The Effects of Service-Learning on Writing and Rhetorical Development

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The Effects of Service-Learning on Writing and Rhetorical Development  
Christopher Iverson, PhD  
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This study explores the effects of community engagement on college writers years after completing first-year composition courses with service-learning partnerships. Since the 1990’s, scholarship has connected service-learning pedagogy and the gains that student writers stand to enjoy when writing for audiences beyond the classroom and purposes beyond the grade (Bacon, Deans, Wurr), while others have warned of the consequences of hastily planned service-learning partnerships (Mathieu, Cushman). These predictions and cautions have guided the larger conversation of community engagement in writing studies to include community-academy partnerships that involve students to varying degrees or not at all while guiding academic stakeholders in such partnerships to be more mindful of the effects of their work.

The time is right to check up on the students who took these courses. Therefore, this study includes testimony from 13 current (at the time of the interviews) and former University of Connecticut students, nine of whom took a service-learning first-year writing course, and four of whom took more “traditional” first-year writing courses. Participants for this IRB-approved study sat for 30-45 minute, in-person interviews with me. I first use the interview transcripts to create case studies of each participant in Chapter 4 and then use the same data to perform a coded, linguistic analysis of their interview responses. This allowed me to provide thick descriptions of participant responses, and the coded analysis allowed me to clear the waters for comparison and attempt to mitigate my own biases.

I find that, while service-learning did correlate with higher community engagement among the members of my study, the drive to engage in community action often preceded the service-learning course, and those who had not taken such courses expressed interest in working and writing outside of the academy as well. I also find that awareness of genre conventions as well as the uses of genres was keen among the former service-learners, and the reported literacy narratives among former service-learners seemed more dynamic than among those who took more traditional writing courses.
The Effects of Service-Learning on Writing and Rhetorical Development

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# Table of Contents

**Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of Study** ................................................................. 1

**Chapter 2: Review of the Literature** .................................................................................. 32

**Chapter 4: Case Studies** ................................................................................................ 123

**Chapter 5: Analysis** ...................................................................................................... 191

**Chapter 6: Reflections and Conclusions** ......................................................................... 233

**Works Cited** .................................................................................................................. 249
Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview of Study

Introduction

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) counts service-learning as one among 11 high-impact practices that have proven beneficial to students insofar as they promote active learning as well as personal, academic, and practical gains. These high-impact practices include First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences (or Core Curricula), Learning Communities, Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, ePortfolios, Service-Learning/Community-Based Learning, Internships, and Capstone Courses and Projects (Kuh). While these practices differ in and of themselves, they also differ between institutions in how they are carried out, how much institutional support they enjoy, and the students they are employed to serve, but the AACU reports in 2013 that service-learning particularly promotes academic rigor, active/collaborative learning, relationships with faculty, and a supportive college environment for students from their first to their senior years (Kuh and O’Donnell). The AACU’s research into service-learning is not specifically keyed to composition studies, however, and this study aims to refine our understanding of what the practice can promise to first-year composition students as they move through their college careers and even beyond.

To achieve this, I have examined the current research into service-learning in composition and called on my experience as a service-learning instructor for context while designing a study that relies on the testimony of current and former University of Connecticut students to determine what they perceive to be the benefits of drawbacks of their first-year writing experiences. I spoke with students who had taken their first-year writing courses with and without a service-learning component going back as far as ten years before the interviews, or
in 2008. With that raw data, I created case studies as well as a more coded, linguistic analysis of their words to try and create as varied a picture as I can of the diverse experiences of the 13 interview participants who agreed to take part in my study. While I ultimately find that service-learning deserves its place among the high impact practices the AACU names, it also has value as a practice in first-year writing classrooms specifically, including teaching students how to become more socially active in contexts outside of the university setting, exposing students to writing practices they may not have previously understood as such, showing writers firsthand how and why genres accomplish their aims, and allowing them to experience not only collaboration but co-authorship as well.

I also find that, much like the AACU claims for the practice in general, in writing studies, service-learning is one among a preponderance of experiences that students will encounter, and that it should be counted among one of the many high-impact practices that may be suited to students and learning environments, while in other contexts, another might prove more fitting. Indeed, service-learning is only one of many approaches to community engaged writing, and in fact, the writing studies field has in recent years favored other approaches, and I intend with this study to return some critical attention to service-learning in writing studies so that we can, as a field, take stock of what the pedagogy has already taught students and faculty as well as what potential there is for its future development as a high impact practice.

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The term “Service-Learning” describes only one application of community engagement in writing studies: the use of some sort of community activity in a writing course. That said, community writing is much larger than service-learning, and recent writing studies scholarship has fruitfully explored this broader application (Cushman; Deans & Roswell & Wurr; Flower;
Goldblatt; Gökmeli; Grabill; Mutnick; Pough; Rosculp). For example, while many in the first wave of research on community-engaged courses in the 1990s used the term “service-learning” amply and explicitly (Bacon; Deans; Herzberg; Schultz & Gere), the CCCC’s 2016 Statement on Community-Engaged Projects defines their topic broadly, including community publishing, facilitating public discussions, community writing centers, teaching exchanges, and community theater, but omitting the term “service-learning” altogether. CCCC dedicates special care as well to noting the responsibility of academy representatives to ensure any community-engaged activities they undertake are reciprocally beneficial for all stakeholders. In fact, this caution echoes much academic discourse surrounding service-learning and community engagement over the past few decades.

I specifically draw attention to Paula Mathieu’s Tactics of Hope: The Public Turn in English Composition and her paradigm of strategic and tactical community partnerships, described in greater detail in Chapter 2. For now, the tactical, community-originated model of community/academy partnerships will serve as the ideal for my dissertation, though Mathieu uses the terms “tactical” and “strategic” not to describe service-learning partnerships, but rather relationships between institutions and communities in general. In fact, tactical service-learning initiatives may prove particularly challenging—though not impossible—considering how much institutional planning, execution, evaluation, and long-term thinking in general is necessary for service-learning classes. I point to Mathieu’s paradigm early in this dissertation as an example of the valuable work rhetoric and composition scholars have contributed to the larger community engagement conversation, work that can inform how service-learning scholarship can grow as well.
With this dissertation, I am concerned with classroom-based service-learning in first-year composition courses (Bacon; Cooper; Deans; Herzberg; Grobman & Rosenberg) in which community action helps guide classroom writing to determine the effects such activities have on students’ rhetorical development. Not discounting the importance of ensuring reciprocal benefits for all stakeholders in a community-engaged project—in this case, students, faculty, community organizations, and those they represent—I move towards determining with some certainty what kinds of benefits faculty can promise to students before sending them into community organizations and how service-learning can be uniquely valuable as a high-impact practice (Kuh).

Therefore, my study follows up with students three to eight years after taking their UConn First-Year Writing courses, some with service-learning components and some without, to learn what, if anything, these students took with them in and out of school in the years after completing their composition courses. I ask questions pertaining to how they saw themselves as writers when they entered their composition courses, what they recall about the course (this could include assignments or anything else they recall), as well as how, if at all, they participate in community action now after their courses. These questions are intentionally open-ended so that the questions themselves interfere as little as possible with the students giving an accurate account of what role their service-learning courses have played in their writing and rhetorical development. Other, more specific questions ask how students came to choose their majors and whether or not they are still active with the specific community organizations from their service-learning courses.

Guiding questions for this study include:
1. What do students self-report gaining from service-learning courses in composition during their undergraduate careers?

2. How does this cohort of student writers’ report compare to what the established literature on service-learning tells us?

3. What can these gains tell service-learning practitioners about the stated and potential goals of such courses?

4. How can we map out service-learning course teachers’ influence and responsibility in tactical, reciprocal service-learning partnerships?

5. How can service-learning practitioners identify and meet their stated goals for service-learning courses?

**Genealogy of Dissertations**

This dissertation picks up about 15-20 years after a handful of influential doctoral dissertations began to firmly establish service-learning specifically as a writing studies matter. In their dissertations, Nora Bacon and Adrian Wurr took on the topic of assessment in service-learning. Using qualitative and quantitative data, Bacon showed that “strong” academic writers tend to succeed as community partners (112), and that such learning to write in a new setting “involves a complex interplay of knowledge, attitudes, circumstances, behavior, and emerging identities” (167). Bacon hoped that the field of composition would embrace the more complex notions of transfer that community writing affords, thus in turn affording students more “power over discourse” (222). Wurr continues the questions of student writing and response to community engagement but extends it to explore the influences of service-learning on native and non-native English speakers, specifically finding that non-native speakers report increased enthusiasm about the cross-cultural understanding and communication skills development
resulting from service-learning coursework (15). Relying on holistic and analytic essay rating as well as interviews to gather the data for his quantitative analyses, Wurr trusts student interpretation of their service-learning experiences and learning as well as their writing itself. Ultimately, Wurr suggests two opportunities for further study: increased attention to student learning to draw attention and support for service-learning in higher education and more increased attention to the moral and civic learning that happens in these courses (214). Wurr recommends, in short, more attention to the effects of service and the effects of learning in service-learning composition courses.

In his 1998 dissertation, Tom Deans hoped that the future of service-learning in composition following his and others’ interventions and that service-learning and community engagement in general would “articulate how community-based writing instruction both draws upon and stretches rhetoric and composition in meaningful ways” (210). Only a couple of years later, Mathieu, in her 2001 dissertation, saw a chance to question whether or not service-learning scholarship focused too much on student writing, noting that other changes in the roles of English departments, such as providing critical tools for textual and social analysis, teaching digital literacies, and community engagement, are “tugging at the stability of college writing” (3). In her dissertation, she aims to represent institutions “not as monolithic organs that constrain all action but as ‘Swiss cheese,’ which contain limited holes and spaces for action” (14). While the serious work of establishing service-learning as a specifically writing studies endeavor began with Bacon, Wurr, Deans, and Mathieu writing dissertations on the topic, Deans and Mathieu’s dissertations became the first monographs to continue the work, testing the constraints of service-learning pedagogy and writing studies. As I will show in chapter two, others followed
suit, including Long, Goldblatt, Flower, Grobman and Rosenberg, and, as recently as 2018 Shah and Lindenman.

My research may be able to find ways of boring those holes in the Swiss cheese a little bigger, loosening the constraints those holes represent. One could consider how rhetoric and composition is an institution that both allows for and constrains action and ask if service-learning has done anything to further composition or if composition has done anything to further service-learning. I dare say that community engagement and service-learning have made staggering contributions to the field of rhetoric and composition by informing the ways we interpret rhetorical concerns like audience and what it means to be a good person speaking well. Similar to how Connors noted in 1997 that rhetoric had hidden itself away in the more palatable composition side of the rhetoric and composition discipline, I argue that community engagement has favored the rhetoric side of the discipline. By looking at service-learning writing and courses, I hope to draw attention back to the composition side, rethinking the reality of growth (if necessary) for community engagement and composition to see how this turn-of-the-century investment in composition’s public turn has changed writers and writing nearly twenty years later.

The Name Game: Community-Engaged-Service-Learning-Participatory-Action

Scholarship/Learning/Research/Partnership/Project Initiatives

The question of how to transcend the boundaries of the academy has circulated since the 1960s if not before, and therefore, there have been many approaches to answering it. Service-Learning is one of them, but, as Chapter 2 of my dissertation will show, the field of rhetoric and

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1 See Garbus’ “Service-Learning 1902” in which Garbus argues that Vida Dutton Scudder’s innovative Literature pedagogy predicted service-learning by sending students to inner-city settlement houses to work with people across boundaries of race, gender, and class at the turn of the 20th century.
composition has taken different approaches, including critical pedagogy most pervasively, but also community publishing, community writing center work, and critical ethnography among others, and even the subset of service-learning does not always look the same, as Long makes abundantly clear. Academics continually adapt the pedagogy to suit their local contexts (institutions and partners, for example), and much of this work addresses problems seemingly intrinsic to service-learning, such as community/academy power dynamics and the risks of paternalism among faculty and liberal-do-gooderism among students who enter service-learning partnerships without considering the subjectivity of their partners. Service-learning is at once a small subset of rhetoric and composition discourse and a broad approach to the teaching of writing, so it seems worthwhile to take a moment to look at the history of service-learning nomenclature and do some organizing.

Though the term “service-learning” was not coined by the South Regional Education Board (SREB) in Atlanta, Georgia, it launched the “first major endeavor in service education in 1967 when it placed college students in internships with local programs” (Myers-Lipton 244). In 1979, Robert Sigmon, claiming that the term had emerged from an unknown origin sometime in the years between the SREB endeavor and his writing, lamented that “service-learning” was rather broadly deployed and suggested three fundamental principles that describe initiatives designed to benefit both the students and communities. These include

*Principle One:* Those being served control the services provided.

*Principle Two:* Those being served become better able to serve and be served by their own actions.

*Principle Three:* Those who serve are also learners and have significant control over what is expected to be learned. (10).
Sigmon moved on, 15 years later, to describe the balance of service and learning that complicates such a definition as shown in figure 1.

![Figure 1: Sigmon’s service-learning typography cited from Furco 10](image)

Here, typography reflects the ideal balance between service and learning. Importantly, the hyphen in “service-learning” shows the symbiotic relationship between the service and the learning aspects of the practice, while the un-hyphenated “service learning” implies that the two aspects stand independently.

To complement this image, and to explain service-learning in relationship to other, somewhat similar practices, Furco turns again to Sigmon and shares a continuum based on service programs’ intended beneficiaries, as shown in figure 2.
Significantly, service-learning straddles the continuum. It overlaps with neither volunteerism nor internship, as volunteerism implies that the participant receives nothing quantifiable—payment, college credit, or grade—and internships primarily aim to give participants hands-on experience if not payment. It is also important to note that all of the elements included in this image have room to slide on the continuum (Furco 12), as internships may focus more or less on the good of recipients, and volunteerism does not rule out experiential benefits for the providers.

Much like the study of rhetoric and—more recently—writing studies, service-learning in its infancy was not discipline-specific, and it continues to defy any sort of disciplinary home forty years after Sigmon began to define it. But as exemplified earlier, the work of scholars such as Bacon, Deans, Wurr, and Mathieu carved out a niche for service-learning in writing studies specifically, though the public turn in writing studies brought with it opportunities beyond service-learning pedagogy. Heath, Cushman, and Flower drew attention to the potential for examining how rhetoric, writing, and learning works in local publics, and Rousculp and Mathieu have opened the conversation of community engagement to include partnerships between faculty and local publics that may or may not include students but are not tied to specific classes or student coursework.

These scholars’ work all represent different ways the public turn has manifested itself in composition, and though different, they are related insofar as they work towards bridging the community/academy divide while expanding the potential for writing studies to contribute to that bridging. In fact, Boyer who called for that coming together in 1990, contributed a helpful keyword, “engagement,” in his 1996 *Journal of Public Service and Outreach* article, “The Scholarship of Engagement.” Here, while Boyer gestures not to any kind of public turn, but rather a tradition of engagement going back 150 years from the time of his writing (11), he
returns to four types of scholarship he calls for in *Scholarship Reconsidered*—discovery, integration, application, and teaching—to offer two challenges to the academy at large. Boyer believed that the academy should invest more attention to child development, health care, and nutrition, and he encouraged our nation’s colleges to become more actively involved in our nation’s primary and secondary schools (19). Ultimately, though, Boyer contributes the keyword “engagement,” the scholarship of which Boyer believes could commit the resources of the academy to pressing social issues that also give the academy a larger sense of purpose, permeating not only disciplinary lines that divide departments but also the divisions between the university and surrounding communities.

