

Something to Write About: Service-Learning as Transitional Rhetoric in Composition

Abstract

While writing instruction is still under the spell of having students engage in rhetorically textual arguments in order to produce the traditional academic essay (the cognitive-individual approach), current trends in composition studies have suggested incorporating service-learning (constructionist-collaborative) approaches. Service-learning in the composition classroom acts as a transitional rhetoric, allowing students to experience social and cultural situations, conditions, and problems from firsthand perspective and the opportunity to produce authentic writing. However, creating activities and assignments for service-learning projects can be difficult and time consuming. I offer instructors examples of how I use service-learning as transitional rhetoric in my own composition courses at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

My first semester teaching freshmen composition at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) was an eye-opening experience. Having spent five years working within the local public school district as a substitute teacher, I had yet to really “teach” or have my own students. I spent most of time working at a special campus for at-risk high school students. Many of the students attended this special campus because they were teenage parents, needed to catch up on their coursework, or had truancy or poor attendance issues at their home schools. I witnessed many different teaching styles and approaches in the classroom during my time at that special campus. I also had the opportunity to work alongside a variety of teachers and observe the different ways in which students learn.

While there was a limited opportunity to work with students for a long period, especially as a substitute, I did observe how students went about conducting research and writing essays. On one occasion, I helped a senior who was working on her final research essay for English. She told me that her topic was the Holocaust and that she was stumped to find any sources on it because she had “checked all over the Internet and could not find anything.” I suggested that she should try using the school’s library and her world history textbook as sources and proceeded to help her search the Internet for sources. Thirty minutes later we had found eight websites and five newspaper articles dealing with the topic. She scanned over them quickly and started copying passages and pasting them onto a blank Word document. I asked her if she planned to use quotation marks or cite her sources. She looked at me and replied, “Why?” I explained—albeit briefly—the concept of plagiarism and giving credit to an author and showed her examples within the websites and newspaper articles where they had cited *their* sources.

I gave her a crash course in MLA formatting—placing quotation marks around passages, creating block quotes, and citing the authors’ names and page numbers within parentheses.

When she had placed all of the quotation marks around the passages and cited where each passage had come from, she began to print out the essay. I told her that she was not done but just starting her research essay. She looked at me confusedly and asked me what I meant. I explained how she has to write an introduction of some sort, a thesis sentence, offer analysis for each quote, and write a conclusion. She answered, “But I already have said what I wanted in the essay. *I have nothing else to write about.*” Now I was the one who was confused because she had not written anything in her essay. We stared at one another as if we were speaking two different languages. When the printer stopped, she collected all of the pages, stapled them together, and went to turn in her essay.

For the next two days I dwelt on what she said. Her words stuck in my head, “*I have nothing else to write about.*” But she did not write anything! I was sure that she did not understand me when I said that she had just started her research essay, or maybe she understood me perfectly and that she did not care about doing anything other than copying and pasting passages. I knew that she was excited and in a hurry to graduate from high school, but what if her English teacher refused her essay, saying that she still had more to write. Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to see if her English teacher made her work more on the essay or not, but when I did come back to the special campus two days later, her name was on the list of recent graduates. I still wonder if she had made a great point—that she really did not have anything to write about.

When I started teaching freshmen composition at TAMU-CC a few years later, I knew that I would be facing a similar dilemma with what that English teacher at the special campus was up against—teaching some sort of research essay. In order to do this, I wanted to make sure that the assignments I had my students engage in were interesting and meaningful to them. Prior

to my first semester of teaching freshmen composition, I started reading about service-learning. Paula Mathieu defines “service-learning in composition” as a place where students and communities learn and write together (Mathieu 4). Mathieu further describes the “active ways” in which students have the opportunity to interact with individuals at the “street” level and by engaging in projects that promote authentic learning and writing experiences (4). Based on this definition, I decided to design my writing assignments based on the concept of having students “write within the real world” as well as how to work together with their peers in constructing a collaborative research project. And by doing this, perhaps I could keep the “I don’t have anything to write about” incident from happening again.

