is hearing and engaging community voices and perspectives that were within the institution all along—and some that were not. This discourse is an important step in developing *deliberative institutions*, environments that help people engage in democratic deliberation by “allow[ing] for the equalities of access, standing, and opportunity, and for the freedoms of expression, conscience, and association” (p. 134).

The Community Problem-Solving Dialogue at Pittsburgh's Community Literacy Center is such a deliberative institution: concerned citizens cross conventional social boundaries such as age and race to exchange stories and expertise, generate understanding, and collaborate for change.

This public space is fostered by a university-community collaborative committed to intercultural inquiry and problem-solving that fulfills the educational and civic missions of both organizations. As we consider the proper *institutional* identity for service-learning, a shift in terminology may be in order, defining not only its location within an academic organizational chart but also its position as a catalyst for virtual deliberative institutions constructed by public interaction: sites of real community engagement composed wherever people bridge differences and deliberate to achieve understanding.

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