This keyword “engagement” has taken hold and widely so. In fact, the term appears to be so broadly used that Connecticut Campus Compact (CTCC) saw fit in 2012 to establish “A Framework for Community Engaged Scholarship” published digitally on the larger Campus Compact site. In this text, their Introduction differentiates between the terms “community engagement,” “community engaged scholarship,” and “service learning,” noting what community engaged scholarship (CES) is NOT. CTCC makes clear in this introduction that literacy interventions without community consultation and review of effectiveness is not community engaged scholarship because it does not engage the community. Similarly, course-based initiatives that teach students to work with partners outside of the academy are not CES because they do not necessarily result in peer-reviewed scholarship (2). These distinctions matter because, as CTCC claims, such confusion detracts from the legitimacy of CES and risks dampening institutional support and muddying the waters when considering the question of whether or not CES is legitimate work for faculty seeking promotion or tenure.
Of course, defining what CES is NOT leaves room for interpretation that threatens to further obfuscate, so CTCC provides definitions from both their own advisory committee and The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement. Connecticut Campus Compact defines CES thus,

Community engaged scholarship can be found in teaching, research and/or service. It is academically relevant work that simultaneously addresses disciplinary concerns and fulfills campus and community objectives. It involves sharing authority with community partners in the development of goals and approaches, as well the conduct of work and its dissemination. It should involve critical review by discipline-specific peers, community partners and the public.

(Cited from CTCC 9)

The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement define CES thus,

Engaged scholarship: A term that captures scholarship in the multiple aspects of teaching, research and/or service. This type of scholarship engages faculty in academically relevant work that simultaneously fulfills the campus mission and goals as well as community needs. It is a scholarly agenda that integrates community issues. (Cited from CTCC 9)

These definitions intersect insofar as they both allow for teaching, research, and service as well as acknowledging the importance of community values in the design of CES initiatives, though the wording of the first definition describes the role of community partners in a slightly more empowering way, pointing to the authority of community partners rather than community need. Ultimately, the CTCC leaves us with a definition of CES that includes work that is truly
community-engaged and results in the kind of rigorous disseminatable scholarship that upholds the standards of published academic work.

To focus more on community engagement as it pertains to service-learning in composition, I turn to the CCCC’s “Statement on Community-Engaged Projects in Rhetoric and Composition.” Here, the CCCC defines community engagement rather than community-engaged scholarship, alleviating some of the burden and rigor of publication and career concern in order to examine what rhetoric and composition as a field can contribute to the legitimacy of community engagement through more focused attention to the public good. According to the CCCC Statement, community-engaged projects are “scholarly, teaching, or community-development activities that involve collaborations between one or more academic institutions and one or more local, regional, national, or international community group(s) and contribute to the public good” (web). It is worth noting that the position statement is for Community-Engaged Projects rather than scholarship, thus alleviating the need for publication or the CTCC’s definitions for what community-engaged scholarship is NOT, but they do indicate that projects must be well-conceived, pursued over time, and designed to reciprocally benefit academic institutions and community groups (web). Therefore, while their definition does not exclude as many types of engagement as that of the CTCC, projects must meet certain criteria to be recognized by the CCCC. It is also worth noting that the statement replaced the CCCC’s “Position Statement on Faculty Work in Community-Engaged Settings” in 2014, and Deans published an interview with Reflections in 2000 in which he shares that the CCCC had institutionalized service-learning in the form of a national service-learning committee (“CCCC Institutionalizes” 3), which put service-learning—now recognized as a subset of community engagement—at the fore.
The terminology for community engagement, projects and partnerships varies depending on the time of the utterance and the discipline in which it is applied. And there are discipline-specific terms for rhetoric and composition, as well, such as Peck, Flower, and Higgins’ *community literacy* (see also, Flower), which they define simply as “a search for an alternative discourse” (“Community Literacy” 205). While this definition leaves plenty of room for interpretation, Peck et al. describe four key aims of community literacy, the foremost of which is *social change*, or change at the hands of more than a select few, achieved through the people writing or composing as a form of social action. For this to happen, the next three aims for community literacy must be in place: *intercultural conversation*—to democratize the pool of who gets to speak and who gets heard—a *strategic approach*—so that the community conversation results in new strategies for enacting social change—and *inquiry*—to openly acknowledge older conversations or strategies that failed as well as examine ongoing “conflicts, presumptions, and practices we bring to new partnerships” (205). Peck et al.’s *community literacy*, I would argue, represents not so much a pedagogy, initiative, project, etc. but rather a value that allows rhetoric and composition to engage with the larger goal of social change.

Over the past ten years or so, the term “community writing” has emerged as well to describe projects that involve communities and the academy. The term differs from community literacy insofar as it does not represent an ends, or a constantly emerging and evolving goal for the work of community engagement in education, but rather a confluence of means towards ends like community literacy. As early as 2005, Deans deploys the term in “Genre Analysis and the Community Writing Course,” published in *Reflections*, to show how genre shapes the writing instruction that he does to support students in their service-learning projects with community

\[2\] See also Flower’s 2000 *Reflections* article, “The Evolution of ‘Intercultural Inquiry’.”
partners. Here, Deans differentiates between his first-year and upper-level writing courses by explaining how his first-year writing courses more carefully balance their adherence to academic genres and the texts community organizations need while in upper-level courses, students dedicate their writing time more fully to the genres their community partners need (15).

Later, and also in Reflections, Michelle Hall Kells (director of Writing Across Communities at The University of New Mexico) takes up the term again in 2016’s “A Prison Story: Public Rhetoric, Community Writing, and the Politics of Gender” and “The Rhetorical Imagination of Writing Across Communities: Nomos and Community Writing as a Gift-Giving Economy.” In the former article, Hall Kells focuses on the term “community writing” as “an overtly neutral construct, de-politicized container, an empty trope, and a vague conceptual metaphor” (17), and contends that “all writing is community writing” (18). While the term is indeed an umbrella—and if we use the word “writing” as a noun, one that denotes products over processes—“community writing” has taken hold as a name for work that can include service-learning, public writing courses, faculty/community partnerships among other initiatives. Take, for example, the Coalition of Community Writing’s Conference on Community Writing and the Community Writing Project in Philadelphia.

As noted above, community writing need not be classroom-based. For example, in “Sustainability Deferred,” Deans mentions a project he maintains as Director of the University of Connecticut Writing Center where the Center partners with one local middle or high school every year to help establish a writing center in that school (102). I can speak to that project personally, because as a graduate student working in the University of Connecticut Writing Center, I coordinated that program for the 2017-18 academic year. That year, one undergraduate student in UConn’s School of Education and I made weekly visits to a local middle school,
where we worked with an English teacher to train middle school students to tutor writing. This project engages community writing as the processes by which middle schoolers encounter and internalize college-level writing center theory and use it to coach their peers as they craft texts themselves. This in concert with the other projects listed above touch upon the variety of ways communities and the academy can work together, and service-learning is just one among them.

**Why Service-Learning?**

Over the past fifteen years in writing studies, the term “service-learning” has gone out of style. This could be because some argue that the “learning” part makes promises that are too big or it could be due to the less-than-prestigious, or even demeaning “service” part of the term. Nevertheless, I am sticking with it. Here’s why.

Referentially put, service-learning here represent the enactment of the values that hold dear community literacy, community engagement, and public writing in the classroom by attempting to embed students in the situations (Feldman) and encourage them to draw upon genres (Deans) to engage with local publics (Long) to create community literacy (Flower, Peck et al.). This does not always look the same, and by using the term, I do not intend to reduce service-learning to a one-size-fits-all way to teach a class; I realize that implementation of service-learning relies heavily on local contexts and available means. Nor do I intend to minimize criticism of service-learning. On the contrary, I use it precisely because these criticisms must remain part of the conversation as I attempt to determine what students take with them after finishing service-learning courses; whatever I learn must be appreciated with these criticisms in mind.

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3 See also Lindenman; Lindenman and Lohr
So, I find it necessary to mention some of the criticisms of service-learning that are grounded in folly themselves as well as those it would be folly to dismiss. First, some criticisms of service-learning come from reactionary or neo-liberal standpoints, and I can address them rather quickly. For example, in 2008, Egger proposed that service-learning “conceals the promotion of a particular social agenda” (183), and that all interactions (including ones that pay) involve both service and learning; forcing students to serve without pay “attempts to promote a communitarian, anti-individualistic social agenda, and the attempt and the agenda are educationally harmful” (183, 184). This response to service-learning is troubling because it promotes its own social agenda that values capital over any non-commodified value that comes of work, and it responds to only the education of students as receivers of knowledge that they can capitalize on in the future, overlooking their social education and the potential for, as Feldman puts it, a more engaged university. Most striking, however, this criticism overlooks service-learning’s potential for positive social change.

Along similar lines, Gallup and Marcovitz note that “Conservative columnists and lawmakers have denounced mandatory community service as a violation of civil rights, likening it to indentured servitude and even slavery” in high school curricula (web). Gallup and Marcovitz note a Carnegie Foundation report that recommends all high school students perform 120 hours of volunteer work, and they note research from Lynda McDonnell, a lecturer in social issues at the University of Minnesota, that shows her students “were out of touch with poverty because they had never experienced it” (cited from Gallup and Marcovitz web). But Gallup and Markovitz maintain that compulsory community service does not instill in students a genuine concern for remedying social inequity. For these students, such service simply completes an assignment; they have no opportunity to discover problems and become concerned enough to act
on their own. It is racially insensitive to refer to compulsory service-learning for white, middle class students (the students in Gallup’s and Markovitz’s article) as slavery, primarily because it minimizes the inhumane treatment of actual slaves, but also because those students do not share an historical experience of slavery that still effects racial inequities in American today. Furthermore, this argument overlooks the attention that scholars pay specifically to making service meaningful to students and criticizes high school service-learning experiences as a representation of the practice as a whole.

Not all criticism of service-learning is so reductive or grounded in a reactionary impulse to safeguard unearned social privilege, however. For example, in an article warning against the reifying effects of service-learning programs in which “[t]he socially-constructed consent of the subordinate to the dominant culture, the central tenet of the concept of hegemony, occurs” (242), Lee Artz points out that “[c]ommunication is…a primary means for domination—and resistance, if subordinate groups have the opportunity to construct their own meaning” (242). However, “subordinate groups” may very well enter into service-learning programs by choice, and in that role, they can construct meaning as service-learners. As potential members of the communities with which they interact, languages of power need not inform the service they do. Regardless, arguments like Artz’s are important because they can and must inform university stakeholders as they theorize community engagement and service-learning. I do not refute Artz’s argument, but rather present it as a reminder of the potential damage hastily planned and executed service-learning endeavors can do, and they remind me of Mathieu’s examples of service-learning and community partnerships that went wrong in Tactics of Hope.

In her examples, Mathieu points out ways universities can fail in community partnerships, and Artz adds to the conversation the power dynamics that exist between students
and faculty, ones that service-learning curricula can reify, especially if faculty impose them on students from marginalized backgrounds. Similarly, Keller, Nelson, and Wick note an argument against service-learning in nursing programs that are traditionally gendered female and “too readily embrace women’s traditional caretaking roles and overlook the power imbalances associated with these roles, encourag[ing] women to embrace their subordination, not their liberation” (39). Indeed, a program that takes women out of the classroom and puts them to work before study is over belittles the importance of that study and suggests that women’s ultimate aim is to serve. Ostensibly, the degree a woman holds pales in importance compared to the degree to which she can serve. This argument points out failures of service-learning theory to account for gender, even though the programs it puts into question differ from composition in key ways. For example, I am unsure if nursing programs offer an alternative to performing the duties of a nurse, whereas composition students have the opportunity to publish in community newsletters, bolstering their resumes and cultivating their public voices. That said, and much like Artz’s argument, this one does the important work of highlighting the potential for overlooking how gendered power dynamics can complicate students’ learning in service-learning partnerships.

In writing studies specifically, Coogan critiques Bruce Herzberg’s early example of the service-learning course he taught at Bentley in Massachusetts to show a failure of service-learning in instigating or catalyzing social change. Herzberg himself found that some students performed a social awakening for him to win a grade, but Coogan adds that the students in the course were not taught to go beyond considering the systematic causes of homelessness and look at what someone could realistically do to change those causes or systems (“Materialist Rhetoric” 668). Simply looking at the systematic causes of a problem does not guarantee that students will
act to change them, especially if those problems appear not only staggeringly widespread, but also intrinsically woven into systems much larger and more established than themselves.

Dubinsky notes that some students, like those in his technical writing courses, might reject any moral education service-learning can offer not only because they value their grade above all else, but also because they may not understand the connection between the public/rhetorical learning they do in service-learning work and the technical improvement they believe they should see in their writing. This problem only gets worse if faculty see their work as teaching technical or vocational skills (63).

A particularly strong criticism of public writing and service-learning along the lines of Coogan’s comes from Eileen Madeiro’s 2007 dissertation, where Madeiros finds that service-learning and public writing endeavors fail in their intended aims. Indeed, she begins the dissertation claiming the assumption that public writing in college coursework results in civic-minded students and social change—the same assumption that propelled service-learning to the fore in the 1990s, according to Madeiros—has proven incorrect (ii). Madeiros examines these assumptions by comparing student writing and activist training manuals, finding that student writing might emulate activist writing, exemplifying citizenship and activism, but “it is a citizenship devoid of political action and an activism devoid of mobilization” (21). She acknowledges that writing classrooms and activist groups are not the same thing because, while students may genuinely want to effect social change, they take their classes to fulfill the requirements for graduation, while activist groups seek only to effect change (121). So, for Madeiros, the next step in public writing theory and pedagogy is to help teach students how to get the writing they do for public writing classes into the public sphere (125), though she laments that “[p]erhaps the best we can hope for is a public writing classroom that functions as a
protopublic” (125, 126). Ultimately, public writing courses—including but not limited to service-learning courses—teach the postures of civic engagement, but do not necessarily teach students to put that posturing into effective action or show them how to make their publicly-oriented texts public.

I wonder, though, if that finding entirely debunks assumptions about public writing and service-learning’s potential to influence students to effect social change through writing and action. One could argue that using student writing as the benchmark for evaluating the effects of public writing and service-learning pedagogy on civic-mindedness puts too much emphasis on the products of writing rather than the learning that accompanies student writing processes. I turn here to Feldman as she reflects on the success of a public writing initiative that used student writing to raise funds for a community organization but warns that “this sort of immediate consequence to a piece of writing makes it look as though we view writing as entirely practical and utilitarian” (6,7) and Wurr, when he acknowledges the shortcomings of his 2002 text-based study on the effects of service-learning (433). Perhaps Madeiros’ classroom as a protopublic represents not a concession but rather something to plan for and plan for well⁴. While this appears to minimize the importance of social change by kicking it down the road until the students are ready, social change does not happen as a result of student writing only; activist groups are filled with people who know what they are doing, and many classrooms, as Madeiros shows us, are not.

Furthermore, the interpretation of the classroom as a protopublic for student writing works quite effectively when both spheres are put to the same scrutiny. For example, Wells

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⁴ See also Weisser
analyses discourse and representation in the public sphere to remind us that we cannot abstain from the public sphere and show that it does not represent, cannot represent, the experience of subaltern classes; it does not even represent all the significant experiences of the ruling classes. It is a specific, historically textured, means of political representation; partial but not illusory. Our life in the classroom is marked by similar inevitability, partiality of representation, and historical contingency. (157)

If the public sphere and the classroom share such key similarities, then the classroom can be seen as a public sphere in and of itself. Much like Negt, Kluge, Weisser, Fraser, and others have shown that there is not, or ought not, be one objective public sphere, Wells highlights the public sphere qualities of the classroom to explore four possibilities of teaching public writing in the classroom setting. Her first approach literally creates a public sphere in the classroom, or at least a model of the public sphere or concentrated public. While Wells admits that the public sphere/classroom alignment is not perfect because, unlike public spheres, the classroom has its own exigencies, she also notes that if cultural criticism is at the center of the class, then the potential for public exigency is there (163). In other words, the classroom cannot work as a public sphere simply because the people in it are diverse, but rather the work of the class must be directed towards achieving public sphere exigency by centering on cultural critique.

