Neumann College

Learning Outcomes in College Academic Service-Learning Experiences

So Much May Factor into Assessing Such Experiences

Gail Shanley Corso
5/18/2008

Courses across the curriculum present possibilities for a range of academic service-learning experiences. Often faculty members discuss academic service learning experiences as if each had similar learning outcomes. However, such experiences vary, not only by how the student responds emotionally, but equally as important, by how students achieve goals, and how instructors identify learning outcomes for each experience. What models are available to begin to understand the range of performance, the kinds of engagement, and the quality of the interactions as they relate to course goals for learning, students' prior knowledge and maturity?

In higher education, we have yet to agree upon methodologies for assessing the quality of academic service learning for Core and major program courses. I have heard differing views about what counts as academic service learning, such as whether or not to value practicum experiences in education courses or placement into non-profit sites where the environment and site clients appear more privileged than those at other sites. Even comments reflect on how complicated assessment becomes when a student does not initiate communication with site clients, or how a student who very much appreciated the experience does not complete significant tasks well. I have heard many other variations on reflections about academic service learning experiences, yet few faculty members or students frame the observations using any methodology to acknowledge a range to complexity for various academic service learning experiences. Furthermore, faculty members neglect to use assessments that acknowledge the range to the experience for cognitive complexity, the student's affective orientation initially compared to at the end of the experience, the range to communication required, the ability to solve a problem, or

to negotiate across differences of opinion. How we measure learning and growth for the individual and how we determine the success of such academic service learning experiences warrant our consideration.

Measuring Cognitive and Affective Growth of the Learner

Rather than simply making available a list of possible academic service learning experiences, I recommend the use at any college of a system based upon Bloom's Taxonomy for situating experiences into categories that reflect varied learning outcomes and values; additionally, a model that shows a range to competence with communication for the kinds of knowledge required and the processes engaged in needs to be made transparent. For any academic service learning experience, the relationship of the learner to the academic service-learning experience may be shaped by prior experiences and knowledge, his or her emotional or affective connection to the community and its values, and his or her communicative competence. By using Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive and also affective educational objectives, the instructor can begin to describe cognitive processes which the learner may engage in as various combinations of literate practices: knowing, comprehending, applying, analyzing and synthesizing, and evaluating or judging, and creating. (See Table 1. Modification of Bloom's Taxonomy for Cognitive complexity.)

Table 1. Modification of Bloom's Taxonomy for Cognitive Complexity. Modified from Encyclopedia of Educational Technology http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Admin/Nav.htm

The Knowledge Dimension	Cognitive Process: Remember	Cognitive Process: Understand	Cognitive Process: Apply	Cognitive Process: Analyze	Cognitive Process: Evaluate	Cognitive Process: Create
Facts						
Concepts						
Procedures						
Meta-Cognitive Reflection						

Similarly, the instructor might perceive the learner's relationship to the community and role in the academic service-learning project through another model that shows stages of affective response, ranging from receiving, responding, valuing, organizing a value into his or her beliefs, or finally, being characterized by a value (Krathwol, Bloom, and Masia). Understanding how values may be characterized allows the learner to situate his or her own intended growth as an outcome of a service learning experience, and the instructor can then best assess learning outcomes during and after the experience. (See Table 2 for understanding stages of commitment for the Affective and Cognitive Domains.)

Table 2. Modification of Understanding STAGES of COMMITMENT for the **Affective and Cognitive Domains**

LEVEL	**DEFINITION of Affective behavior**	**BEHAVIOR toward Service-Learning Shown through Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Competencies**
1. Receiving	Being aware of or attending to something in the environment.	Person listens to or learns new **knowledge**. *Communicating about*
2. Responding	Showing some new behaviors as a result of an experience.	Person considers new experience in relation to existing knowledge and beliefs, attempting to **comprehend**. *Communicating about*
3. Valuing	Showing some definite involvement or commitment.	Person begins to consider how to **apply** this concept. *Communicating for*
4. Organizing	Integrating a new value into one's general set of values, indicating how it fits into one's general priorities.	Person **analyzes** experience and decides to **synthesize** it into one's understanding or belief system. *Communicating for and/or with*
5. Being Characterized by the Value	Acting consistently with the new value.	One has **evaluated** the experience and has thoroughly committed to its values and meanings in a personal **synthesis.** *Communicating with*

Adapted from W. Huitt's web site "Krathwol et al.'s Taxonomy of the Affective Domain" Educational Psychology Interactive: Taxonomy of the Affective Domain. Revised April 2001. Accessed 15 August 2003. http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/interact.html.