For the last three years, I have been incorporating field researching and service-learning approaches in my composition courses in the First-Year Learning Communities Program (FYLCP) at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC). During this time, I have noticed that students need a *transitional rhetoric* in place to acquaint them to the types of researching and writing activities and assignments that service-learning projects demand, such as engaging in developing questions and conducting semi-formal interviews, writing formal or professional emails, keeping schedules, and using a journal to record observations or reflections on their experiences. The purpose of this research is to provide composition instructors with an example of how to incorporate service-learning approaches within their own classrooms while still meeting the goals and objectives of their school’s curriculum.

Traditional-Textual Rhetoric vs. Transitional-Social Rhetoric

Writing instruction in freshmen composition still largely revolves around the traditional academic essay—the development of a logical argument. The teaching of writing a logical argument usually focuses on a certain type of rhetoric—textual rhetoric—where students learn

how to write arguments from reading arguments. While there is nothing wrong with teaching students the different types of rhetorical arguments that are used within various discourse communities (e.g. psychology, political science, history, etc.), their experiences are usually limited to inward journeys rather than outward ones because of the types of writing activities and assignments. This approach to writing instruction is designed to develop or measure students' cognitive abilities, where the focus is individual and *textual* rather than collaborative and *social*. Figure 1 below describes the differences between traditional-textual rhetoric and transitional-social rhetoric.

<p>Traditional-Textual Rhetoric</p>	<p>Pedagogy: Cognitive-Individual development Expectation: Individual-Textual proficiency Outcome: Academic essay</p>
<p>Transitional-Social Rhetoric</p>	<p>Pedagogy: Constructionist-Collaborative development Expectation: Collaborative-Multi-Textual proficiency Outcome: Academic/Non-Academic essay</p>

Figure 1. Traditional-Textual Rhetoric vs. Transitional-Social Rhetoric

The type of writing instruction that focuses on engaging students in textual rhetoric requires them to research arguments from print and electronic sources, make their own argument or choose one of the existing sides, and then support their claims with evidence from texts and articles. While textual rhetoric starts and usually ends with print and electronic sources (secondary sources), students engaging in a more socially-based rhetoric are asked to participate

within certain discourse communities where many of their sources are living people (primary sources). This dialectal approach to writing instruction is inherently more social and collaborative in nature (following the educational and linguistic philosophies and theories of John Dewey, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Lev Vygotsky). These educational and linguistic theories are an inherent part of the civic discourse that encompasses service-learning projects.

Writing instruction that approaches civic engagement and argumentation from a social-collaborative standpoint involves a greater level of participation by the students. Current trends in composition studies claim that one way in which to engage students in civic engagement and argumentation is through the application and practice of service-learning projects. In the most liberalist sense, service-learning acts as a transitional rhetoric, slowly introducing freshmen to the idea that civic engagement involves more than just writing another essay for the instructor to read. However, rather than just having freshmen engage in full-fledged service-learning projects from the beginning, I feel that there is an important transition stage that students need to experience. Writing activities and assignments in service-learning projects, such as developing interview questions, learning how to write a formal email, scheduling and planning trips, etc. are important in preparing students cognitively, not only with the proper writing skills, but also with the proper attitude in which they can adequately develop and ask questions, research, and reflectively write on their authentic learning experiences.

Service-learning as transitional rhetoric—A slow shift

Many composition practitioners and theorists have advocated service-learning in the composition classroom (Anne Ruggles Gere and Jennifer Sinor, Ellen Cushman, Kevin Ball and Amy M. Goodburn, Thomas Deans, Thomas Tai-Seale, and Paula Mathieu). Paula Mathieu defines “service-learning in composition” as a place where students and communities learn and

write together (Mathieu 4). Mathieu further describes the “active ways” in which students have the opportunity to interact with individuals at the “street” level and by engaging in projects that promote authentic learning and writing experiences (4). The application of service-learning in the composition classroom has taken on various forms, such as Thomas Deans’ service-learning community partnerships where the pedagogy reflects the needs of the community (Deans 145-46). Through this type pedagogical focus, students are slowly eased into the idea that writing and research extends beyond the classroom and that the idea of “audience” involves more than just the composition instructor.