While her first model for public writing in the classroom makes the public sphere/classroom alignment literal, Wells offers alternatives, which could overlap. First, the classroom could take on public writing by incorporating existing public writing critically. Wells suggests including not only critical essays into class reading, but also, gesturing towards Mary Louise Pratt, the genres of the contact zone, including parody and dialogue, as such a shift in
subject matter could result in a shift in the aims of writing from disclosure to performance (163). By focusing on how writing critiques culture—rather than simply what it says about culture—students can internalize how their writing can achieve something; they can learn how it becomes active and public. Her third strategy aligns well with what Madeiros hopes public writing courses will do by allowing students to create public writing in class, writing for advocacy groups outside of the academy and directly challenging ideological reproduction. While she acknowledges that this approach will prove politically thorny, as some of this work could directly subvert the ideological stance of the academy, for example, she holds firm that these challenges are not enough to dissuade such a pedagogy (163). Finally, Wells’ fourth option for public writing is to “work with the discourses of the disciplines as they intervene in public” (164), or to take the discourse knowledge that students in upper-level writing courses have learned from their majors and apply them to public concerns. While students may not necessarily share in their peers’ disciplinary knowledge, the common learning goal for the class could be to make disciplinary writing publicly significant in this model.

Service-learning also has the potential to make student writing public, and since, as I’ve noted, the pedagogy is not monolithic, interactions between students, faculty, and community stakeholders could prove effective in a cooperative effort to make public writing and writers. Primarily, since service-learning involves students as well as faculty in direct interaction with representatives of communities, I find it an excellent opportunity to explore the rhetorical possibilities of what Susan Jarratt calls “middle spaces” (cited from Coogan “Sophists” 159), or spaces where stakeholders from multiple discourse communities can challenge local “truths” that stakeholders consider metaphysical but are, in fact, situated and constructed. Coogan expands on this definition, applying Mathieu’s tactical/strategic paradigm to note that middle spaces have the
potential for “not a strategic orientation to the public work of rhetoric, but at tactical one. Making a middle space is not generating and then disseminating ideal strategies for rhetorical intervention but generating publics capable of addressing their own social problems” (“Sophists” 159). For this to work in a service-learning relationship, academic stakeholders must come to the middle space critical of their own a priori, situated “truths,”—such as their outsider perceptions of “communities”—but it is also essential that the middle space share in that critical approach by acknowledging the perception of authority that a unified and heavily credentialed body like the university enjoys. In reality, the university is not a homogenous entity; students do not necessarily share in the worldviews of faculty. More importantly, they may not read that way to others approaching a service-learning middle space. Involving students in such a middle space creates opportunities to water down the perceived authority of faculty as well as help protect against the risk of a monolithic university dominating middle space discourse. But of course, this is only a potential, and it is beyond the scope of my study to theorize and model the possibilities for achieving this potential when we have little to go on when deciding if such potential could benefit students, who are, after all, a key group of stakeholders in such a service-learning middle space.

A Taxonomy of Values and Outcomes

To highlight the values in each type of community-engaged, publicly rhetorical university endeavor, I place service-learning in relationship but apart from faculty/community partnerships and public writing courses based on its interaction with students, faculty, and diverse community stakeholders all at once. It seems that the body of community-engaged and/or publicly rhetorical work falls roughly into three categories: service-learning courses, public writing courses, and faculty/community partnerships. All hold as their ideal the potential for social change, but they
differ in their approaches to such change in key ways. Service-learning courses tend to work towards educating citizen-writers in partnership with community organizations and create sustainability in their endeavors for the good of community organizations who may not realize the benefit of service-learning partnerships within the span of one semester or academic year. Here, since service-learning is often based in classrooms and community spaces, learning must happen to benefit students and sustainability must be possible to benefit communities.

Public writing courses, such as the ones Madeiros describes, work towards social change with slightly different values. Students remain central, but community or activist organizations serve less as partners for students and more as models for how those students can effect change. Therefore, public writing courses tend to work towards creating citizen-writers capable of creating effective public texts. Here, sustainability does not seem as crucial to the endeavor as the creation of texts that can effect change, as social change seems to be a more immediate goal.

Finally, in faculty/community partnerships, such as Cushman or Heath’s research, Mathieu’s community publishing work, or the UConn Writing Center’s partnership with local secondary schools to establish writing centers, sustainability is absolutely necessary, and somewhat more possible than in course-based partnerships, as faculty tend to focus on projects for longer than a semester. Public texts can take forms other than student writing. For example, Mathieu’s contributions to Spare Change News are contributions to a public text, as well as the publication that results from Cushman and Heath’s research.

To help draw attention to service-learning’s stress on creating citizen-writers, I propose the taxonomy below. Unlike Deans’ prepositional framework, this taxonomy does not describe student writing in relationship to a community, but rather it organizes community engagement into three types of endeavor, intentionally focusing on each endeavor’s ideal values to represent
its contribution to one shared goal, social change. In the cases of citizen-writers and public
texts, the focus is on the product. This is intentional and not meant to value products over
processes; the processes differ vastly even among courses or partnerships of the same kind, and I
do not wish to impose a minimizing structure on the diverse and locally situated nature of
community-engaged endeavors. Nor is this taxonomy, like Sigmon’s continuum, intended as a
guide for determining under which heading an endeavor falls, or like Sigmon’s typography, to
make a case for nomenclature. As I will discuss in Chapter 2, other taxonomies, such as those by
Eleanor Long and Paul Heilker organize the type of social change that drives community-
engaged teaching or the type of learning outcomes they promise, but mine departs in some
significant ways from their proposals. It is a temporary heuristic I have assembled to highlight
some of the most prominent values of community engagement and call specific attention to
service-learning as a type of community engagement that values, at once, educating citizen-
writers, effecting social change, and allowing for planned sustainability. I hope that this
attention to the education of citizen-writers will unearth new aims or outcomes of service-
learning instruction in composition that will displace the ones I name here.
Figure 5 represents how these approaches to community engagement sit in relationship to each other. This entire diagram would fall inside of a larger circle labeled something like writing studies’ approach to breaking down the barriers between the academy and community. These are just three approaches to the problem Boyer noted in the early 90s. Also note that there is overlap between all three of the approaches, and there are outliers to this taxonomy. Rousculp’s Community Writing Center in Salt Lake City, for example, involved students, though not necessarily as students working at the Community Writing Center for class credit, required sustainability, and served as a place to effect social change through texts, though not necessarily
student texts. Similarly, in “Sustainability Deferred,” Deans makes clear that faculty do not always have the freedom to focus on sustainable projects as long as they otherwise would when personal and professional demands pull their attention in other directions. Therefore, this taxonomy is not intended to map flawlessly on the landscape of community engagement in academia, organizing every endeavor neatly into one of three categories, but rather it is meant to reflect trends in writing studies’ contributions to this engagement and highlight the critical role learning plays in service-learning in the education of citizen-writers.

The Study

Moving forward with this focus on the education of citizen-writers towards the ends of social change and writing education, my study consists of a series of case-studies based on retrospective interviews conducted with students who have taken First-Year Writing Courses at the University of Connecticut between Fall 2008 and Spring 2015. Of the 157 students invited to participate in this one round of in-person interviews, roughly two thirds of them took First-Year Writing Courses at UConn with a service-learning component. My call for participants resulted in 13 in-person interviews applicable to my study. Of those 13, nine had taken service-learning courses, and four had taken more traditional first-year writing courses that I taught between the fall 2015 and spring 2016 semesters at the UConn Storrs campus. Of the nine service-learners, one took a course I taught at the UConn Stamford in the Fall semester of 2014, and eight took courses at the Storrs campus taught by either Tom Deans or another faculty member in partnership. I received Institutional Review Board approval to conduct the interviews (protocol number H18-053), record them, and transcribe the recordings. For the first phase of this study, I created case studies of the 13 participants based on those interviews, and for the second phase, I segmented those transcriptions into topical chains and t-units and coded those units to provide a
more linguistic analysis based on the participants’ words alone\textsuperscript{5}. To inform my interpretation of this data, I use the key terms from my above taxonomy in my analysis to determine if and how students and alumni reflections on their experience fit into that taxonomy.

My findings are situated, as my pool of participants are all UConn students, but they are telling, as I interviewed students and alumni who took their first-year writing courses between Fall 2008 and Spring 2015, and I was able to speak with participants who were still finishing their undergraduate careers, those who were in graduate school at the time of our interview, and one from 2008, who had finished his formal education. Taken in conjunction with the findings of Tucker-Loner, Eyler and Giles, Long, and the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) at UCLA, among others, my findings confirm and complicate existing findings about service-learning. For example, while the research of Tucker-Loner, Eyler and Giles, and HERI finds that students learn a sense of civic duty from service-learning experiences, my case studies and coded analyses suggest that the participants in my study were already inclined towards civic action (indeed, those who took the service-learning classes at Storrs enrolled in the course knowing there was a service-learning component), and even those who had not taken service-learning courses voiced an inclination to become socially active. My study does suggest, however, that those who took service-learning courses were more well equipped to seek out opportunities for social action or recognize such opportunities when they presented themselves in unexpected places, such as professional or other academic situations.

In a related finding, some former service-learners found that they were equipped to make intelligent career or graduate school choices based on the kind and extent of social change they wanted to see. My data also suggests that service-learners who took what Deans labels “writing

\textsuperscript{5} My analysis will continue after the completion of this dissertation, as I am scheduled to bring this study to the Dartmouth Summer Seminar in Composition Research in New Hampshire during the summer of 2019.
for the community” courses (53) learned a sense of genres as tools for specific exigencies—including social change—as well as how to balance their personal writing choices with those of others to both collaborate and co-author texts, sometimes learning that co-authoring can be detrimental for such a text but ultimately good for their learning. Ultimately, though, my data corroborates the findings from other longitudinal studies (Beaufort; McCarthy; Sternglass) that learning is uneven and gradual, and service-learning courses themselves are indeed valuable, but they also count as one among many meaningful experiences students encounter during college. Service-learning holds an important place among other high-impact practices (Kuh) that can achieve many of the outcomes of service-learning; service-learning courses are appropriate and valuable for students who are willing and/or able to take them on, but the pedagogy is not the only way to educate civic-minded students.

In short, the research into community engagement over the past 15 years has turned away from classroom-based community partnerships, but the turn of the 21st century saw a lot of service-learning research and teaching, in composition courses and otherwise. Those courses had effects on the students who took them, and it is important to consider what those effects were, whether they were desirable for students, and if/how to seek out those effects in our teaching today. I cannot overstate the value of the research into the effects of community/university partnerships on community organizations and members because we have learned and continue to learn how to mindfully bridge the gap between universities and their surrounding communities. In fact, while much of that research looks into community publishing efforts or other partnerships that do not involve students, some of that research has even shown how those that do involve students can more mindfully work alongside community partners. But, given all that we have learned over the past decades, it is time to return to those students and learning
outcomes and begin amassing a body of research into how community-engaged writing instruction can continue to evolve. It is uncool to look at service-learning and students at the moment, but given the history of longitudinal, student-based research and its role in legitimizing Writing Across the Curriculum, the effects of such work can create new knowledge of how students learn about writing and how to be not only civic-minded but also actively so, and that potential is anything but uncool.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Theoretical Underpinnings

As we have seen, service-learning is a relatively new term, arising only in the very later decades of the twentieth century. That is not to say, however, that the values associated with it have no roots in rhetorical or educational theory. In fact, Dubinsky, Eyler and Giles, Deans, Comstock, and others have intentionally established theoretical underpinnings for service-learning in existing rhetorical and educational theory to both help establish service-learning as an academic (rather than simply pedagogical) enterprise and create promise for future service-learning-specific theory. For example, Dubinsky explicitly asserts that service-learning and community engagement arise from the values of Ancient Greeks and Romans. Specifically, Dubinsky notes that, for Aristotle, rhetoric should work not only to persuade, but to do so by appealing to ethos, showing that there are moral implications to certain arguments (61).

Dubinsky moves on to explain how Cicero built on Aristotle’s moral claim to assert that students need to be taught such responsibility in their rhetorical instruction, and that “Quintillian extended Cicero’s ideals to produce speakers and writers who had their communities’ best aims at heart” (61). Importantly, Dubinsky claims that service-learning specifically can teach students not only practical, vocational skills, but also the practical wisdom, or phronesis, to execute those skills critically and responsibly (63). For Dubinsky, service-learning’s stated goals of reciprocity and reflection not only require mutually beneficial partnerships, but they also can and must teach students to critically examine any partnership—community action or professional work—critically and with a sense of social responsibility. Clearly, Dubinsky sees a distinct relationship between the values of rhetorical instruction (and therefore writing instruction) and service-learning going back to classical rhetoric.
But to find theoretical roots for what we now call service-learning, we need not go as far back as antiquity. Therefore, this literature review will mention briefly the roots of writing studies theory pertinent to service-learning discourse but pick up in more detail scholarship from the late twentieth century to the present day. Case in point, Eyler and Giles turn to Dewey in 1994 not so much to ground service-learning in a tradition begun by Dewey and naturally leading to service-learning, but rather to intentionally establish a theoretical groundwork for the pedagogy. Eyler and Giles note that, by 1994, service-learning had warranted plenty of research into its viability as a pedagogy, and one that could permeate the barriers of academic insularity. In order for the work to have long-lasting significance and credibility, though, a theoretical framework was necessary as “a systematic way of generating and organizing [further] knowledge” (78). Eyler and Giles turn to Robert Merton’s 1949 assertion that such theorizing can provide a “grounds for prediction” (78), allowing service-learning research and theory to grow in its own right rather than relying on immediate observable outcomes; in other words, some theoretical basis allows service-learning scholars the freedom to form hypotheses to spur further research and implementation.

So Eyler and Giles begin that work, pointing to what they see as already existing “Deweyian influence” (“Theoretical Roots” 78) in current service-learning at the time of their writing. Namely, they focus in on the commonalities in Dewey’s and service-learning’s conception of learning and then of service. For Eyler and Giles, a key point of contact between Dewey and service-learning is the intersection of experience and education. Dewey cautions that not all experiences are educative, and that without proper continuity and interaction, experiences

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6 Earlier, in 1977, Janet Emig turned to Dewey to theorize what she dubbed composition’s “tacit tradition” (“The Tacit Tradition”), a move that Fishman recalled in 1993 (“Explicating our Tacit Tradition”). As I will show in my explanation of service-learning scholar’s use of Friere’s work, influential scholars such as Dewey and Friere often appear across theoretical boundaries when used to establish historical precedent.
are not likely to be so. That is to say, if teachers direct the continuity on which experiences play out towards the ends of growth and development, and if they also select those experiences so that they include some interaction between the internal and external for students—if students’ presumptions and expectations are challenged—then learning occurs (Eyler and Giles 79). On the service side of the coin, Dewey’s stress on citizenship, community, and democracy map well onto service-learning theory. Namely, they point out that “community was a core concept for [Dewey’s] social philosophy. It was the communal association that gave rise to the moral, intellectual, and emotional aspects of life as well as the foundations of democracy” (81). As service-learning discourse has grown, and in part given way to the larger discourse of community engagement or community writing, this point of contact has indeed proven foundational.