During an academic service learning experience, the learner might evidence a combination of these affective responses, depending upon the nature of the task, his or her role in the project, and any prior beliefs and experiences. Understanding such

frameworks allows the student as well and the instructor a lens through which to perceive experiences and to characterize assessments.

Understanding the Affective Range to Academic Service Learning Projects

To be more goal-oriented, one envisions the end outcome for each learning experience. Ideally for an academic service-learning experience, participants would envision a sense of reciprocity; each participant—student, site's clients, site coordinator, instructor, and the college program-- would experience the satisfaction of a task's completion, and equally as important, would feel valued and respected while working toward completing the goal(s), during and after completion of the activity, tasks, or ongoing service related to achieving the goal(s).

Ongoing communication seems integral to facilitating the success of service-learning experiences. Thomas Deans in *Writing and Community Action* describes how reciprocity can be attained when he identifies a cooperative spirit in the language of a "partnership" wherein "all sides give and receive, all open themselves to learning and growth." Such "mature social action," Deans explains, "is built on such presumptions of equality and exchange" (254). Unlike an act of volunteerism, and unlike a technical service rendered for a client, the service-learning project values human dignity, and by extension, mutuality and care for one another. To achieve this sense of reciprocity, each participant, including the student, would work toward creating and maintaining a sense or culture of respect with each person feeling valued. With a clear understanding of the purpose for a service-learning project, the student would work toward defining his or her role, and processes for enacting it, within the organization's culture. For the best alignment of need to a human resource, the student would select a service-learning

project with a role that he or she could assume. As the student better internalizes the scope of his or her role, the varied aims of spoken and written discourse within a specific community would become more evident. This process of achieving "reciprocity" might best be understood as an ongoing outcome of a service-learning project.

Each person's "primary orientation" to the service project and the student's prior knowledge and experiences communicating (speaking and writing) with others need to be considered for the end outcome of "reciprocity" to be felt. Keith Morton in "The Irony of Service: Charity, Project and Social Change in Service-Learning" presents a model for understanding how low to high investment in relationships and low to high concern with root causes of problems interrelate in determining one's orientation to the three paradigms for service-learning—charity, project, or social change (21). This model breaks from a developmental or hierarchical model of service-learning projects to one that sees possibility for a participant's deep or shallow involvement for each paradigm of service-learning. Morton challenges a developmental view of service-learning projects that move in complexity on a continuum from charity as a primary motive to project engagement, and then to social change or advocacy, with advocacy quite frequently perceived as the most ideal form of service-learning experience. In Morton's model for understanding the three paradigms of service-learning experience, he argues that each involves "a world view, a problem statement and an agenda for change" with a "thick" or "thin" rendition, depending upon a participant's "primary orientation" from which he or she acts (28-29). This model attempts to understand the transformative possibilities of service-learning experiences across each of the paradigms—charity, project, or social change— with two critical aspects of the experience considered: investment in

relationships and concern with root causes of a problem. Morton begins to show how values may vary within the three paradigms for service-learning experiences. As investment in relationship building would vary, so too, would skill level with needed communication processes except in cases with an agenda to change the culture of a community.

Morton's model, while powerful because it analyzes values or investment in the experience, still does not describe the range of communication characterizing an investment in relationships and the range to values for describing stages of commitment. Its strength resides, however, in recognizing the variation for investment in relationships and, too, variation in concern for changing causes of problems. Equipped with such lenses for understanding the complexity of performances in academic service-learning experiences, an instructor or a program coordinator can begin to understand why certain individuals reflect upon their experiences with a greater sense of reciprocity than others do, or how site coordinators evaluate performances by students perhaps more critically than instructors do, or other such divergent responses to academic service-learning experiences. These differences in perception relate to the student's orientation, prior knowledge, and affective response.

Those of us interested in understanding how to assess the range of performances, and too, to prepare students for such diverse interactions, or to negotiate with students their placement into experiences that align best with their orientations to service or personal goals, may want to consider how theories for cognitive and affective learning relate to each student's experience, and, too, how the range to spoken and written communication gets more complicated as the student assumes a more intense role

emotionally and cognitively within a community. A student best equipped with strong interpersonal communication skills might be frustrated if placed into an experience that little values investment in relationships rather than just getting an assigned task done.