James M. Dubinsky claims that service-learning encompasses these three important elements: “[L] *earning* (establishing clearly defined academic goals), *erving* (asking the students to apply what they learn for the benefit of one’s community/society), and *reflecting* (encouraging the students to consider the value of their service-learning work) (Dubinsky 3). Dubinsky stresses the importance of “*learning-by-doing* (emphasis by the author)” in service-learning because the focus is at the “human” level (3). While Dubinsky provides the theoretical description of service-learning, Bruce Herzberg provides examples on how he has applied it within his writing classrooms as a means of “teaching public-discourse writing” (Herzberg 467). Herzberg lists “four possibilities” of how and why service-learning can be and should be incorporated into the writing class (467). These four possibilities are:

- “Students are more engaged by current issues”
- “The rhetorical immediacy of public discourse helps students understand audience and genre constraints”
- “*Critical pedagogy*, the goal of which is to promote social consciousness or something like a Freirean critical consciousness and, if possible, to lead students to social action”
- “The history of rhetoric” has “a noble tradition of education for civic leadership.” (467-68)

Herzberg’s four possibilities encompass various realms of engagement, such as

collaboration between peers and within the community, as well as engaging with language and writing from a dialectical standpoint—where individuals with different perspectives engage in dialogue in order to persuade each other through argumentation.

When engaging in service-learning writing projects, students will start to view research as dynamic and “living” because it is coming from people instead of books or the Internet. The role of audience changes and suddenly becomes a living, breathing, working creature that is sometimes collaborative in nature. Service-learning provides the means by which ethnographic research can bring the students into the role of an active participant and contributor within a community.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s First-Year Learning Communities Program

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi’s First-Year Learning Communities Program (FYLCP) consists of large lectures, such as psychology, history, political science, biology, etc., seminar courses that support the lecture courses, and composition courses—therefore forming triads. Freshmen are required to take two semesters of English composition (1301 and 1302) in order to meet core curriculum requirements.

While the FYLCP has no standard service-learning component in its list of goals and objectives, graduate teaching assistants, adjuncts, and professors are not discouraged from incorporating it within their composition and seminar courses. Some of the goals of English composition 1301 and 1302 at TAMU-CC that relate to the service-learning approach include:

- Exploring and understanding multiple perspectives
- Arguing and persuading
- Writing, reading, and speaking for a variety of real-world purposes and for various audiences
- Engaging in drafting, revising, and editing strategies and techniques
- Collaborating with peers
- Writing within different genres and conventions (MLA, APA)

- Using technology for research and communicating purposes (FYLCP Staff Manual, Goals and Objectives 1301 and 1302)

as well as these objectives:

- Using writing, reading, and academic inquiry to critically engage increasingly complex open-ended questions and ill-defined problems
- Understanding and effectively using both primary and secondary sources
- Constructing formal multimedia presentations based on research
- Constructing personal, academic research-based portfolios
- Constructing ethically and rhetorically responsible arguments
- Working within multiple modes of argumentation
- Self-assessing research process and product (FYLCP Staff Manual, Goals and Objectives 1301 and 1302)

Writing instruction in the FYLCP focuses on researching techniques, conventions, and the integration of knowledge within the learning communities.

Another goal of the FYLCP at the university is to build a strong sense of community among the students and encourage a certain level of civic engagement, which is usually defined as participation within various on and off-campus communities. However, many writing activities and assignments are usually unauthentic experiences for students. Students are asked to write about their own communities, where they come from, and about their initial impressions of the university, which resembles a form of recall or memory writing. For instance, many composition instructors emphasize social-political-historical-cultural themes and the way in which rhetoric is used within those spectrums.