But the point of this exercise for Eyler and Giles was to look to the past to contextualize the present and plan for the future, and they end their text by naming some potential steps in relying on Dewey as foundational. While Eyler and Giles call for more work done in the realms of continuity of experience, principles of interaction, inquiry, reflective activity, truly educative experiences, concrete and abstract knowledge, the great community, citizenship, and democracy, I want to name only a couple of highlights to show how the push to establish Dewey as a foundational philosopher for service-learning can continue to guide growth in the discourse nearly twenty-five years after Giles and Eyler began this work. For example, under the continuity of experience area for theoretical development, Eyler and Giles ask whether or not there is a developmental continuum of service-learning experiences and, if so, does that continuum project into adulthood (82)? While there has been plenty of research into service-learning outcomes relying on the work within the semester, and often relying on texts produced by the end of it,
there has yet been little accounting for any projected continuum of experience let alone performance after the end of a service-learning class. Furthermore, Eyler and Giles ask if “involvement in community-focused service-learning lead[s] to lifelong community involvement” and, more generally, if there are any other long-term positive effects from the exposure to Dewey’s ideal democracy (83). In short, while scholarship has done well to situate Dewey as a foundational figure in service-learning, lending the pedagogy theoretical legitimacy and plans for further theorizing, nearly a quarter of a century of research has not exhausted that potential.

In 2000’s Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition, Tom Deans deepens the connection between Dewey’s theories of education and service-learning, specifically in the field of rhetoric and composition. While I will go into more detail on Deans’ three-tiered taxonomy of service-learning later, it is worth noting here that he, like Eyler and Giles, explicitly and deliberately places Dewey as a central figure in theorizing service-learning, noting that “Dewey is an apt thinker to call on to contextualize service-learning not only because of his deliberations on experiential learning but also because he connects these matters, through his social philosophy, to the issues of reflective activity, citizenship, community and democracy” (29). Deans also moves on to ground his own “writing for the community” model of service-learning in Deweyan theory, as writing-for initiatives “tend to focus on the same synergistic relations of knowledge to action and the individual to society” (53) prominent in Dewey’s pragmatism.

Eleanor Long, in 2008’s Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics, links to Deans to continue theorizing service-learning in Dewey’s tradition. Specifically, she notes that,

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7 See also Deans’ 2009 “Richard Rorty’s Social Hope and Community Literacy”
in his description of “writing with the community” models, Deans warns that students run the risk of encountering too wide a chasm between what they preconceive as learning activity and what service-learning asks of them. Long, however, sees nothing wrong with cognitive dissonance so long as teachers can predict it and weave into their teaching preparation for going public (198). Such preparation is in large part possible and theoretically justified when considering Dewey’s stress on the importance of teachers acknowledging the internal as well as objective factors that come to play in interactional educational experiences (Experience and Education 39). Essentially, we know this risk will arise when students do not expect what is coming, and that cognitive dissonance can be made productive when we approach it not as a barrier but as an opportunity to use the discomfort to punctuate a learning experience in the memories of students so long as neither the internal nor objective side of the interaction dominates.

While Dewey has been explicitly and intentionally made foundational for service-learning and community engaged scholarship discourse, it is important to point out that his work can still complicate the notion of community/academy partnerships as well as the abstract notion of “community.” In Democracy and Education, for example, Dewey, using the terms “community” and “society” as near synonyms, notes the dangerously normalizing nature of naming groups as communities from without:

The terms society, community, are thus ambiguous. They have both a eulogistic or normative sense, and a descriptive sense, a meaning de jure and a meaning de facto. In social philosophy, the former connotation is almost always uppermost. Society is conceived as one by its very nature. The qualities which accompany this unity, praiseworthy community of purpose and welfare, loyalty to public
ends, mutuality of sympathy are emphasized. But when we look at the facts which the term denotes instead of confining our attention to its intrinsic connotation, we find not unity, but a plurality of societies, good and bad (82).

Note that Dewey does not always deploy the terms “community” and “society” so synonymously, but in this case, he explicitly does, and awareness of the dangers of imposing idealized—by and for the academy—notions of a singular community or society on a group from without permeate service-learning discourse today.

Paulo Freire is a figure whose work has also helped scholars to theorize service-learning and community engagement even though it is not directly about the pedagogy. In 1996, Saltmarsh refers to Eyler and Giles’ 1994 “Theoretical Roots,” which both notes the comparisons of service-learning in practice to Deweyian pragmatic values and consciously places Dewey’s work as a theoretical ancestor of burgeoning service-learning theory. Saltmarsh adds, however, Eyler and Giles’ work left open the question of whether service-learning proved a form or philosophy of experiential education, concluding that service-learning is a distinct pedagogy (or form) informed by a philosophical tradition (“Education for Critical Citizenship” 14). And that philosophical tradition does not represent a straight line from Dewey to service-learning, as influential scholars, such as Freire, have done the work of adapting Dewey to a new time and new contexts. Saltmarsh points specifically to Freire’s wording on the role of the teacher in Pedagogy of the Oppressed and a significantly similar quote from Democracy in Education in which each scholar calls for the barriers between students and teachers to bridge, each party informing and helping the other learn (14). Considering Freire wrote his doctoral dissertation

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While it is worth noting that Freire’s work has had considerable, defining influence on scholars’ theorization and implementation of critical pedagogy (see Bizzell, Berthoff, Shor, George), I focus specifically on Freire’s influence on service-learning and community engagement, not to tie service-learning and critical pedagogy intrinsically together, but simply to show that they share this influence.
with Dewey figuring prominently, it is no surprise that Freire would adapt this sentiment and that his emancipatory pedagogy would echo the values of Dewey’s experiential learning.

As a later example of this tradition of Dewey via Freire, in 1999, Cushman challenges prevailing notions of the public intellectual, charging that the current model of public intellectualism remains centered around the academy, and even those who attempt to speak to larger audiences speak to socioeconomically privileged ones through media outlets like The New Yorker and Academe (“Public Intellectual” 330). Cushman posits service-learning and activist research as ways academics can go public with a sufficiently broad sense of the “public,” and when activist research ideals are applied to service-learning endeavors, students can avoid paternalistic “liberal do-gooder” approaches to working with those they see only as less fortunate (“Public Intellectual” 332). Cushman gestures to Freire’s emancipatory teaching, modeled in Pedagogy of the Oppressed to show how learning can happen across boundaries of means and privilege that does not impose the ideals of the privileged on the oppressed, thus ideologically colonizing them. Cushman is careful to note that scholars like Apple and Weis, Giroux, Luke and Gore, Lankshear and McLaren have adapted Freire’s emancipatory pedagogy from the teaching outlined in Pedagogy of the Oppressed and that Freire himself urged that those who apply his work to their own teaching in the United States not import him wholesale because exported pedagogies must be reinvented to make them emancipatory specifically for those involved (“Public Intellectual” 333). While Cushman applies emancipatory pedagogy to activist research, this application works to posit emancipatory pedagogy as an ideal for further service-learning discourse as well.

Simply looking at how Freire’s banking concept of education has informed critical pedagogy can inform how educators can, in turn, teach that critical pedagogy to service-learning
students. In Freire’s condemnation of banking education, “knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (72). When applied to teachers in the classroom, this criticism has had considerable sway in how instructors approach teaching, but it maps flawlessly onto how students can learn to enter community spaces in a reciprocal, respectful partnership. In fact, in applying Dewey to his theoretical framework for service-learning, Deans relies on Freireian as well as Deweyan theory to show how progressive education rejects elitist and factory-like industrialist values (39) and describing the dialogic and activist nature of the work at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh, which exemplifies his writing with the community model of service-learning (116).

While Dewey and Freire figure prominently in the theorization of service-learning, it is important to note that the pragmatic approach to community literacy and applications of Freire’s critical pedagogy in composition differ; the Community Literacy Center, for example, tends to prize pragmatism over critical pedagogy, and Flower turns to Dewey while questioning critical pedagogy⁹. In fact, Flower explicitly does this in Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement when she calls for community-engagement in composition to add to the rhetoric of critique inherent in critical pedagogy, imagining and acting on a “vision of transformation.” In other words, Flower finds in critical pedagogy a means to “speak up” and “speak against” power structures, but in community literacy, she finds a means to “speak with others or speak for our commitments in a nonfoundational way” (2). While Flower notes the value of Freire’s work—and Shor’s extension of it—to help learners achieve critical insights and invite dialogue, she warns that insight and dialogue alone do not necessarily effect change, and in the case of classrooms settings, can sometimes replace or diffuse exigencies for action (132).

⁹ See also Peckham’s 2011 book, Going North Thinking West
Indeed, this deliberate application of Dewey and Freire to legitimize and carve out a possible future for service-learning has not been haphazard. In 2003, Harper, Donnelli, and Farmer recognize that establishing Dewey as a theoretical foundation for service-learning has allowed its practitioners to understand what they do by importing outside perspectives, even if at the time of their writing, that groundwork had not been extensively done (615). They warn, however, that importing a theoretical foundation to promise service-learning a future almost paradoxically puts that future in the balance, and they turn to Robert Tucker to assert that pragmatism is heuristic rather than epistemic (616). By grounding service-learning theory in pragmatism, then, we run the risk of developing the pedagogy (as well as a body of theory that props it up) far too locally; Harper et al. worry that pragmatism answers the question of epistemology with experimentation, which would lead theorists and practitioners to “determine what works best for us in this situation, solving this problem, achieving this goal” (617). Harper et al. address these problems by recognizing the value of Freire’s theory as well as others, such as Cathy Comstock’s application of ecofeminist literary criticism to service-learning (628; see also Barrow in 2015 and Mirmotahari in 2018). But they acknowledge the necessity of establishing some sort of foundational theory and point out that, in 2003, service-learning was being hastily appropriated to either bolster university’s public image or justify neoliberal notions of charity (635). So, while dangers of theorizing service-learning existed, dangers in not theorizing it existed alongside them.

1990s

While Freire and Dewey wrote from the perspectives of other spheres in education, and scholars later interpreted them to apply to higher education, others wrote explicitly in and for the

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10 In 2018, my son came home from kindergarten with a flier for his elementary school’s canned food drive bearing the term “service-learning.”
sphere of American higher education. For example, in 1990, Ernest Boyer attended to the role of teaching in academia, and he was hopeful “that the 1990s may well come to be remembered as the decade of the undergraduate in American higher education” (xi). In *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate*, Boyer critically examines higher education in the United States, noting that universities increasingly (though not openly) value research over teaching. Boyer’s study seeks to put the focus on teaching, and therefore students, but he also notes that the inward focus of universities harms faculty by forcing them into publication and service to gain status in the academy when, often, their original goals were teaching in the academy (xii). In response to this, Boyer voices the need for a more creative view of the professorate, one that prizes teaching and the individuality of institutions.

To show the need for such change, Boyer notes that higher education went through a change in the 1940s, when academia went from being an elite system to a mass system (11), and when higher education went from being a privilege to a right, university focus did not change with student expectation. When education is a privilege, then students can follow their professors on a research-driven path of discovery; learning that happens along the way only adds to the quality of life for the already privileged. But when education is a necessary right, then teaching must take precedent over research. Therefore, Boyer offers a model of scholarship that reacts to this change. This model includes the scholarships of *discovery, integration, application, and teaching*.

In this model, scholarship of discovery adds to the “stock of human knowledge [as well as] the intellectual climate of a college or university (17), and therefore ensures that the tradition of research does not wither away in this new, student-centered model of scholarship. Scholarship of integration builds from discovery by situating what is discovered by “making connections
across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating non-specialists, too” (18). In integration, we see overlap with the values that undergird Writing Across the Curriculum. Scholarship of application asks how this discovered and integrated knowledge can be used to solve real-world—or as Boyer puts it, consequential—problems, but it also goes further to ask how or if those problems themselves can help determine the trajectory of scholarly work (21). While I could stop here and show how Boyer’s scholarship of application has informed service-learning discourse up to the present day, I will move on to the scholarship of teaching because it highlights the teacher’s role in making this model work. Indeed, Boyer draws from Aristotle’s sentiment that “Teaching is the highest form of understanding” but projects that relationship to include the teaching as a bridge between teacher and student (23). In other words, teaching as a scholarly enterprise, rather than the routine job to be done to fund or facilitate more research, brings students to the fore of instructor’s scholarly work.

This concern for students translates to concerns for communities outside of the academy because, as Boyer notes, increasing diversity brings with it increasing obligations to the students that enter into the academy (76). This obligation could include speaking and teaching to strengths that students bring with them, and these students are not the ones bred to enter the pre-1940s academy; they are members of a larger American community. Boyer does not specifically predict that service-learning will emerge from or enable his hopes for the American academy to come into being, but his focus on community highlights the obligation of colleges and universities to positively influence the “world beyond the campus” (75). While Boyer stresses the importance of community to help merge the notions of self-benefit and more altruistic aims (77), and while he hopes that higher education will promote better professionals as well as better
citizens (78), he does not go so far as to recommend service-learning as a pedagogy that will deliver these outcomes.

Later in the 1990s, however, composition had inherited some of the values in Boyer’s model of scholarship. A sociopolitical turn and writing scholarship’s appropriation of the works of Friere and Shor had given critical pedagogy a chance to encourage students to question the power structures that govern them, including the university. Writing Across the Curriculum was questioning the interplay between writing to learn and learning to write, and, as I will cover in more detail, articles had inspired dissertations that would in turn inspire monographs on service-learning and community engagement in writing studies.

So, while scholars such as Peck, Flower, and Higgins had worked towards solidifying terminology for writing and community engagement, as we saw in their “Community Literacy” article, significant work had also established service-learning as a practice. For example, Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters’ *Writing the Community* compiled the work of scholars from across composition to discuss the implications of service-learning as a pedagogy in 1997. While I make something of a leap from Boyer’s call to reimagine the professorate to an edited collection of essays about service-learning in composition to suggest a change in the field, that connection is warranted. Case in point, Stock and Swenson specifically cite Boyer in their contribution to the collection, “The Write for Your Life Project: Learning to Serve and Serving to Learn” when they elaborate on their “combination of collaborative learning, peer tutoring, and service-learning practices that [they] call consultative teaching” (153). Here, Stock and Swenson explicitly name Boyer as they posit consultative teaching as a way of situating teaching as scholarship. Stock and Swenson’s service-learning project indeed calls for a change from the insular teaching of writing in the academy to writing about social issues that matter to students.
by putting them into contact with a network of students and teachers around the United States.

Student writing is then shared with other Write for Your Life Project classrooms (155), thus making student writing public in a way that traditional composition classrooms do not.

But service-learning in composition need not look the same for every classroom and every community, and it may look very different from sharing texts within a national network. Also in Adler-Kassner et al.’s collection, Paul Heilker problematizes the traditional writing classroom, arguing that “writing teachers need to relocate the where of composition instruction outside the academic classroom because such an environment cannot offer students real rhetorical situations in which to understand writing as social action” (71). Here, Heilker not only questions the efficacy of composition classrooms, but he also questions the value of service-learning as it was conceived of at the time of his writing. He names four models, which he considers falling short of their potential. One model has students perform community activities to give them something to write about; another gives students a subject or method for research; another makes students aware of social injustices and inequities; and finally, another helps hone students’ academic writing by relocating the where of composition production to the community to help students frame their ideas in a way more palatable to the academy (73, 74). Heilker proposes a fifth distinct form of service-learning in which students write for community organizations, producing texts that these organizations can use in order to hone their writing abilities while simultaneously awakening them to the social issues of previous service-learning models (76). Heilker describes this service-learning approach as Writing Beyond the Curriculum, specifically claiming a service-learning pedagogy for composition.