Competence with Writing Processes and Rhetorical Knowledge Related to Academic Service Learning Experiences

Practices fairly common in professional, client-centered, or technical writing classes often require understandings of audience and context to identify strategies for communicating well *about*, *for* or *with* the clients served. To develop this kind of rhetorical understanding, an analysis of audience needs often is made explicit as a focus of inquiry in assignments for constructed or real audiences or clients. Understanding audience figures into rhetorical choices a communicator would make, including choices for service-learning experiences. With Deans' model of writing in academic service-learning contexts for non-profit agencies, he explains the importance of understanding three different aims of written discourse in which audience becomes a defining feature.

The student writer can write *about* the service-learning project, and by so doing, distance himself/herself emotionally from individuals at the site, yet complete needed research about issues and learn a bit about the agency and himself/herself through the process. While this research may broaden the student's understanding about an issue, the student's role in such a project seems to allow for a certain emotional distance from taking a pro-active stance; writing *about* seems more learner-centered than client-centered. Deans describes this context for writing as one that allows the student to write "about community outreach experiences, local community problems, and social justice concerns" (24). For example, a student tutoring children at a community site may write

about personal experiences or observations in weekly journal entries *about* learning to interact with each, or *about* what was learned in this other educational environment. At the end of the experience, the student might write a reflective essay *about* what he or she learned from engaging in this service-learning experience. Writing *about* may be perceived as the kind of reflective writing that captures the student's understanding and response in this role where he or she has interacted with low stakes personal investment into relationships. The student's persona in writing remains that of the student as a learner, an academic engaged in learning more *about* self and self in relation to others.

For the second aim of writing in an academic service-learning context at a non-profit agency, the student writer, Deans explains, writes *for* the site or its constituents. By so doing, the student may become situated within an organizational culture, attempting to understand more clearly the client's values, the organization's mission, the culture's preferred discourse, and the representative venues for effectively communicating the agency's messages. By having the student writing real-world documents *for* real audiences and performing tasks within the organization, such as creating newsletters, web pages, presentations, advertisements, public service announcements, public relations messages, reports, and other kinds of professional documents, the student, too, engages in varied interpersonal and group dynamics processes. The student in this professional role seems to project an identity that is more professional than that of the student writing *about* the experience. Here the student may perform across a range of transactional communication processes: integrates research into written products, follows discourse conventions, applies theory, communicates within an organizational culture, cooperates with others on solving problems, collaborates on

completion of tasks or activities, and in short, engages in ongoing communication to achieve the agreed-upon goal(s) or complete the task. In this role, the student writer takes on a responsibility as a professional communicator and engages in transactional processes to write well *for* the community.

The student in this role is more integrated into the community of practice. Writing in this context is more of a hybrid for both instructor and community site coordinator or members. This kind of writing is characterized by authors of *Worlds Apart* as having "a double social motive, one served by the rhetorical exigencies of school work, the other by the exigencies of the workplace" (209). In this role, the student performing the academic service-learning experience would need greater primary orientation to transactional communication processes and the rhetorical structures for appropriate communications and discourse conventions within the community.

While the student may complete the tasks well, how the student responds affectively to the agency, its clients, and a cause, overall, may or may not show such high stakes investment. In other words, the student's meta-cognitive awareness may suggest values that do not align with the agency. While the student may have completed the task well, he or she may have assumed a perfunctory attitude toward the project, distancing himself/herself from the clients and the goals of the organization, or vice versa. It seems critical that for such an experience to elicit reciprocity, not only communicative competence, but also, the values of the learner need to be considered before such placement at an agency.

Deans describes the third aim of writing in a non-profit agency as that which situates the student as writing *with* members at the site "to raise awareness of or to

address community problems" (24). The student as a social agent of change in such an experience is collaborating in a range of activities that requires skills with negotiation, and to a certain extent, understanding the role of advocacy for social change. The kind of writing when the student is writing *with* the agency or individuals from it assumes that the student as social agent for change can manage working with individuals within a group, can negotiate conflicts when they arise, can and wants to advocate for social change, and most significantly, can collaborate with members of the community on evolving written documents.

This third aim of writing necessitates that the student exercise transformational leadership skills—communicating across the interpersonal and intrapersonal, identifying problems, and resolving conflicts. It also assumes that the student has a high degree of personal interest in the project with values in total alignment with those of the service-learning experience. This kind of writing, Morton's social change paradigm for service-learning, occurs "when otherwise ordinary people find ways to bring their values, their actions and their world into closer alignment with each other" (28). This kind of service-learning experience requires that individuals value and demonstrate high degrees of skill with relationship building.