Structuring and preparing for service-learning projects

Since TAMU-CC does not play a direct role in defining service-learning or determining which community programs and organizations educators can or cannot work with, there is a dangerous freedom for instructors who wish to use it in their composition courses. The dangers are many—they include students' safety, conflicting schedules, misinterpreted communications between teachers, students, and organizations, money for gas, applications and background

checks, etc. While all of these factors are relevant when considering incorporating service-learning, the most important factor is students' safety once they are on the outside.

For this reason, I have students fill out "Student Activity Release Forms" with student affairs before they begin their service-learning projects. This document is a formal agreement—a binding legal agreement—between the students, the university, and me. The form does more than just protect the university from being held responsible if anything happens to the students once they are on the outside, it also helps the students realize that what they are doing is not simply just another writing assignment but also something where their actions and decisions will be observed and judged by a larger audience.

Another challenge with service-learning projects is making sure that the communities' needs are met as well as the syllabus' requirements. In order to accomplish this, Paula Mathieu suggests that instructors, not educational institutions, create the service-learning opportunities for their students. Mathieu asserts that service-learning should be "tactically driven" rather than "strategically designed," where the instructor decides how to best incorporate service-learning into their classrooms, not strategically designed by an academic administrative board or oversight committee (Mathieu introduction xiv, xv, 16, 17, 95, and 96). The purpose of a tactical approach to service-learning in the composition classroom is done to benefit the service being provided to the community and for the students' overall learning experience; it is not done to strengthen a university's credibility or earn them a spot on the ten o' clock news.

The communities where the students are volunteering are the focus, not the university.

Robert Sigmon's three principles of service-learning act as a guideline to follow:

- *Principle one:* Those being served control the service(s) provided.
- *Principle two:* Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions.

- *Principle three:* Those who serve also are learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned” (Sigmon 10).

Sigmon’s three principles are essential when developing service-learning projects. Developing activities and assignments that will benefit the communities’ needs and still meet the students’ writing requirements can be challenging. Collaboration between students and the community is a key element in determining the success of a service-learning project.

Service-learning in the composition classroom at TAMU-CC

I used service-learning in my 1302 composition classes in the 2007 and 2008 spring semesters. Each semester I taught two sections of 1302 that consisted of no more than twenty-five students at one time. Both courses consisted of freshmen who had successfully completed 1301. My composition courses were connected to a learning community that consisted of a history large lecture and a seminar course. The goals and objectives of the FYLCP involved more in-depth research and writing requirements for the second semester of composition. I decided to incorporate service-learning into my classes because I felt that the students wanted something more than just general writing activities and assignments that they may or may not have experienced in their first semester of composition—I did not want to repeat what I had done last semester (e.g. writing the traditional research essay).

In addressing the service-learning part, I choose local non-profit organizations within Corpus Christi where I had volunteered at one either time or knew individuals that were volunteering. In some cases, this meant calling or emailing the non-profit organizations prior to the beginning of the semester to see if they were willing to work with my students. The non-profit organizations I contacted were:

- Charlie’s Place Rehabilitation Center, for substance abuse, counseling, and recovery (<http://charliesplaceonline.com/media/news.html>)

- The Wenholz House, also for substance abuse, counseling, and recovery (<http://ccsafeplace.com/>)
- The Salvation Army of South Texas
- The YWCA of South Texas
- The Food Bank of Corpus Christi (<http://www.foodbankofcorpuschristi.org>)
- P.A.L.s Animal Shelter (<http://www.palscc.org/>)
- Planned Parenthood of South Texas
- USS Lexington, a retired aircraft carrier now a museum on the bay (<http://www.usslexington.com/>)
- The Texas State Aquarium (<http://www.texasstateaquarium.org/>)
- Communities in Schools (C.I.S.), a public school mentoring program

Fortunately, all of the non-profit organizations mentioned above were willing to work with my students. The next phase was to create a syllabus, writing assignments, and a classroom structure for this type of service-learning project to work.