In Adler-Kassner et al.’s collection are other viewpoints that remain concerned with the future of higher education, and specifically composition. In her introduction to the text, Bridwell-
Bowles seems apprehensive and asks if service-learning will offer help for higher education in the new millennium. She notes that, despite Boyers’ hope for the 1990s, the academy is still perceived as isolated and exempt from the “late-1990s problems of joblessness, downsizing, and poverty” (19). For Bridwell-Bowles, the academy does not know how to communicate with the world from which its students come and back into which most of them will enter, and while she notes that service-learning will face challenges such as technology changing the locus of education from the classroom to the chatroom\(^\text{11}\) and the “do-gooder” mentality that is often projected onto academia, she believes that experiential learning is still a way to save the academy from the plagues of its history and perception.

In addition to the growing pains Bridwell-Bowles notes that service-learning will have to go through, other service-learning courses in writing had mixed results. For examples, Bruce Herzberg at Bentley University in Massachusetts describes his service-learning course in which students tutored writing and literacy skills at a local homeless shelter. Students participated in “10 hours of tutor training designed to sensitize them to the problems and attitudes of illiterate adults, as well as provide them with some teaching materials and methods” (Community Service” 60). This training left students with an expanded sense of teaching theory and practice, but more significantly, it attempted to disabuse them of an illusion most of them fostered: that the homeless problem centered around the individual without a home who had somehow failed. This illusion proved so pervasive that even students who empathized with the homeless population in general failed to see the systematic inequities that in reality had caused the problem (58). Assumptions about the normality of middle-class life discussed in the comfort of the

\(^{11}\) See also Grabill in 2007
classroom or university halls allow for discourse about social problems but do little to expose their root causes.

Even writing about social inequities has the potential to fail in this regard, since it does not necessarily require interaction with a community. Herzberg notes that he overheard students discussing the course, an “easy A” in many students’ minds, describing the work as “No sweat,” and advising another to “[w]rite that before you went [to the homeless shelter] you had no sympathy for the homeless, but the visit to the shelter opened your eyes” (“Community Service” 59). Aside from the obvious problem of the student not taking the assignment or course seriously, one cause of this problem deserves note. It may be tempting to assume that students fostered a callous attitude towards social inequities because they think of the homeless as an object towards which to claim a new understanding. But it could also be the case that students find themselves torn between self interest and concern for others, and they perceive social awareness as the ends of the course rather than writing or rhetorical growth let alone the ability to put their rhetorical abilities into action12.

The question of what students take with them when they leave composition classrooms and enter communities proves central to theorizing service-learning as the body of scholarship continued to grow and mature. Pulling from her 1997 doctoral dissertation to publish “The Trouble with Transfer” in The Michigan Journal of Service-Learning in 199913 (cited here from its reprinting in Writing and Community Engagement in 2010), Bacon challenges traditional notions of transfer to examine how writers work between classroom and community contexts

12 See also Dubinsky
13 Much like, as I note above, the term “service-learning” is decidedly uncool with writing scholars now in 2018, the word “transfer” did not ring in tune with the chorus of writing studies in 1999, when the field was producing fruitful and important work in critical pedagogy, for example, and challenging students to question institutions. “Transfer,” at the time, carried with it connotations of utilitarian learning or vocationalism.
during and after service-learning courses. She finds that the question of what kinds of knowledge students transfer from classroom to community settings seems like the logical one at first glance, but transfer is not an adequate way to conceptualize that learning (435). She turns to situated learning theory for this inquiry because it highlights the importance of activity in learning, de-emphasizing the role of rules, schemata, and explicit instruction[,] and it focuses less on the mind of the individual learner than on the social world in which learning takes place, suggesting a complex set of relationships among the individual, the members of communities of practice, and the culture as a whole. (438, 439)

While transfer may prove an adequate way to test the effects of a traditional composition course (or may not, that’s not in debate right here), situated learning emphasizes more holistic learning outcomes which Bacon organizes into eight cognitive, affective, and social factors that affect writers in transition.

In her observations of the Community Service Writing Program at San Francisco State University, Bacon notes that some faculty judge writers as weak or strong based on classroom performance, but she found that the following eight factors warrant attention in programs based on community/academy partnerships:

- Knowledge about Writing: Which includes both prepositional knowledge—“familiarity with the set of principles describing writing conventions for written languages and strategies for composing texts” (443)—and writing proficiency—“control over discourse styles” (444).
- Theory of Writing: “[A] writer’s conception of what writing is and what it is for” (444).
• Rhetorical Awareness: “[T]he writer’s sensitivity to the fact that different rhetorical contexts call for different choices about what to say and how to say it” (444).

• Motivation and Attitude Toward the Task: A writer’s interest in a writing task that can “determine whether knowledge is operationalized” (446). Explicit or implicit, long-term learning may not happen when writers simply go through the motions to achieve a writing task.

• Social Relationships: The “ability to establish relationships and assume appropriate social roles” (446).

• Learning Strategies: Or the ability to learn new ways of learning (447).

• Identity as a Writer: Knowledge of how power interacts with the writing process when writers no longer write for teachers, by and large evaluative readers with more content knowledge than writers, and begin to write to inform a readership (448).

• Identity as a Reader: Bacon finds that students who viewed learning as a lifelong process were more open to learning in and outside of the classroom (449), which can in turn affect rhetorical awareness, as the location of learning necessarily changes when one cultivates contextualized rhetorical awareness.

Ultimately, Bacon noted that success in the San Francisco Community Service Writing Program hinged on these eight factors, and not all students performed the same way. But the take-away for writing scholars proves vast. First of all, Bacon lays out a framework for the assessment that service-learning needed at the turn of the century and still nearly twenty years later (see Blackburn and Cushman). She also contributes significant points of focus for the evaluation of student writing and, in turn, some ideal goals of service-learning courses when she notes that, in the Community Service Writing Project “[s]tudents’ success as writers depended
not so much on mastery of the lessons typically covered in composition courses as upon affective
and social aspects of the experience” (449). To apply this more broadly, Bacon contends that
“[i]deally service-learning programs prompt students to question the passive model of
studenthood, calling their attention to the way we participate, in the course of our everyday
activities, in the construction of knowledge” (449). In essence, Bacon comes to mixed findings
about the success of her program, but her findings in terms of the viability of transfer as an
accurate metric for assessing service-learning programs show the potential for service-learning
courses to teach more than the immediately demonstrable knowledge transfer can often track.

Alongside service-learning scholarship in the 1990s, composition took interest in other
types of community engagement, such as faculty research done in partnership with communities
but not necessarily involving students. In 1996’s The Struggle and the Tools: Oral and Literate
Strategies in an Inner City Community, Ellen Cushman reports on her three-year-long
dissertation research project on the intertwining of language and life of African-American people
living in the inner-city section of Quayville, a mid-sized town in the Northeast. Readers
privileged enough not to notice how bureaucracies exercise power over them using language
could see this as a text that exposes the operations of such power, but that is not the book’s aim.
Cushman notes that The Struggle and the Tools “explores how others construct, manipulate, and
negotiate the influences that institutions attempt to exercise on them” (xiv). So, while much
academic discourse at the time of her publishing this book in 1998 had treated how power works
to oppress, Cushman treats how those already aware of that oppression consciously navigate it.
She specifically reports on the rhetorical activities of two Quayville families, the Cadenses and

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14 That is not to say that ethnographic study of language learning arose in the 1990s; see Heath’s 1983 Ways With
Words for an example that precedes The Struggle and the Tools.
the Washingtons, as they knowingly use the rhetorical tools at their disposal to assert their agency during interactions with institutional representatives acting as gatekeepers.

Cushman finds that they do so with rhetorical knowledge that does not need the academic study that scholars like Geneva Smitherman and she contribute (though we in the academy certainly need it). For example, as she describes an incident when Lucy, the matriarch of the Cadense family, employs linguistic elements of White English to communicate with an institutional representative of the Department of Social Services. To describe Lucy’s masterful use of language in this scenario, Cushman turns to Gumperz to name the phenomenon as “diglossic” and Smitherman to note that African-Americans have historically needed to employ diglossic linguistics to survive. Cushman goes so far as to note the specific linguistic differences between White and Black English that Smitherman has described (14), but there is no indication as to whether or not Lucy was aware of either Gumperz or Smitherman; Lucy either knew of this work and employed diglossic linguistic practices with ease or she did not need the scholarship to name and chart this, to her, evident and necessary linguistic practice. Interestingly, some academic stakeholders do need this scholarship to recognize what Lucy intrinsically knows.

Other than setting an example of how to recognize agency in the communities that allow academic stakeholders in for a moment (or three years), The Struggle and the Tools is organized in such a way as to suggest how academics can works against the normalizing effects of the word “community.” For example, Cushman dedicates chapter 3 of the book to Quayville and the residents she does her best to represent faithfully in her text. This chapter charts the history of Quayville as it effects the African-American community at the turn of the 20th century, as well as showing how that community developed the rhetorical tools to survive as the city evolved and providing maps which serve as rhetorical tools for readers to understand population distribution.
in terms of poverty and unemployment within the small city (50, 51). Significantly, though, Cushman also includes one-paragraph biographies of each member of the Cadense and Washington families who agreed to appear in her study (54-57). I underscore the significance of this because, as the use of the word “community” tends to minimize difference in groups who partner with academics or participate in their studies, and as the imposition of that term often comes from those outside of these groups, the inclusion of these biographies reminds readers that, though the complexity of their lives and identities could not come through the pages of this book, the participants in this study resist easy classification into a homogenized “community.” Work such as Cushman and Heath’s broadened the scope of community engagement and provided intersections with the public turn (as opposed to the community turn) in writing studies, but those important contributions also began the trend of focusing more on the “rhetoric” side of the discipline to pursue community engagement, nudging pedagogy (i.e. service-learning) to the “composition” side.

2000s

After the turn of the 21st century, the problems that bothered Boyer in 1990 and Bridwell-Bowles in 1997 continued and evolved, but service-learning in composition also continued to evolve with that discourse. That evolution meant more than arguing that higher education needed service-learning or some other form of experiential or community-based learning. Some looked inward at the academy, as did Adrian Wurr, when he argued for the importance of assessment in service-learning to justify it as a legitimate pedagogy and make it more visible to the academy at large. In “Text-Based Measures of Service-Learning Writing Quality,” originally published in Reflections in 2002, but cited here from its reprinting in Writing and Community Engagement (2010), Wurr assesses service-learning curricula designed as part of the Southwest Project, which
linked “students and teachers at the University of Arizona with their counterparts in two local elementary schools to teach and learn about the land and people of the Southwest” (422, 423). To assess this writing, Wurr turned to holistic assessment and primary trait scoring to avoid what he noted as a flaw in previous quantitative writing analyses that missed important student gains, such as research and library skills not always evident from looking at student writing alone (424). In addition to holistic ratings, Wurr’s assessment narrowed in on analysis of rhetorical appeals, analysis of reasoning, analysis of coherence, and analysis of mechanics to come to numerical representations of student writing in service-learning and non-service-learning courses to find that essays written for service-learning courses scored higher than non-service-learning essays by about half a letter grade (431). He presents this data as part of the argument for service-learning, building on previous research showing the benefits of service-learning for communities (432).

But Wurr is also careful to note that his research does not complete the necessary inquiry into the positive effects of the pedagogy. He recommends that more quantitative assessment be done with varying interpretation of scores, because, for example, scorers in the study were familiar with both the context of the study and the institutional context of first-year writing at Arizona State (432), and this would, no doubt, effect the inter-rater reliability of the assessment positively. But even more importantly to my study, Wurr cautions that the use of student writing alone to assess service-learning initiatives creates a product-oriented argument for the pedagogy. Though Wurr’s study was the first of its kind and shares valuable insight into writing progress in service-learning courses, its data alone highlights the final product of student learning over the learning of composing process, and ultimately, a sharp focus on student writing within the course of three or four months, or even three or four years, may not account for the longer-term effects
on writing performance that could result from student participation in service-learning (433). I would add that one can read Bacon’s “The Trouble with Transfer” in tandem with this assessment to consider how both qualitative and quantitative data together can represent the effects of service-learning on student writing and learning.

Tom Deans’ *Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition* adds to the conversation about the legitimacy of service-learning in composition in a pragmatic way, laying out the often-cited writing *about*, *for*, and *with* paradigm for writing in a service-learning composition classroom. While Deans echoes other scholars’ need and justifications for service-learning in composition, citing Dewey’s pragmatism and Freire’s liberation pedagogy as examples of how service-learning values already fit into the values of composition—and while he also cites Boyer’s claim that the academy is due for a reimagining (7)—Deans also pivots from Heilker’s critical approach to existing service-learning to establish a taxonomy and attempt to respond not as much to the “why” of service-learning, but rather the “how.”

What sets Deans’ taxonomy apart from Heilker’s criticism is an exploration of what works in the existing ways of performing service-learning. Where Heilker names an approach to service-learning in which the pedagogy gives students something to write about, Deans creates a category: writing *about* the community, in which students do community service and then “reflect on their community-based experiences in writing” (85). Here, service-learning activities can inform writing and even instill a sense of social awareness even if their community activity and writing are not one in the same. Writing *for* the community parallels Heilker’s fifth model for service-learning by having students produce texts for a community organization and resembling mini-internships (53), also resembling the projects Bacon describes noted above. Here, while academic writing may at times take a back seat to writing that more directly effects
change, the potency of public writing is clear. Finally, in writing with the community, students work alongside community organizations to determine the type or writing necessary for outcomes decided upon by students and community organizations. Deans explores this third model by describing the Community Literacy center (CDC), a partnership between Carnegie Mellon University and Community House in Pittsburgh. At the CLC, the students of Carnegie Mellon and members of Community House work together to address, in part through writing, the immediate exigencies and dilemmas that residents of urban Pittsburgh face (111).

As well as providing a taxonomy for service-learning in composition, Deans’ text looks forward to how service-learning can grow in the field. For example, he cites the history of Writing Across the Curriculum and the problems it has faced and urges educators interested in starting and maintaining service-learning initiatives to be careful and consider the institutions in which they work. In fact, Deans gestures towards what will come to be known as an institutional model of service-learning when he warns that service-learning, like WAC, does not necessarily have a home in the academy, and therefore, it does not always have funding. Though he offers the cautionary tale of WAC funding, he notes that WAC, in 2000, was in a “healthy state” (168), and this was in large part due to it enjoying some institutional success. Ultimately, Deans suggests that service-learning initiatives could learn something from WAC and enjoy some level of sustainability if practitioners align their efforts with their institutions (169).

Sustainability plays a large part in service-learning discourse in the 21st century. Mathieu’s Tactics of Hope also praises the potential for service-learning in composition, though she takes a cautious stance and warns that “while many in composition are drawn to the immediate rhetorical situations that public writing offers, the consequence of such a turn are multiple, complex, and not easy to summarize” (27). Service-learning requires something for
students to do outside of the classroom, and while that sounds like a banality, it deserves thought because when deciding what that something will be, service-learning practitioners must remember who that something will affect. In fact, it might not be necessary for those practitioners to decide on their own what students in service-learning programs will do outside of the classroom. Mathieu proposes that, while we acknowledge the value of sustainable service-learning programs, we consider the benefits and risks of institutional service-learning initiatives. Namely, she warns that “[w]hile institutionalized service-learning is not evil on its face, it is risky and not necessarily beneficial, especially when universities institutionalize well-intentioned but top-down relationships” (98) with community partners.