Writing *with* and communicating *with* the agency would require a primary orientation of a student who is self directed, responsible, one who functions well with a high degree of freedom, one who is oriented toward transformational leadership. In a community where advocacy for change is valued highly, the strong support of all team members is important, and past expertise in areas may be called upon to effect changes. Typically more than originally set as a goal of the experience occurs, and participants

may be inspired by interactions (Lumsford and Lumsford 264, 267). The students drawn to such engagements, as characterized by Morton's model, might be depicted as those both highly invested in developing relationships and highly concerned for identifying and solving root causes of problems.

For each of these varied aims of writing (*about, for, and with*), when a student is situated in a non-profit agency for an academic service-learning project, he or she needs to understand expectations for the written genre, and equally as important, how to apply spoken communication processes to effect completion of tasks, to maintain a sense of reciprocity through transactional communication processes, and to understand his or her role when writing *about*, *for*, or *with* the community and its members. These varied aims delineate the relationship the student/writer in each role creates with the clients (audience) at the site and/or with the site coordinator, or with the targeted audience, thus working to define the structure and rhetorical choices for written products. It might be wise for instructors to consider these three aims of writing in relation to communications competence to better prepare students to perform such roles in different contexts, and to instruct students how to communicate, cooperate, and collaborate in diverse contexts, striving to sustain a sense of "reciprocity" i.e., respect, for all involved.

By using these frameworks for understanding the complexity of academic service-learning projects, I do not wish to demean those service projects that show a learner engaged in a process of trying to understand another by writing *about* or communicating *about* the experience as opposed to his or her co-authoring a policy at a teen center, or another such community-based project where the student is writing *with* the community members, or taking the lead in other ways; rather, I wish to make explicit how certain

experiences require more complex interactions that in most situations, may necessitate formal introduction to a range of communication, such as critical questioning, attentive listening skills, group dynamics, transactional and transformational task processes, and conflict negotiation, to achieve positive outcomes and the ultimate outcome—a sense of "reciprocity." Attention to spoken communication processes as well as varied purposes for professional writing and communication processes may work toward advancing this sense of reciprocity if the student understands the role he or she is engaged in, and **values the goal(s) of the project.**

Communication Processes for Academic Service Learning Processes

For the perceived range to academic service-learning projects, many require communication competence. Some require students to communicate with the clients or the site coordinator to some extent, and in other experiences, to demonstrate ability to communicate within a group, or even to assume leadership roles. For all such experiences that require students to interact with others beyond the classroom context, students may need greater understanding of self, personal values, self in relation to others, orientation to new contexts and professional roles to be assumed, along with an orientation on how to solve problems by assessing the nature of specific tasks. Some academic service learning experiences require the students to move beyond understanding the needs of others and to take action. To complete projects or to effect change, a service-learning experience may necessitate understanding the organizational culture, and an ability with language to talk with people from other backgrounds, to negotiate differences, or simply to listen to or begin to understand another's values. Even more challenging, an academic service learning experience may warrant that the student

empathize with others whose beliefs may be in conflict with his or hers, or the experience may challenge the student's prior belief.

This is not a complete overview of the range to communication that academic service-learning experiences may set in motion, but it begins to portray the importance of group communication processes as one factor among several to consider for facilitating placement of students into successful academic service-learning projects that are equally meaningful and supportive of learning. Correlating the goals of an academic service learning experience using Bloom's chart of cognitive and affective complexity with knowledge of the student's prior experiences and knowledge serves as a good starting point for placement into an academic service learning experience. Aligning the student's goals, the course goals, and the site's needs also should be considered. For each of these service-learning activities, completion of the project or task may require that the student participate beyond regularly scheduled classroom contact hours and learn how to cooperate with others whose time needs vary significantly from the student's schedule. If the goals of the experience, however, align with the goals of the course and ideally, the student reflects positively upon his goals and values in relation to this personal investment of time, emotions, intellect, and energy, as does the supervisor, and the client, the experience has possible transformative possibilities.