In order to create a safe learning experience for the students, and to reinforce the concept that writing is a social act, I decided to let the students group themselves into writing teams (WTs). Each WT was allowed the maximum of five members per group. Since the portfolio-projects were collaborative in nature, the research and writing was also collaborative. The first semester using collaborative writing groups I structured the students based on majors, having them develop their own contracts with rules, expectations, and how they plan to go about handling the writing of the document(s) (following the theories of collaboration by Lowry, Curtis, and Lowry 72). This approach produced successful results, but when I let the students choose their own groups the second semester, there was a higher level of collaboration, which was apparent in the writing and presentations. I also decided to develop set guidelines for collaborative group work instead of requiring individual WTs to create their own. Below are the guidelines that used during the spring semester of 2008:

- Writing teams will consist of 3-5 members. Students will collaborate in their research, reading, and writing for the course of the semester.
- Writing teams will be decided at the beginning of the semester, but may change after that. Once the research/writing for the portfolio-project begins, the groups will remain the

same, unless there are MAJOR differences among group members.

- In the instance of MAJOR differences, the writing team and I will decide what needs to happen in order for all group members to be happy.
- Writing teams will decide on a socially acceptable group name.
- All researching, reading, and writing is shared equally among all writing team members. There will be no “dumping” on one or two members because of laziness. There will also be no “invisible” team members who pop in from time to time to lay a claim to all the hard work that their writing team is doing.
- Collaborative writing is a team effort and all responsibilities for the portfolio-project will be shared equally, creatively, and respectfully.
- The actual writing of the final paper may be the hardest part for your writing team; however, this is a challenge that you will have to work through together with your group members.
- During the course of the semester, I will check with each group constantly to see where your team is at and how things are going. If an individual in a writing team has a question or something to discuss that they do not wish to share with their group members, we will deal with this type of situation on a case-by-case basis.

The guidelines allowed the students to focus more on the research and writing rather than just focusing on how they planned to work together. While the students could choose any of the local non-profit organizations listed above, they also choose their own. However, I made sure that the WTs with their own non-profit organizations checked with me first before contacting or visiting them.

Before the students conducted their interviews, we spent two weeks discussing what primary research is and why it is important, developing interview questions, seeking permission from their chosen local non-profit organizations, discussing how they planned to record the responses from their interviewees, and how to write reflectively about their interviews. Some students decided to conduct email interviews, which meant learning how to write a professional email. I had the students read chapters in *The Bedford Researcher* (2nd edition) by Mike Palmquist & Barbara Fister and in *Everything's An Argument* (3rd edition) by Andrea Lunsford & John J. Ruszkiewicz. I also introduced the students to Purdue Online Writing Resources and Lab,

further explaining and showing examples of how to write a formal email, how to develop effective interview questions, and how to conduct an interview.

I kept attendance during the course of the semester but I was flexible when it came to using class time to visit their non-profit organizations for interviews, observations, or volunteering. I did require each WT to meet with me five times (checkpoints) during the course of the semester. Writing teams were also required to keep journals (what I termed “critical journals”) to record important developments in their research and interactions with their non-profit organizations, questions, or information about their non-profit organizations and/or experiences while visiting and volunteering there. The day before each checkpoint meeting WTs submitted their critical journals (one per group) to our online wiki space. Reading over the journals before we actually met helped me to think about and offer any suggestions if they were facing challenges with their projects or with their group members. I also had the students do self and peer evaluations, which counted as half of their overall grade in composition.

Writing teams were required to turn in one collaborative portfolio at the end of the semester. The portfolio-project and the formal, multimedia presentation rubrics were designed and developed prior to the beginning of the semester. Writing teams were required to follow APA conventions when researching and documenting their information and sources (e.g. websites, interviews, etc.). Figure 2 below describes the main requirements for the collaborative portfolio-project and formal, multimedia presentation.

Description	Part or Section
Proposal (75-100 words)	(third part of the essay in the portfolio-project)
Abstract (25-50 words)	(third part of the essay in the portfolio-project)
Introduction & history of non-profit	(first part of the essay in the portfolio-project)

State & federal laws of non-profit	(second part of the essay in the portfolio-project)
Interviews & volunteering	(second part of the essay in the portfolio-project)
Recommendations and conclusions	(third part of the essay in the portfolio-project)
Sources	(references ... both primary and secondary)
Final essay	(parts 1-3 in one document)
Final presentation	(formal, multimedia)
Final reflections from writing teams	(one per group member)

Figure 2. Descriptions and parts or sections of the portfolio-project.