As an example of one of these top-down relationships, Mathieu cites the student assigned to work with *Spare Change News*, a street newspaper in Boston, for one semester. The student sent an email to the editor of the publication introducing herself, saying that she had been assigned to work with the organization, and asking for more information or possibly an appointment with a representative of *Spare Change* to learn how she could best serve them. The executive director of *Spare Change* dismissed the email immediately after reading it because it sent the tacit message that the student and her institution had little to no sustained investment in a partnership (100). For starters, the email introduced the student as someone assigned to work with the organization, but this was the first time anyone from *Spare Change* had heard from her, which means nobody from the university had done the work of establishing a partnership, simply assuming that the newspaper could use student help; the student would be in and out in a semester, and *Spare Change* may or may not get another email in four months asking the same questions. Additionally, since the student asked for information about the paper and how she could work with them, it is clear that she had not read the paper to find out what they were doing
While this does not mean that this student’s service-learning class was utterly unaware of the need for a community-institution partnership, it does indicate that such a partnership was not woven into the fabric of the class and that nobody from the institution had established a partnership before sending the student over to be taught.

Mathieu lists other failings of top-down service-learning initiatives, but more importantly, she offers an alternative to what she calls risky and possibly unnecessary institutional service-learning initiatives. Mathieu characterizes top-down partnerships as institution-oriented, beginning with the needs of the institution in mind and then considering the needs of a community, any community. She problematizes this by noting that service-learning looks great on paper, and such initiatives can do wonders for a university or college’s reputation; in fact, she also turns to Bridwell-Bowles’ concerns that service-learning can serve universities, making them publicly relevant. While that may be the case, this relevance should not be the ends of service-learning, but rather a side-effect, and while service-learning initiatives in the institution are not guaranteed to be selfish, the risk is there. Mathieu borrows the terms “strategic” and “tactical” from Certeau and notes that university/community partnerships that originate in the institution tend to be “strategic” because they “emanate from and depend upon ‘proper’ (as in propertied) spaces, like corporations, state agencies, and educational institutions, and relate to others via this proper space” (16). In other words, the perspective is situated and predictable. In contrast, “tactics foreground the temporal and spatial challenges that street-based projects must always face—time challenges, incompatible schedules, the often conflicted special politics involved in deciding on whose turn work can and should take place” (17), and that work is often “calculated actions emanating from unofficial places that lack a propertied locus” (32).

See also Harper, Donnelli, and Farmer’s concerns that failure to theorize service-learning could render it a marketing tool for universities.
Thus, tactical—non-institutionalized—partnerships inherently serve a community (however it defines itself) because the necessary activity is named by that community rather than the institution.\footnote{The tactical/strategic paradigm here does not mean that academy-based programs are always strategic, but rather than strategic partnerships tend to have more long-term goals and require more sustained efforts, and universities have the funds and space to afford this. Tactical partnerships have aims that are more immediate and can respond to the unexpected more nimbly, a quality that community organizations, by necessity, develop.}

Future action coupled with the interests of community partners proves an important talking point in service-learning discourse because often, social change more immediately affects community partners, and such change cannot often happen in the course of a semester. Scholars such as Ellen Cushman have noted the importance of sustainability in service-learning programs for the good of the community organizations with which service-learners partner. Cushman cites a social worker reflecting on the value of UC Berkeley service-learning initiatives who claims that these programs focus too heavily on the research aspect of the service, disappearing once data is gathered (“Sustainable” 40). Such an approach to service-learning clearly places the good of the course (or at least the benefit to the research) over the good of the community and using the community as a tool rather than a partner with which to establish a reciprocally beneficial relationship.

Therefore, Cushman highlights the necessity of sustainable service-learning programs that do not take advantage of community organizations, asserting that

> [s]ervice learning programs that have sustained themselves have incorporated reciprocity and risk taking that can best be achieved when the researcher views the site as a place for teaching, research, and service—as a place for collaborative inquiry—with the students and community partners. (“Sustainable” 43)

And, in Cushman’s view, much of this responsibility lies with the instructor of a service-learning
curriculum (“Sustainable” 44). Indeed, relying on students alone to establish long-standing connections with community organizations essentially asks them to participate in the type of grass-roots movement that can overload students and distract them from the rest of their courses.

Cushman also notes the detrimental effect on student research and scholarship within an unsustained service-learning program in which students were forced to do much of the footwork themselves. Citing Dorman and Dorman, Cushman labels the situation in which students find themselves stymied in their research, not knowing where to begin or where to go, as a “wandering-in-the-dark research project” and warns that many instructors defend such projects on the grounds that research often feels unguided, and that that is inherent to most research (“Sustainable” 45). But the establishment of community relationships, coupled with community activity and research on top of this, according to Cushman, proves an overload for first and second year undergraduates. Perhaps such an approach gives beginning students too much too quickly. See also Deans’ Writing Partnerships and Long’s Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics for discussions of overload and cognitive dissonance, and note that cognitive dissonance, according to Long, can work towards student learning when instructors plan for it well. Cushman warns, though, that instructors can feel tempted to let students take on more than they can handle, thereby not planning for and facilitating productive cognitive dissonance.

Much writing studies scholarship around the turn of the century focused on reasons for establishing university/community partnerships, the best ways to create and sustain such partnerships on the university side, and the dangers of not planning them well. But Christian Weisser’s 2002 contribution, Moving Beyond Academic Discourse: Composition Studies and the Public Sphere, places the turn of the century “social turn” on a theoretical timeline in writing studies, looking not at why to pursue partnerships, but why writing studies feels the need to now.
Opening with a history of writing studies beginning at the 1966 Dartmouth Seminar and moving through the shifts from current traditional, cognitivist, expressivist, and social constructionist rhetoric, Weisser’s first chapter seems to suggest that the public turn was a logical next step in writing studies. As a matter of fact, Weisser concludes the book predicting that “public” will become the next significant keyword in writing studies (131). For Weisser, writing studies has moved from considering writing a transient skill that “current traditionalist” approaches could teach, learning better when cognitivists such as Emig pointed out that writing is a process that develops as writers grow intellectually under the guidance of teachers, then abandoning the importance of the teacher when Elbow called attention to the “hidden truths” germinating within writers themselves that some well-intentioned teachers stunt. Ultimately, though, and according to Weisser, such individualism made social change difficult if not impossible by undermining political solidarity and cooperation; Bruffee among others asserted that knowledge was socially constructed, and this includes constructing knowledge in partnership with peers as well as teachers. It makes sense, then, that a public turn is in order when the scope of where knowledge begins and grows has moved from the curriculum to the teacher, to the student, and to the classroom. The street (see Mathieu and Reynolds) is the only place left for it to go.

It is precisely through criticism of the centrality of teacher authority that the discourse went public. Weisser notes that radical pedagogies made way for this turn-of-the-century shift; after all, without radical thought and action, changes don’t often take place. Specifically, Weisser joins Deans, Cushman and other in gesturing towards Freire’s contributions. And more directly influential of this public turn were those whom Victor Villanueva named the “Feireistas” (26),

17 And in a way, he was right. Though concern for the “public” is evident in writing scholarship over the past two decades, the term “community” has taken a stronger foothold, especially when talking pedagogy. In other words, the “public” turn remains significant in theoretical conversations along the lines of Habermas and Fraser, but others, such as Deans, Flower, Matheu, Cushman, and others tend more towards the key word “community.”
scholars whose work was grounded in Paulo Freire’s liberatory pedagogy, as those who, along with critics of social construction, “created the necessary preconditions for the complex and sophisticated discussions of public rhetoric” that existed in 2002 (26). And so Weisser follows those necessary preconditions—salient among them questions of power in relationship to identity and whose public sphere enjoys recognition as public and whose remain stubbornly private—into further scrutiny of public sphere theory, which already tussled with such questions thanks to Habermas, Negt, Kluge, and Fraser, to assert that writing scholars can continue this tradition as a basis for “important theoretical and pedagogical advancements towards a more holistic and sophisticated approach to writing” (87).

Weisser attempts this sort of discourse by turning to Nancy Fraser among others, but I will specifically note his reference to Fraser’s notion of “subaltern counterpublics” (cited from Weisser 106), in which those subordinated in Habermas’ broadly-defined public spheres, which relegate the concerns of the subordinated to the private sphere, and “strong publics” (cited from Weisser 111), where both discourse and action are possible via self-governance, like residential communities or small offices. This matters to the conversation surrounding writing studies because, if we retain some of the importance of the individual from Elbow’s expressivism insofar as it allows members of underrepresented groups the agency to participate in social construction (or gives minority populations voice by reminding us that voices that are louder because they are more abundant may have more, inequitable sway in social construction), we can model strong publics in classrooms that are staging grounds for larger, public discourse. And if, as Weisser contends, public intellectualism is an end-goal of the public turn in writing studies and public intellectuals often, though not always, “speak from and for marginalized viewpoints” (122), then rigorous theorizing of public spheres and, namely, strong publics, can characterize
the conversation surrounding community engagement and service-learning in the 21st century.

But the problems of publics and publics spheres is not only a theoretical one since academics often find themselves moving between social spheres as a part of their work, and that motion often negatively effects possibilities for creating and sustaining partnerships. Goldblatt notes the perils of the transient, isolated lives of academics and the detrimental effects of that isolation. In Because We Live Here, Goldblatt wonders how academics can truly teach and work in a community when they are not educated there. While considering taking an academic job miles away from his home in Philadelphia, he wonders what it meant that he studied students in Philadelphia and then moved thousands of miles away to teach children who don’t know the first thing about Philadelphia (11). In other words, Goldblatt’s research was grounded in a place and therefore his learning and development as an academic professional were grounded in that place—which happened to be the place where he grew up—so to take that research and learning and plug it into a new location seemed incongruous to him. Goldblatt makes clear the extent to which the transience of academic life has been normalized by paraphrasing the poet Gary Snyder in his introduction “Perhaps the most radical thing we can do today is to live in one place for the rest of our lives” (3). But the opportunity to be radical in that way is for most not a choice but rather a stroke of luck, and Goldblatt had that stroke of luck when he found an academic position in Philadelphia.18

It is in Philadelphia that Goldblatt is able to do his work, which is lucky because he finds that, while Writing Across the Curriculum has succeeded in many ways, its fatal flaw is that it “emphasizes the campus as the unit of measure” (12). To extend that unit of measurement, one must look beyond the campus and know where to look. Goldblatt knew to look at Philadelphia

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18 See also Parks’ Gravyland for an account of community-engaged writing work done in Philadelphia.
schools from which Temple University students came, and when he did, he found a mismatch in the expectations of students at school and in college. To address this mismatch, Goldblatt acknowledges the importance of circulation between the campus and community, a “framework for literacy sponsorship that includes multiple partnerships within a region [that] will serve most postsecondary schools better than a traditional view of writing contained by campus boundaries” (194). Goldblatt draws on successful models of community engagement from Rousculp’s Salt Lake City Community College’s Community Writing Center Partnership (citing it as an example of Deans’ writing with the community) and the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s successful extension of college writing center support to local libraries and schools as examples of how such circulation could work (198). He then speculates a model that may work for Temple: a model in which English graduate students with years of experience tutoring writing at the university spend a year tutoring in an elementary school in Philadelphia. While this model may seem one-way, as it presumes the elementary school students stand to gain the most, it is indeed an example of circulation because that tutor stands to gain knowledge of how “reading is first acquired and what challenges are for young readers in stressed neighborhoods” (199). But if the relationship between the campus and community does not exist, then that circulation is cut off, and considering writing outside of the curriculum is counterproductive because the community is not an active partner in that consideration.

Reynolds names problems with attempts to promote such circulation in an unreflective way, however well-intentioned. In 2004’s Geographies of Writing, Reynolds acknowledges that the academy is making attempts at bridging campus and community, but also notes that this requires great care, as the subjectivity of the academy is fragmented: “The growing popularity of service learning and community literacy programs makes even more urgent the need for rhetorics
that will interrogate…artificial splits between the classroom and the real world” (44). For Reynolds, the work has begun, but this work requires the dissolution of academic ontologies that create division between the campus and community, which Reynolds exposes as intrinsically artificial because it assumes that “the construction of space is somehow ‘different’ for the academy” than the rest of the world (45). And for Reynolds, this ontological rearrangement requires keeping the material and metaphorical connected, “acknowledging that the real and the imagined are dependent on one another” (46) precisely because the academy is attempting to bridge a metaphorical rift that it has created and continually creates and that has material consequences. The academy sees the material, but if it fails to acknowledge the metaphorical, then material efforts do nothing to address the constructed, metaphorical conditions for the problem.

So, to work towards creating rhetorics that interrogate artificial splits, Reynolds proposes the idea of streetwork19 in composition pedagogy and scholarship. Streetwork sends students off campus, and the results of this experience prove anything but simple. By having students observe the architecture of their surroundings when they leave campus—be that architecture rural or urban—Reynolds invites students to consider not just what they see—not simply to report the material realities of the environment—but to attempt to reverse-engineer the construction of that environment. Students consider which areas seem most desirable and why; who lives in which areas and why; as well as what kinds of attitudes people in different areas have to academic intruders, and how the material conditions of those areas make those attitudes understandable. Reynolds finds that “streetwork exposes the workings of geographies of exclusion” when she reflects on what her students learn from their streetwork experiences, and she notes that, if the

19 “Streetwork” interestingly foreshadows Mathieu’s 2005 emphasis on the streets and Goldblatt’s 2007 emphasis on location.
burgeoning enthusiasm for service-learning does not include and consider “sociospatial constructions of difference,” then that enthusiasm fails to create the interrogating rhetoric needed to address the material and metaphorical rifts it seeks to bridge (109). Again, students’ awareness of environments—even if those environments are not their own—matters.

In 2008’s Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics, Elenore Long introduces the notion of a local public framework as a heuristic for drawing “implications from the distinctive features of…discursive spaces, the discourses they circulate, and the literate practices that sustain them” form studies of the “places where ordinary people develop public voices” (7). In fact, local publics have complicated and sometimes empowering relationships to institutions, be they academic or otherwise mainstream. To exemplify this, Long turns to previous scholars’ examples of local publics and highlights their guiding metaphors before
describing their relationships to institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literacy Scholar/s</th>
<th>Metaphor for the Local Public</th>
<th>Relation to Formal Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Brice Heath</td>
<td>an impromptu street theater</td>
<td>the local public turns its back on public institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Brandt; Caroline Heller</td>
<td>organic imagery: a cultural womb and a garden</td>
<td>the local public relies on one or more institution to sponsor it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Barton and Mary Hamilton; Ellen Cushman</td>
<td>a link and a gate along a fence-line</td>
<td>the local public intersects with a public institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eli Goldblatt; Linda Flower</td>
<td>a community-organizing effort and the community think tank</td>
<td>the local public is forged in partnership with a formal institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Cintron</td>
<td>a shadow system</td>
<td>the local public defies formal public institutions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4: Long's Relationships between Local Publics and Institutions (7)*

Here, Long draws attention to the varying kinds of relationships local publics can have with institutions, noting that local publics can and do either turn their backs on public institutions or outright defy them. In either case, the activities of local publics need not rely on institutions, and in her definitions of *community* and *local public*, Long drives home the point that institutions are not necessary for determining the parameters of communities and local publics. Communities are defined when ordinary people, those who are “full and representative people in the local publics in which we participate” (14), construct them “around distinct rhetorical agendas” (15), which can organically address the interests of that group of ordinary people. In other words, local
publics are groups of self-defined communities that make use of literacies on their own terms to fulfill agendas and, when necessary, they can communicate what is needed to fulfill those agendas to outsiders, including institutions.