A service-learning experience may situate the learner in a professional role and context like that of a student in a co-op experience often perceived as a transitional experience between college and a professional career. While some students succeed in academic service-learning performances, many need greater introduction to such non-academic roles. As a novice professional in a context apart from the classroom, "learning

to manage the relationships that enable fuller participation in such communications, moreover, may be one of the crucial transitional learning tasks" that a student engages in (Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Pare 226). Contexts may vary from concrete experiences like listening to a presentation about an alternative healthy lifestyle choice and acting upon ideas presented by weeding a local community garden for one or two hours, to those that are more abstract like working for 45 hours or more during the semester toward institutionalizing a more sustainable recycling program at a college. The range of complexity to communication, emotional connection, the intellectual involvement, and the time dedicated to such projects need to be considered when goals for such experiences are negotiated by the student, instructor and site coordinator.

In addition to Morton's model for understanding contexts in the three paradigms for service-learning experiences, and a range to communication processes and writing aims, it would be wise to examine other theories about the learner. An understanding of Bloom's taxonomy for cognitive competencies and Krathwol, Bloom, and Masia's taxonomy of learning objectives for the *affective* range could serve as good starting points for understanding varied service-learning projects in relation to the learner's maturity and the role the learner will perform at an agency.

An understanding of the student's stage of commitment and knowledge of communication processes prior to engagement with a service-learning experience could allow instructors occasion to orient the student to an experience or project, negotiate with the student placement into an experience where the student shows concern and has demonstrated basic understandings of the kinds of communication processes the role may warrant. After the experience, learning can be measured by determining the range of

performance to complete a task, engage in a process or activity, and by assessing the sense of reciprocity felt by all involved in the process.

The Social Construction of Knowledge and Composition Theory

Models of cooperation and collaboration are integral to understanding a process approach to teaching writing. In composition studies, literature about collaborative models for writing assume different functions for the group with members playing different roles. Spear describes the occasional peer feedback group, Moffett writes about "the awareness group," Strang delineates the workshop led regularly by student authors, Elbow explains how to create the teacherless classroom, Hawkins introduces the pedagogy of the "parceled classroom," Lunsford and Ede recognize the role of students as co-authors, Bruffee identifies the value of student negotiations as they construct understandings by moving toward consensus, while Trimbur recognizes the importance of acknowledging "dissensus" in groups. Corso recognizes that each of these composition theorists who has written about the function of collaborative activities challenges the notion of writing as an isolated act, valuing collaborative group activities for their potential to activate learners (Corso 12).

Other models for collaborative communication techniques in composition studies are evidenced in the literature about peer feedback response (Belanoff and Elbow), effective peer- tutoring sessions (McAndrew and Reigstad), and effective use of technology to expand communication in threaded discussions (Reiss). However, writing instructors often show little understanding of how speech communication processes underscore group task and team processes that work well when teaching students to write. Instructors, too, in writing classes may complain that a student does not succeed when

working in groups to provide feedback or to complete an aspect of a collaborative task. If the instructor does not provide needed instruction, or give concrete direction, a student may not comprehend how to complete a task. He or she may be unsure of the expected role and unaware of the group's purpose for working on a task. The student or group may lack primary orientation to the group's task and the expected outcome.

Similar complaints may surface when a student engages in an academic service-learning project, especially when writing *for* and *with* the community members at a non-profit agency or organization. An instructor might expect a student to take the lead in effecting change, transforming an environment through working *with* community members, but in fact, the student might be disadvantaged by not having learned how to interact with others in such situations, or how to co-author. Or a student might be disadvantaged writing *for* a community if he or she has not been properly introduced to the preferred methods for communicating at the agency, as well as the preferred discourse conventions or professional genres for documents. In each case, the faculty member may not have considered how well the student is prepared to or oriented to react to individuals outside of the classroom or, for that matter, in their small groups in the classroom to engage in collaborative task processes, and too, how well they can manage a task that might be more abstract for solving problems. Without first considering the range to the communication for a task to be completed, a well-intentioned instructor may be integrating service-learning experiences at risk of creating dissonance, or even failure, for its participants.

It seems that basic understandings of speech communication processes needed for success in different kinds of interactions are not adequately introduced into courses;

instructors may set in motion more complex transactional task processes and transformational social agency tasks for students to engage in and write *about, for* or *with* the community members without the instructor's first having considered the student's understanding of (affective development, prior knowledge, and communicative competence) what is expected and the role he or she may be expected to perform. When instructors have not considered the range to communication that any collaborative writing task or service-learning project may warrant, the quality of each may be compromised seriously.