When the WT's completed the first part of their essay for the portfolio-project, which was the introduction and the non-profit's history/background, they started working on the next parts, which included state or federal laws that affected their non-profit organizations as well as their interviews and volunteer experiences. Once students completed the second parts, they shifted gears and focused on the third part of the portfolio-project, which was the fifty-to-seventy-five word proposal followed by a twenty-five-to-forty word abstract. The third part of the portfolio included any additional information that each WT decided they needed as well as sections for recommendations and/or conclusions.

Once each WT completed all of their parts for the essay, they compiled all of them into the final document with references and submitted it to our online wiki space. Writing teams also constructed a multimedia presentation on their portfolio-projects (while some groups used PowerPoint for their presentations, other groups used MySpace or Facebook), and each student wrote a final reflection on the class and their learning experiences. I also encouraged the WT's to share their final reflections as well as invite individuals from their non-profit organizations to their final presentations. Once again, how well each WT stayed in communication and

collaborated with each other and with their non-profit organizations determined how the success of their final products.

Peter Elbow's descriptions of "weak" and "strong" collaboration also came into play in the students writing (Elbow 10). While most WTs worked together to reach a "consensus" or "agreement" to decide when the writing was complete, there were a few WTs that produced final essays that bordered along cooperative levels rather than collaborative, meaning that all group members did not have to agree to final product in order to complete the assignment (10). A variety of factors could have contributed to this, such as some students do not like working in groups, perhaps some WTs were not clear what I wanted them to do for the writing part of the portfolio-project, or they were not interested in their non-profit organization. Group dynamics played a key role in determining how successful, or unsuccessful, students were once they started collaborating amongst themselves and with their non-profit organizations. The "stronger" WTs stayed in constant communication with each other as well as with their non-profit organization.

While the exact outcomes were difficult to measure in quantitative terms, there was a visible growth that many of the students experienced by engaging in their service-learning projects. I did not see evidence to indicate that the students improved as writers but they did take more of an active stance in their writing, such as by producing pamphlets or brochures for their non-profit organizations, reflecting on their volunteering experiences, and in their presentations. This more active approach in their writing was because students' experiences were not abstract but concrete ones that they could identify with on a personal level.

As for meeting the goals and objectives of the FYLCP, students explored and worked with multiple perspectives during the course of their research, engaged in research, using primary and secondary sources, used these sources within their writing for audience, rhetorical

arguments, and for conveying information, used conventions of writing (e.g. APA), used computers to generate texts, discussed readings from the local newspaper and non-profits' websites, communicated and participated within various discourse communities, generated a research portfolio, and self-assessed their group dynamics, research processes, and final products. From an instructor's perspective, I also felt more comfortable asking my students to work collaboratively together because I knew that were making it their own. For the most part, all of the writing teams worked well together. Some of the common issues that a few writing teams dealt with were missing group members and schedule conflicts. While not all of the students continued to volunteer or re-visit their non-profit organizations once the semester ended, many did.

There was some student resistance toward the service-learning portfolio-project during the course of each semester. However, the students' resistance did not seem to rise from the service-learning projects themselves, but from the idea of working in collaborative writing teams. Once the semester was under way, and the writing teams begin to visit and volunteer at their non-profit organizations, the resistance to working together started to fade. Although the resistance never truly disappeared, students were starting to learn how to negotiate their schedules between themselves and their non-profit organizations, how to delegate roles within their groups, and how to write an essay together. Writing the essay challenged the writing teams the most because many of the students had never written a collaborative document before. Another challenge was the layout of the essay (e.g. Introduction, background/history of the non-profit organization, state and federal laws, interview reflections, personal reflections, and conclusions and/or recommendations) because many WTs had developed their own sections, depending on what they thought was important about their non-profit organizations. However, I

do not regret presenting the WTs with “possible” sections at the beginning of the semester because it allows them to think critically about how they are going to use those sections or create their own based on what they discover.