Long avoids simple heuristics for understanding the complexity of public spheres and the relationships between them. In fact, she further complicates Deans’ three prepositions for describing community engaged pedagogies. Long concentrates her focus on Deans’ writing with the community as the one that specifically describes community literacy pedagogy and further divides it into five kinds of pedagogy, naming scholars who have exemplified it:

**Interpretive pedagogies:** students venture somewhere new, building relationships to confront and revise familiar stereotypes (e.g. Canagarajah “Safe Houses”; Coogan “Counterpublics”; Goldblatt “Van Rides”)

**Institutional pedagogies:** students learn professional research methods to elicit and to represent the interests and expertise of community residents (e.g. Grabill and Simmons; Swan)

**Tactical pedagogies:** students learn to circulate their own publics writing that challenges the status quo. These often boisterous public acts activate shadow systems that mimic and critique the dominant culture (e.g. Matheiu Tactics; Pough; Welch)

**Inquiry-driven pedagogies:** students learn to deliberate pressing social issues with community partners; they circulate documents that serve as catalysts for social change (e.g., Coogan “Service”; Flower “Literate Action”; Flower and Heath; Long “Rhetoric”; see also
Performative pedagogies: students learn to engage as rhetors with others to gain the practical wisdom required to build inclusive communities for effective problem solving (e.g., Coogan “Sophists”; Flower Community Literacy; Lyons; Simmons and Grabill). (48)

Long further divides Deans’ writing with the community in terms of student learning, but in each scenario, the students straddles the community/academy divide differently, depending on their identification with the institution or local public; tactical pedagogies can situate students in defiance of institutions, while institutional pedagogies can situate students as representatives of the institution, learning how to apply what they’ve learned as researchers to concerns outside of the institution, for example. In terms of my proposed taxonomy in Chapter 1, this division would place initiatives in the Service-Learning category leaning either towards sustainability or public writing as a core value in their work towards social change.

It is also important to note how Long lays these pedagogies out in more detail in chapter 9 of Community Literacy. Before providing further description and examples of each type of pedagogy, Long reminds the us that “these instructional practices are not new public actions that students take but rather what teachers can do to support them [and so] each pedagogical practice is introduced with an ellipse and completes the phrase What teachers can do to help...” (157, 158). Here, agency lies within the students to act, and therefore, these students can identify with local publics and institutions in whatever way their situation requires. Perhaps more importantly for instructors, Long invites them to help rather than teach, which allows them to participate in this public action without their presence overly determining how aligned such action will be with the institution. My project takes Long’s distinction here to heart; as a researcher, but also as an
instructor who has taught service-learning composition courses, I am interested to learn what, if any, agency students in such courses felt or continue to feel after the learning experience has reached its institutional end. I am interested to learn if instructors like myself have been of any help.

Linda Flower’s *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Public Engagement* (2008) contends as well with the agency of those outside of the academy in academy/community partnerships. Flower provides a quick and easy definition of community literacy as “a rhetorical practice for inquiry and social change” (16) but complicates this definition by positioning community literacy as a way to challenge existing power structures that stem from and support unequal value placed (largely on behalf of universities) on rhetorical practices across identity markers such as class, race, gender, and culture. And she does so by offering a clearer idea of how community literacy works by intersecting it with Deans’ writing *with* the community model of service-learning:

The community literacy I am hoping to document is an intercultural dialogue *with others* on issues that *they* identify as sites of struggle. Community literacy happens at a busy intersection of multiple literacies and diverse discourses. It begins when community folk, urban teens, community supporters, college-student mentors, and university faculty start naming and solving problems *together*. (19)

While notions of writing *with* the community and truly reciprocal partnerships between community-spurred action and academy-supported inquiry serve as exigencies for community/academy partnerships echo throughout this definition, Flower contends with more than power and resources. By stressing the importance of multiple literacies, Flower challenges the presumption that the academy sets the bar for what is considered literate activity and
therefore challenges one of the ways the academy tends to hold on to undue power in such partnerships.

Flower brings to light that community agency proves essential to academy/community partnerships because, given the academy’s presumed rhetorical authority (the right to define, name, categorize, etc.), the communities in these partnerships may not reflect anything other than academia’s constructions of the other. Therefore, Flower’s definition of community literacy works reflexively; while academics might need to acknowledge the value in literacies outside of the academy, they must first become community literate themselves, because “[t]he most important thing about community literacy…is not that it convenes a preexisting community but that the community it creates is a deliberative one, a distinctive local public sphere that was unlikely to exist without it” (29). Here, it seems that communities emerge in complex and often contradictory ways. For starters, imposing the term “community” on a group begins the work of normalizing them, erasing presumably inconsequential differences in search of the commonalities that allow outsiders (in the case of service-learning, for example) to presume what they as outsiders can do for the benefit of that community. But also, communities do not necessarily form as they are perceived from without, and so they can and do exist before well-meaning academics attempt to define them.

Here lies the work of academics and their students developing their own community literacy. Flower cautions that the amount of work preparing for a community academy partnership can be enough in and of itself for a semester and that “simply unveiling suspect ideologies and assumptions can become an academic exercise that takes the place of the more vulnerable stance of community engagement with these conflicts (154). But Flower admits that for some students, an emerging social and critical consciousness compels them to action, despite
the potential for damage they might do before learning not just *that* they should respect the rhetorical ecosystems of self-defined communities, but also *how* they can do that. Flower points to Cushman’s *The Struggle and the Tools* to exemplify community literacy and support her argument that this is a double bind: students can do damage without developing a sense of community literacy, but pre-community-literate “certainties can be challenged when we recognize community partners as agents in their own right, rather than as the recipients of our service and empowerment” (157). In other words, community action can allow community stakeholders to teach academic stakeholders (faculty as well as students) the community literacy they need to do community action well.

Learning to do community action well is an invaluable lesson academics can take away from work like Flower’s. But as I’ve noted above, though necessary, teaching these lessons draws attention to the faculty side of the academic coin, while the student side (student learning in addition to college curriculum and writing programs) warrants attention as well. And while my study might be countercultural insofar as it looks specifically at student learning, that is not to say that it has been unprecedented since the boom of academic inquiry into service-learning in the five or so years surrounding the turn of the twentieth century.

For example, also in 2008, Feldman’s *Making Writing Matter: Composition in the Engaged University*, echoes Boyer in the call to re-envision the university as an entity in partnership with the world around it rather than apart from that world. In stark contrast to Stanley Fish’s call for scholarly work to occur within the disciplines, Feldman submits that breaking down disciplinary walls can create for writers a sense of embeddedness that places them in rhetorical situations and define the rhetorical choices they make (15). This opens the teaching of writing to the teaching of discourse, which allows for knowledge-making, and Feldman adds to
this claim—which she attributes to Boyer—that the university is not the locus of knowledge-making nor does the university own the means of knowledge production; knowledge is made at multiple sites, and the engaged university must learn to cooperate in that making of knowledge with fluidity and respect (24). This does not exclude the discussion of genre from that of academic engagement, but rather it interacts with the existing academic treatment of genre to position genres as effective means to enacting social motives as opposed to simply a way to make writing work better within a discipline (5).

Since the engaged university, for Feldman, is a radical re-envisioning of both the university and disciplinarity, she proposes that this change happen at all levels, including the training of the next generation of writing teachers. First addressing how many new graduate writing instructors teach to fund their graduate studies in literature, Feldman notes that their teaching often reflects graduate students’ disciplinary biases in ways they do not recognize. For example, she provides a sample syllabus that her own graduate students in a teaching practicum assembled for a writing course with the theme of social justice. The portion that Feldman provides cover nine class meetings, each listing either a reading for the day, a writing workshop, or the due date of the paper the classes are meant to prepare the students to write. While Feldman notes that this syllabus appears to give the undergraduate writers all they will need—readings to inform the day’s discussion, time for workshops, and due-dates for essay drafts—she also notes that this syllabus is steeped in the graduate students’ perception of how they learned to write rather than how they may have grown as writers outside of a classroom setting. Feldman encourages graduate students to stress plausible situations that call for the application of appropriate genres not as templates, but rather as “link[s] to a particular situation. Thus, the writer’s embeddedness in a specific situation—not the ideas contained in the readings—drives
the writing” (165,166). Embeddedness serves as a key word for Feldman to overturn long-standing, static conceptions of genre and discipline and make the work done by faculty and student writers (graduate or undergraduate) engaged.

Interestingly, Parks and Goldblatt recommended in 2000 that Writing Across the Curriculum “could integrate a multiplicity of writing and reading modes with a conception of literacy instruction not limited to serving the needs of established disciplines” (585) in their effort to spread the integrative values of Writing Across the Curriculum outside the walls of the institution. But Feldman calls for more intrinsic change. Parks and Goldblatt ground their argument in the values of institution-based WAC initiatives20, while Feldman encourages students and faculty to embed themselves in situations that organically call for the application of genres, and these situations need not arise at the behest of institutions. Again, though Feldman proposes a radical change in making universities engaged, she pulls from the existing discourse of genre and interdisciplinarity to ground her proposal.

2010s

The discourse surrounding service-learning has been cautious for the past two decades; scholarly thought has remained rightfully focused on the unintended as well as intended outcomes of service-learning pedagogy, and sustainability remains a concern. In fact, Restaino and Cella’s Unsustainable: Re-imagining Community Literacy, Public Writing, Service-learning and the University invites Cushman, Deans, and Mathieu as contributors to look back on how their work in service-learning and public rhetoric has addressed this concern. All three reflect on the realities of creating sustainable partnerships while acknowledging that the realization of their aims might not always be in their control.

20 While Parks and Goldblatt engage here with community engagement and pedagogy, their work moves on to broader commitments to community literacy. See Park’s Gravyland and Goldblatt’s Because We Live Here.
Cushman’s chapter, “Assessing Sustainability: The Class That Went Terribly Wrong,” co-written with Lorelei Blackburn, reflects on a service-learning class that Cushman taught at Michigan State University (MSU) for which she partnered with the local Lansing Public Library. Cushman positioned students from her class, who were preservice teachers, in the library to provide writing assistance to patrons, and found that, though the patrons reported positive experiences overall, her perception of the student experience harkened back to her language in her 2002 article “Sustainable Service-Learning Programs” insofar as the students seemed overwhelmed by the shift from inside to outside the classroom (161); in other words, she felt they wandered in the dark (“Sustainable” 45). Though Lorelei reconsiders the data available—reports from Lansing and student evaluations, for example—to show that the course did, in fact, go over well with students and community partners (168, 169), Cushman’s perspective as the instructor of the course shows a different outcome.

Blackburn could see things differently because she draws conclusions from reflective evaluations from students and community members that show mostly positive outcomes and reflect positive experiences. Cushman, on the other hand, bases her report on day-to-day contact hours with students, and because neither data set can alone provide a complete picture of the success or failure of the course, Blackburn and Cushman suggest a more holistic approach to assessing service-learning courses. Blackburn and Cushman’s recommendation for service-learning-specific assessment criteria brings to light some very real opportunity for academic attention to how we construct and evaluate service-learning courses. This will likely prove challenging if more scholarship examining student reports of service-learning classes does not emerge, hence the exigency for my study.
Deans reports on the reality of sustainability in his chapter “Sustainability Deferred: The Conflicting Logics of Career Advancement and Community Engagement.” Writing in 2012, Deans begins his reflection with a quote from David Bartholomae in 1996, which describes the irony of academic structures that keep pedagogical experts away from the sites of instruction as they work towards “a career that has everything to do with status and identity in English and little to do with the organization, management, and evaluation of student writing” (cited from Deans 101) and notes that he had read this quote—he was aware of this problem in rhetoric and composition—even as his career was unfolding in such a way as to keep him from the classroom.

At first glance, Bartholomae’s observation should be one so simple that knowing it exists helps keep faculty focused on teaching. But this observation and the call for sustainability in service-learning can sound loud and wide, and the realities of life in the academy keep them necessary. Of course, that’s not to say rhetoric and composition has failed to adapt and evolve its approach to community engagement, and Deans notes the shift from classroom-based writing partnerships to “[talk] about networks and neighborhoods” as evidenced in work by Flower, Goldblatt, and Grabill, which focus on longer-term projects over semester-dependent service-learning partnerships with high student turnover rates (102). Deans lauds this shift for its sustainability and potential for social action, and notes that his own work has allowed him to maintain a longer-term project that helps middle and high schools establish writing centers, but the realities of teaching in a large research university still keep him from the classroom.

Deans notes that service-learning courses can and should be given to the established faculty who have the resources to handle them, he also calls attention to the restrictions full-time, more established faculty face in their day-to-day lives21. His own is an example of a career that

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21 See also Goldblatt’s *Because We Live Here*. 
had to mortgage some possibility for sustained service-learning partnerships for the professional reputation that would allow a faculty member to invest in those sustain partnerships (109), and there’s the contradiction. Couple this with responsibilities outside of the professional sphere, and it appears that sustainability alone does not serve as a reliable criterion for evaluating community-academy partnerships, at least insofar as they can be attributed to the continued activities of one professional.

As a matter of fact, in “After Tactics, What Comes Next?” also from *Unsustainable*, Mathieu looks back on her involvement with *Kids’ 2 Cents*, a joint project of herself (as a faculty member of Boston College), *Spare Change News*, and Sandra’s Lodge, a shelter for homeless women and their children in Boston. *Kids’ 2 Cents* is a special annual edition of *Spare Change News* dedicated to the work and writings of the children of Sandra’s Lodge. Mathieu began the project as an optional service-learning component of a writing course she taught at Boston College, and some students stayed on after the end of the semester (18). For Mathieu to continue her partnership with *Spare Change*, she accepted an invitation to serve as a member of the executive board, but after some funding and staffing decisions were made by another member of the board without the consent of the board majority, Mathieu found herself in a place to either back a non-approved plan or resign from the board from the board. She chose the latter, and the member of the board with which she had disagreed on funding and staffing informed her that the nonprofit would no longer need her services (20, 21). As a result of a presumably no-fault disagreement, Mathieu’s partnership with *Spare Change News* was at an abrupt end after decades, as were the programs she ran with them. That is not to say that *Spare Change News* did not sustain itself without her, although *Kid’s 2 Cents* did come to an end, and, for unrelated reasons, Sandra’s Lodge closed down (22). But years after *Spare Change News* and Mathieu
parted ways, they invited her in to talk about re-establishing their partnership (30). *Spare Change* continued to do their work, and Mathieu continued to do her work, and given *that* sustained effort, the former partners could consider working together again.

Regardless of the guardedly optimistic ending to Mathieu’s chapter, the question, “After Tactics, What Comes Next?” remains. Her experience with the realities of partnership, including personal and professional aims as well as executive board member politics, prompted Mathieu to reflect on the tactical/strategic paradigm she adapted from Certeau in 2005’s *Tactics of Hope*. Reconsidering the paradigm after nearly ten years of its deployment in rhetoric and composition as well as community engagement scholarship, Mathieu clarifies and invites readers to consider tactics and strategies not in a binary relationship, but rather on a spectrum. Namely, Mathieu contends that academy/community partnerships can begin tactically—or in nimble response to exigencies outside of the academy—but may need to adopt more secure, situated, and strategic support as they mature (17). In other words, such partnerships may evolve into strategic ones as they accrue the kinds of institutional support they need to keep going.