Intercultural Communication in Community Service Learning

Some instructors with interests in community literacy, however, write positively about complex transformational task processes that their students in graduate level and upper-level writing and rhetoric classes engage in. Linda Flower in "Partners in Inquiry: A Logic for Community Outreach" describes a model of communication for service projects that include community outreach. In it she emphasizes collaborative activities that place students in ongoing focused dialogue with clients at the community site. The kind of writing in such a service-learning project would fit into Deans's third category of writing *with* community members. Such a role situates the student in a relationship with the community that engages him or her in group communication processes, professional writing to communicate about, for, and with the project, and negotiation across differences. Flower's "community problem-solving dialogue" has as its rhetorical purpose to "put course-relevant problems on the table and let students and community members seek out, interpret, and negotiate culturally diverse perspectives on live issues and their human consequences" (as qtd. In Adler-Kassner, Crooks, Waters 104-105).

This kind of intercultural communication is defined by Linda Flower, Elenore Long, and Lorraine Higgins in *Learning to Rival* as "make[ing] contact with another person's richer, more experientially grounded situated knowledge" (6). In their research about a variety of collaborative, intercultural inquiries, they observed such "rival hypothesis thinking" that their students and members of the community engaged in as a "process rife with conflict, where competing and contradictory voices were being brought into both generative and problematic conflict and where writers were struggling to construct a negotiated meaning" (23). Often these inquiries are interdisciplinary, the authors explain, so participants in such groups need to have the maturity to understand more abstract processes, to recognize differences, to function in areas with less certainty, and to negotiate meanings that respect the values and communication styles of all participants.

A student in such a service-learning project is challenged to engage in mature thinking, for such a literate practice of constructing solutions to ongoing problems in the community requires advanced communication ability—the ability to communicate interculturally. In "Talking across Difference: Intercultural Rhetoric and the Search for Situated Knowledge," Flower explains how intercultural rhetoric operates "by definition and by choice, in a space where discourse practices and complex networks of situated knowledge are known to differ…. it chooses to build knowledge on the constructive potential and the reflective agency of everyday people" (43). This model of intercultural inquiry foregrounds the kinds of communication which a student will need to engage in for the process of effecting such change.

Minimizing Barriers to Reciprocity

When students commit to academic service-learning projects in courses, they are engaging in rhetorical acts that necessitate understanding a range to communication processes for types of projects in relation to the values or vested cognitive or affective interests of student participants. While options for service may exist, experiences that align to goals of courses and perhaps to the mission of a college are assumed to align well with individual students' values. Occasionally, this is not the case, and it poses special challenges that create barriers for achieving reciprocity.

Another contributing factor that may minimize a sense of reciprocity might be insufficient time for the student, clients, or site coordinator to engage in communication processes fully. Morton explains that the paradigms for academic service-learning suggest "profoundly different senses of time and space: charity is out of time and space; projects divide time and space into rational and manageable units; and social change places one squarely in the stream of history leading up to and through the world as it is" (28). These metaphors for understanding time commitment for each paradigm move from the concrete to the abstract, suggesting too, the varied aims of each paradigm and the desired orientation of a student with time constraints as a major variable. In composition pedagogy, models of cooperation and collaboration show variation in how students learn indirectly to communicate in groups and in some cases, to complete tasks when working around another's time constraints.

Conclusions

In academic service learning, students are either writing *about*, *with*, or *for*, depending upon their prior experiences, their ability with writing, their understanding of group transactional and transformational processes, and their affective orientation and

cognitive development. As an outcome of service-learning projects, participants, including the student, ideally experience a sense of reciprocity. Academic service-learning projects include a range of professional communication with many kinds of projects qualifying as **viable** service-learning experiences. Similarly, Deans' three aims of written discourse for the service- learning experience may begin to be construed as situating the more transactional and transformational group task processes for writing at stages of **valuing**, **organizing**, and **being characterized by the value**. These affective responses require the learner's **applying** what is understood, **analyzing** and **synthesizing** information for reports, and **evaluating** what has been analyzed and synthesized to the degree that the learner can write *with* members of the community to advocate for **shared values**.