One of the things I learned was that students are not without their own resources when it comes to locating or choosing an interviewee or a non-profit organization. I will continue to seek and encourage feedback from my students as well as their suggestions to adapt and to add to my growing list of non-profit organizations. For composition instructors who wish to incorporate service-learning projects into their composition classrooms, I suggest that they see service-learning as more than just a “component” but as an overall all driving force behind their educational practices and philosophies.

Conclusion

Service-learning is a current trend in composition studies and provides students with the opportunity to engage—actively and civically—with various communities. The collaboration between students and local communities usually comes in the form of volunteering. However, one of the future challenges of service-learning is developing and sustaining a pedagogy that centers on service-learning within composition. While researchers and practitioners give examples on how to do this, there is no one way on how to incorporate service-learning projects into the composition classroom.

Service-learning approaches act as a transitional rhetoric for students to experience active participation within personal, academic, and professional communities. This transition involves more than just preparing students cognitively, such as in learning proper grammar, how to properly cite a source, or how to write within a certain convention (e.g. MLA, APA). The transition also involves helping students develop the proper attitude in which they can adequately

develop and ask questions, research, and reflectively write on their authentic learning experiences when engaging in service-learning projects. In order for these approaches to work as effective transitions, composition instructors need to develop writing activities and assignments that students can utilize in the future, giving them something to keep writing about.

Works Cited

- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Trans. by Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993.
- Ball, Kevin. & Goodburn, Amy M. (2000). "Composition studies and service learning: Appealing to communities?" *Composition Studies* 28.1 (2000): 79-93.
- Cushman, Ellen. "Sustainable Service-Learning Programs." *College Composition and Communication* 54.1 (2002): 40-65.
- Cushman, Ellen. "Service-Learning as the New English Studies." *English, Inc.: English Studies in the 21st Century*. Ed. David B. Downing, C. Mark Hurlbert, and Paula Mathieu. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. 204-18.
- Deans, Thomas. *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2000.
- Dewey, John. *The School and Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.
- Dubinsky, James M. "Service-Learning and Civic Engagement: Bridging School and Community Through Professional Writing Projects." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Warwick Writing Programme, Department of English and Comparative Literacy Studies, University of Warwick, (5th, Coventry, England, March 26-27, 2001).
- Elbow, Peter. "Using the Collage for Collaborative Writing." *Composition Studies* 27.1 (1999): 7-14.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles and Sinor, Jennifer. "Composing service learning." *The Writing Instructor* 16.2 (1997): 53-63.
- Herzberg, Bruce. "Service Learning and Public Discourse." *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*. Ed. Cheryl Glenn, Melissa A. Goldthwaite, and Robert Connors, 5th edition.

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's (2000): 462-73.

Lowry, Paul Benjamin, Curtis, Aaron, and Lowry, Michelle Rene. "Building a Taxonomy and Nomenclature of Collaborative Writing to Improve Interdisciplinary Research and Practice." *Journal of Business Communication* 41.1 (2004): 66-99.

Mathieu, Paula. *Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in English Composition*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2005.

Sigmon, Robert. "Service-Learning: Three Principles." *Synergist* 9.1 (Spring 1979): 9-11.

Tai-Seale, Thomas. "Liberating service learning and applying the new practice." *College Teaching* 49.1 (2001): 14-18.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's First-Year Learning Communities Program, Home Page (2008). <<http://firstyear.tamucc.edu/wiki>>.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's First-Year Learning Communities Program, Goals and Objectives for English Composition 1301 (2008)
<<http://firstyear.tamucc.edu/uploads/English1301/1301objectives.htm>>.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi's First-Year Learning Communities Program Staff Manual, Goals and Objectives for English Composition 1302 (2009).
<<http://firstyear.tamucc.edu/wiki/FYStaffManual/GoalsObjectives1302>>.

Vygotsky, Lev. *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1978.