While it is important for the instructor to consider the purpose for a service-learning project, its connection to the student's prior knowledge and experiences, its connection to the student's current academic experience either co-curricular or course related, it is as important for the instructor to anticipate the range of communication involved in the project, and to integrate into course instruction strategies on how to effectively communicate through the range of processes. Or, a speech communication course that emphasizes effective processes for working in groups could be introduced into the curriculum. A model for communication, foregrounding the range of service-learning projects, might work toward identifying how to develop a student's professional communication skills, and as an effect, move the student through a range of complexity that prepares him or her to meet challenges, such as those in communicating interculturally or negotiating across differences of opinion.

When a student is new to interacting with others, a writing task, such as writing about an agency's issue or history or other such desired document might still pose challenges that the instructor needs to anticipate. By perceiving the learner's needs, the instructor along with the student can identify possible service-learning projects at stages in a curriculum—from first year to courses in the disciplines or service-learning experiences in major programs. Introductory service projects might be identified as those where outcomes like developing attentive listening behaviors or observational skills are introduced, intermediary service projects might be those that require students to attend to a group task for a supervisor, while the more sophisticated projects might situate mature learners in projects that require understanding of intercultural communication or initiating action plans for change.

Through each kind of project the instructor needs to attend to introducing students to mindfulness of the problem, a rhetorical understanding of the agency or site, and problem solving strategies for creating solutions. Across each experience, the student might demonstrate transactional task processes or transformational outcomes, so their basic understandings of group dynamics, social styles of communicating, and techniques for overcoming conflict would seem critical. Certain service-learning projects may have as a goal simply listening to the needs of others, or weeding the organic garden—tending to basic needs of other people and places, yet each requires the learner to begin understanding another perspective or an alternative view to his or her own beliefs and practices. Some projects may require skill level with technology, and expertise in writing a specialized document, such as a press release for a specific non-profit agency to a targeted audience for a specific purpose. Yet others may require leadership ability for the

student to participate in a community activity that attempts to change behaviors or policies, or that designs procedures for solving problems, or that attempts to open lines of communication across groups that otherwise would not communicate. What constitutes a service-learning project at all levels of college instruction requires institutional sensitivity to the student's development emotionally and cognitively, to the emotional and cognitive needs of the client, to the integration of professional communication strategies needed for completing a task, and to the varied aims of writing and communicating –*about*, *for*, or *with* the community.

Instructors introducing projects need to consider such a range to communication that certain projects entail, and question, how is each student prepared to communicate effectively in the process of solving this problem, interacting with others, and completing an agreed upon task? In some cases, a student might even be trying to figure out how best to perform a service-learning project in a specific location, for not all projects have evolved into programs with clear guidelines for responsibilities. At some sites, a student may be asked to work together with other students or community members on a task, while others might be expected to work alone at the site on solving a problem, such as tutoring a particular student at another institution where need is identified. One student might complete a task while working from home. For each experience, the student needs to know how to communicate with others. While collaborative learning techniques may have been integrated into the student's prior experience, how has the student been introduced to a range of collaborative communication processes, for that matter, effective communication processes, that can be applied while engaging in service-learning projects with persons whose needs, too, are to be respected? How well has the student

internalized these speech communication processes to transfer competencies to other situations?

Introducing a range of speech communication into college courses is evidenced in other significant educational reform movements, such as electronic communication across the curriculum (Reiss), writing across the curriculum initiatives, (WAC Database), and writing in the disciplines programs (Carson, Simple, Yahr, Marshall, and O'Banion). In each, strategies for integrating varied communication processes, such as cooperative learning, collaborative learning, strategies for enhanced threaded discussions, models of argument and discussions in disciplines have been made explicit. Centers for enhancing teaching and learning by integrating active learning and problem-based models of instruction are evidenced. In "Writing across the Curriculum and Community Service Learning: Correspondences, Cautions, and Futures," Deans argues that service-learning like initiatives for writing instruction needs to align with "institutional structures and commitment to a progressive vision of teaching and learning" (as qtd. Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Waters 33). Such a "progressive vision" might begin to map out a model of service-learning projects with distinct aims of communication that allow for writing *about*, *for*, and *with* the community.

Not only does the instructor need to consider the student as a learner on a problem-solving journey that requires some exposure to active listening processes and models for collaborative processes, so too, the instructor needs to understand the clients at the site, their needs and experience with communication styles, and the intentions of a specific site coordinator. Service learning like collaboration places professionals and students-as-professionals in a variety of collaborative contexts with some experiences

more complicated than others; it is not enough to describe service-learning projects without adding to its literature, information about communication processes and the primary orientation of the learner. In composition studies and rhetoric different kinds of collaborative models have been studied in college environments as well as in corporate culture. From group communication theory, too, we can begin to describe how different types of service-learning projects require the student to understand, apply, and value a range of spoken communication—from active listening, sharing and responding, to models of collaboration that serve different rhetorical purposes —completing transactional task processes or effecting transformative change, as he or she writes *about, for*, or *with* the community and/or its participants. Much work still needs to be done to come to greater understandings of how varied contexts for academic service-learning align with goals for specific courses, programs, and the mission of a college, and most importantly, contribute to the growth of students as learners.

Works Cited

Adler-Kassner, Linda, Robert Crooks, and Ann Waters. eds. *Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition.* Washington, D.C.: AAHE, 1997.

Bloom, Benjamin et al. *A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives,* Vol. 1, *The Cognitive Domain.* London: Longman, 1956.

Bruffee, Kenneth. A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *College English* 46 (1984): 635-52.

Carson, Jay, William Sipple, Mike Yahr, Thomas Marshall, and John O'Banion. "A New Heuristic for Planning WAC Programs: Ensuring Successful Collaboration from All Stakeholders." *Language and Learning across the Disciplines*. 3:3 (January 2000): 35 pages. <http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/issues.htm>

Corso, Gail Shanley. *How To 'Let Them Write-Together': The Effects of Social Styles on Written Products of College Entry-level Collaborative Writers.* Diss. Bowling Green SU, 1991, Ann Arbor: UMI, 1991. 9210453.

Cruz, Emily. "Bloom's Revised Taxonomy." *Encyclopedia of Educational Technolog.* Ed. B. Hoffman. Retrieved March 24, 2008, from http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/Articles/bloomrev/start.htm

Deans, Thomas. *Writing and Community Action: A Service-Learning Rhetoric with Readings.* NY: Longman, 2003.

---. Writing across the Curriculum and Community Service Learning: Correspondences, Cautions, and Futures." Adler-Kassner, Linda, Robert Crooks, and Ann Waters.

Eds. 29-37.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing Without Teachers*. NY: Oxford UP, 1986.

Elbow, Peter, and Pat Belanoff. *Sharing and Responding*. 3rd ed. NY: McGraw-Hill, 2000.

Flower, Linda. "Partners in Inquiry: A Logic for Community Outreach." Adler-Kassner, Linda, Robert Crooks, and Ann Waters. Eds. 95-117.

Flower, Linda, Elenore Long, and Lorraine Higgins. *Learning to Rival: A Literate Practice for Intercultural Inquiry*. Mahwah: NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000.

Gere, Anne Ruggles. *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications: Studies in Writing and Rhetoric*. Urbana: Southern Illinois UP, 1987.

Hawkins, Thom. *Group Inquiry Techniques for Teaching Writing*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1976.

Huitt, W. "Krathwol et al.'s Taxonomy of the Affective Domain." Educational Psychology Interactive: Taxonomy of the Affective Domain. Web site. Revised April 2001. Accessed August 15, 2003. http://chiron.valdosta.edu/whuitt/interact.html.

Krathwohl, David et al. *A Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, VolII, The Affective Domain*. NY: David McCay, 1956.

Lumsden, Gay, and Donald Lumsden. *Communicating in Groups and Teams: Sharing Leadership*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2000.

Lunsford, Andrea, and Lisa S. Ede. *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP. 1990.

McAndrew, Donald A., and Thomas J. Reigstad. *Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 2001.

Moffett, James. *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. 1968. Boston: Houghton, 1983.

Reiss. Donna. Electronic Communication across the Curriculum. Developed 1996 by D. Reiss and modified 26 February 2003 by Donna Reiss. Accessed 18 August 2003. http://www.wordsworth2.net/resource/ecac-writing/ecacindex.htm

Spear, Karen. *Sharing Writing: Peer Response Groups in English Class*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton, 1988.

Strang, Steven. "Product and Process: the Author-Led Workshop." *College Composition and Communication* 35 (1984): 327-31.

Trimbur, John. "Collaborative Learning and Teaching Writing." *Perspectives on Research and Scholarship in Composition*. Ed. Ben McClelland and Timothy R. Donovan. NY: MLA, 1985, 87-109.

--- "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning." *College English* 51 (1989): 602-616.

The Writing across the Curriculum Clearinghouse. Website. Colorado State. 2000-2003. Accessed August 18, 2003. http://wac.colostate.edu/ .