Randy Stoecker also notes the perils of service-learning, focusing on institutionalization and admitting that his criticisms are rather idealized. In fact, while Mathieu claims that institutionalized service-learning can prove risky but possibly necessary, Stoecker flat out rejects institutionalization in 2016’s *Liberating Service-Learning and the Rest of Higher Education Civic Engagement*. Although Stoecker focuses on service-learning across the university (not only in composition), his voice warrants note here as his condemnation is categorical: “[I]n both learning and service, today’s meek, institution-bound, visionless service learning should be shaming” (16). Stoecker places modern, institutional service-learning into contrast with the grassroots actions that brought about the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts of the 1960s, and
by comparison, what Stoecker labels institutionalized service-learning are tame, and though he admits there are exceptions (21), his critique challenges what he sees as the norm.

That norm for Stoecker does not effect change, but rather smooths over and temporarily mitigates social problems that should make institutions obsolete. Regardless of what type of activity service-learning students take on, social change should be the ends, and we need to stop prioritizing the interests of our students and our higher education institutions over the interests of constituencies and our ultimate mutual interests in understanding that our liberation is bound up with each other [so] we can liberate service learning and all other forms of higher education civic engagement from their academic shackles and reorient them toward real impact in the world. (161)

Real change for Stoecker means complete rejection of institutionalized service-learning and taking Mathieu’s call for tactical service-learning to the extent that the institution is divorced from service-learning altogether. Oddly enough, Stoecker finds support in Boyer, who’s *Scholarship Reconsidered* he calls out as a “touchstone of institutional service learning” (17). Stoecker notes, though, that Boyer’s 1996 “Scholarship of Engagement” calls for campuses to become staging grounds for social action and hopes that academic and civic values will communicate more openly with each other (cited from Stoecker 16). But Stoecker laments that this did not happen, and service-learning’s liberatory potential was ultimately “colonized” (17).

While my project does not promise to entirely “de-colonize” service-learning—after all, I conduct this study as an institutional stakeholder—I do hope to draw some much needed attention to student (and former student) agency in community-engaged pedagogies and learn what kind of social actions those students engage in later, possible after their affiliations with their institutions have ended.
It may be that Stoecker’s concerns, though radical, reflect the concerns of those in rhetoric and composition that favor public writing or faculty/community partnerships over service-learning. After all, faculty enjoy securities that students don’t in the form of tenure and professional reputation, and when faculty take on the risks of politically controversial community action, they are taking the risk for themselves and not foisting them onto students who still have grades and careers on the line.

It is no coincidence that the first years of the 21st century bring with them such concern in composition studies for an outward-facing academy. Farmer’s 2013 *After the Public Turn: Composition, Counterpublics, and the Citizen Bricoleur* notes with over a decade of hindsight historical precedent for this concern by building on Warner’s interrogation of public (and counterpublic) spheres to explain the notion of a “public turn” in composition22. While Farmer is careful to situate this turn in between the 1990s’ cultural turn and the 2010s’ digital turn, and while he is also careful to say that no turn takes precedence over another—it’s not as if composition is done with culture and will deal with publicness until it’s time to move on to digital media; they overlap and inform each other—it is worth noting that the turn of the century brought with it increased attention to community literacies, service-learning, and public writing pedagogies (2). And since these turns in composition can happen alongside each other and inform but not supplant one another, “the relationship between rhetoric and the schools is far more complicated than the Ciceronian ideal” where schools did nothing more than create citizen-orators who could contribute to thriving democracy ethically (3). This is because rhetoric has

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22 See also Weisser in 2002.
retreated into the schools; it is no longer an explicitly public concern but rather an academic one, hiding in composition studies until it is safe to come out again\(^{23}\).

As Farmer positions it, the public turn in composition arose partially because of a realization that writing scholars had been taking for granted the publics that “shaped the formation of [their] specialty” and partially a realization that public rhetoric is simply in decline (4). Farmer notes an increasing skepticism about whether or not a public sphere is even possible in a postmodern world at the end of the 20\(^{th}\) century as well as a dramatic uptick in commentary attempting to make sense of and/or solve a growing rift between academic departments and the outside world (6). In this context, works like Boyer’s envisioning of the professorate in Scholarship Reconsidered, and Mathieu’s refocusing of service-learning efforts on community exigencies in Tactics of Hope make historical sense; the campus/community divide was so real that it was impossible to educate public citizens because the campus was a public apart from the community.

It also makes sense that other types of public writing would warrant attention after the public turn in writing studies. For example, while Tiffany Rousculp’s 2014 account of her work with Salt Lake City’s Community Writing Center (CWC) in Rhetoric of Respect: Recognizing Change at a Community Writing Center is not an example of service-learning in the sense that she sent students from her class to tutor as part of one semester’s worth of work, it does provide valuable accounts of interactions between herself, Salt Lake City Community College students, and writers from Salt Lake City. Case in point, relationships between writers and the CWC often played out on the writer’s terms, which Rousculp makes clear with her account of Adjivah, who first came to the CWC to work specifically on her American English pronunciation but after

\(^{23}\) See also Connors’ 1997 Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy for an account of how rhetoric has survived in writing studies.
coming to terms with herself as a writer who is capable as opposed to one who needs help, shifted the focus of her visits to work on writing sentences and eventually her own story (7,8). And the SLCC students who worked in the center did so according to how the public made use of the CWC. Alisabeth was a consultant who had no desire to (and felt underprepared) to lead workshops, getting angry that the work was expected of her. Eventually, and repeatedly, she co-wrote and led such public workshops, as “[h]er comfort with uncertainty grew, as did her trust in the collaborative expertise at the CWC” (86), not because she had ambitions to teach, but rather because that was how the public used the CWC.

These accounts could come from any public writing center in the United States, but Rousculp’s use of them to exemplify the results of a “rhetoric of respect” provides crucial vocabulary to approach community/academy partnerships. Rousculp describes respect, as she deploys the word in a way that differs from sometimes patronizing responses to difference and conflict (e.g. “tolerance” or “acceptance”) that mask simmering distain. Respect implies a different type of relationship, one that is grounded in perception of worth, in esteem for another—as well as for the self. Even so, respect does not require agreement or conciliation—as “tolerance” suggests; rather it entails recognition multiple views, approaches, abilities, and, importantly, limitations (especially our own). In other words, respect needs flexibility and self-awareness. Engaging within a rhetoric of respect draws attention to how we use language in relation with others; how we name and classify, how we collaborate, how we problem-solve. Whereas respect itself may exist as a feeling, a rhetoric of respect requires discursive action. (25)
In the case of the CWC and other organizations with any sort of means or power (like the academy), Rousculp’s rhetoric of respect requires institutional members of community/academy partnerships to recognize that their ideas of social change or public good may not map well onto the tactical goals of community members or everyday citizens.

For Rousculp, change itself can stand rhetorically respectful reconsideration, when she recognizes change “not as a collective action or anticipated outcome but as the potential for individuals to use writing as they see fit, to exercise agency over textual production within regulatory systems in ways they deem most appropriate for themselves at a particular moment in their lives” (91).24 She also stresses the importance of academic stakeholders reminding themselves not to replicate the hierarchies that uphold the privileges the academy already enjoys in community/academy partnerships. She notes that it is easy to fall into thinking that presumes community partners are in need of help and somehow not whole, as the academy tends to prize individual knowledge and demonstrable change that shows growth in either the individual knowledge of others or successful achievement of the stated goals of the academic partnership (90, 91). In other words, we as academics can innocently fall into partnerships where we assume undue authority precisely because of academic value systems. Rousculp notes that even though she is familiar with the works of Goldblatt and Mathieu, which warn specifically against these attitudes, she has found herself evaluating the success of the CWC through academic rubrics that uphold these hierarchies25 (91).

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24 If we apply this to the public writing or more rhetorically educated graduates of universities (who have done SL coursework) then we really can’t determine what that change will look like; we need to find out what it looks like.

25 See also Amare and Grettano in 2007
Interestingly, though, while rhetoric and composition has turned much of its attention away from service-learning and towards the broader community literacy and writing in the 2010s, Grobman and Rosenberg have published the 2015 edited collection, *Service Learning and Literary Studies in English*, which tends away from rhetoric and composition, and even to a significant extent, first-year writing pedagogy, to favor reading and literature at the college level. But this does not mean that the conversation abandons rhetorical understanding of real-world concerns outside of the academy. For example, Sarah D. Wald’s chapter, “Sustainable Harvests: Food Justice, Service Learning, and Environmental Justice Pedagogy” contributes to the larger service-learning and community engagement conversation by showing how the study of literature can inform student activities outside of the classroom.

In this chapter, Wald describes a 2011 course she designed and taught in the College of Liberal Arts at Drew University in which students worked closely with El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA; The Farmworker Support Committee) in southern New Jersey, and since most of her students spoke only English, Spanish majors joined the group when students had direct contact with the mostly Spanish-speaking farmworkers (231, 232). Wald’s course was a lit course, but students learned rhetorical thinking as they produced texts used for CATA outreach, and so they considered their audience. But they also had to consider themselves as audience members, and Wald shows how carefully they considered the translation work that those Spanish majors did and how they can best understand the words of the farm workers. Wald also notes that the farm workers did not perform their oppression in ways that students who are familiar with texts like *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Fast Food Nation*, and *The Jungle* can understand, which makes everyone consider audience in ways perhaps counter to popular, theoretical notions of reader response; we as audience members can be wrong.
The coupling of service-learning and literature studies does more than allow each service-learning and literature to inform each other. For example, Barrow’s “Building Empathy through Service Learning and Narratives of Sexual Violence” (from SL and Lit Studies) makes very clear how literature and service-learning could intertwine in a way that does good, at least for the students.

Since most students did not have contact with victims, this transformation [building empathy and an understanding of the complexities of such] was largely conceptual. Service learning functioned as a pedagogical technique that grated a *truth effect* [my italics] to the fictional stories and, by suggesting possibilities for social activism, prevented students from becoming too depressed by the emotionally challenging literature, which had been one of my concerns when designing the course. Conversely, reading literary characters’ personal responses to sexual violence emphasized the need for services provided by our community partners. (221, 222)

I also want to note that Barrow suggests how literature and service-learning can, respectively, introduce students to a problem and an approach to it (in this case, sexual assault on campus and bystander intervention), and then show them how difficult or unexpected that approach can be in real life, not to discourage students from intervening, but rather to prepare them for what may seem like a reason to those who might not expect to come up against those perceived reasons (220, 221; see also Comstock in 1994).

This chronological review of the scholarly literature in service-learning and writing studies shows a rather rapid trend over the past 25 years or so. In the 1990s, an awareness was taking hold that the academy could do more to bridge the gap between itself and the community
it works to serve. This awareness in the broader academic community inspired compositionists in a number of ways. Writing Across the Curriculum initiatives challenged the barriers between academic interests, and the public turn in composition invited renewed theoretical attention to public and private spheres. But very quickly, right at the turn of the century, scholarship into service-learning and community engagement emerged in the form of articles and edited collections and then almost immediately came of age in the form of entire dissertations and then monographs. Service-learning specifically, though, proved almost an inroad to the more academic-oriented (as opposed to student-oriented) and theoretical community engagement that enjoys prominence nearly twenty years later. But it seems fitting to look at how this scholarship has survived in the forms it initially took; it seems fitting to look at how the journals have kept community engaged discourse fresh over the past two decades.

**Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Reflections, and The Community Literacy Journal**

My chronological review of the influential books, dissertations, and articles on service-learning and community engagement shows a rapid emergence of scholarly attention to service-learning in composition studies followed shortly thereafter by a shift to broader, more rhetorically-oriented scholarship in public writing and community engagement outside of the classroom. And from the mid 1990s to the mid 2010s, much significant service-learning in writing studies scholarship has been published in journals such as *College Composition and Communication* and *College English*. For example, in 1995, Peck, Flower, and Higgins published their influential “Community Literacy” in *CCC*; Schutz and Gere published “Service Learning and English Studies: Rethinking Public Service” in *College English* in 1998; and Cushman contributed “Sustainable Service-Learning Programs” to *CCC* in 2002. But another
interesting way to track how the community engagement in composition conversation has evolved over the past 20-plus years is in journals that were founded to publish scholarship in this subfield. The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, Reflections, and The Community Literacy Journal prove compelling sources to trace the beginnings of service-learning discourse, the role writing studies has played in developing that discourse, and the nomenclature that has evolved as the discourse has grown.

The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning was founded in 1994 as a resource for scholarship in service-learning, and since then has published work from scholars from across the disciplines, including some significant work from compositionists. Reflections was founded in 2000 specifically dedicated to publishing scholarship on service-learning and community engagement in composition studies, though the journal’s focus has shifted towards non-pedagogical approaches to community engagement over the past decade. And Community Literacy Journal was founded in 2006, not to displace the still only six-year-old Reflections but rather to take up a more non-academic approach to the classroom-based scholarship that Reflections was publishing at that time. CLJ also introduced an online forum that the creators hoped would invite engagement from non-academic thinkers, widening the pool of contributors and inviting community stakeholders into the conversation. In the coming pages, I will further explore these three journals, providing some excerpts of their first issues and highlighting contributions those journals have made to the larger conversation of service-learning and writing studies.

The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning focuses on service-learning across the disciplines and occasionally publishes articles and reviews keyed to writing studies. Eyler and Giles’ “The Theoretical Roots of Service-Learning in John Dewey” appeared in the first
issue. Alongside Eyler and Giles’ forward-thinking theoretical work was Marilyn W Smith’s “Community Service Learning: Striking the Chord of Citizenship,” which also looked to the future of the pedagogy and warned that the intents of service-learning may not always translate into outcomes. Smith reports on a contemporary study that used case studies and interviews with college administrators, instructors, and students to gather reflections on service-learning outcomes and did a semantic analysis of these reflections. Interviewee’s were asked to consider 12 distinct kind of service-learning outcomes, including:

- competencies, career development, clarification of values, self-concept, personal connections, cognitive connections/curriculum, confrontation, commitment, contribution, civic responsibility/civic participation/citizenship, spiritual development/character, and social change (37)

The study found that, while civic responsibility/civic participation/citizenship was the most frequently cited outcome at the level of national organizations and policymakers, students almost never acknowledged it as one they experienced (37), college administrators tended to prefer the term “moral” to “civic” (39), and some faculty specifically avoided discussions of citizenship on the grounds that they were too politically charged (39). Smith concludes that, if service-learning initiatives are to support the education of citizens, then practitioners cannot assume that civic education automatically arises from service-learning pedagogy, and again, if citizenship is the goal, faculty, administrators, and other institutions stakeholders must collaborate on making that explicit (42). It seems clear that, in 1994, both the theoretical and practical future of service-learning were at stake.

The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning debuted in 1994—several years before the work of Bacon, Wurr, Cushman, and Deans brought significant critical attention to
service-learning in writing studies—and is dedicated to a broader picture of community engagement than *Reflections*. But their second issue, this one in 1995, included Cooper and Julier’s “Writing the Ties that Bind: Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom,” in which the writers describe the Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP) at Michigan State University. This article, which seems to serve largely as an introduction to the concept of service-learning in writing studies for a readership familiar with the concepts if not the combination of them, nods to democracy and Dewey for theoretical significance before moving on to describe the SLWP program, its core values (also grounded in democracy), and some courses that came out of the SLWP. Interestingly, they finish this article with a short literature review of the existing scholarship that justifies the combination of service-learning and writing studies as well as a short but well annotated bibliography of public literacy scholarship and the work that had already begun combining service-learning with values education and the language arts, including early essays by Bacon, Herzberg, and Swanson.

Between 1994 and 1998, *The Michigan Journal* continued to publish works relying on Boyer and Dewey to create a case and/or establish theoretical scaffolding for service-learning in higher education (Varlotta; Hatcher; Morton & Saltmarsh), also touching on service-learning and writing/English again in 1997 (Frazier) and 1998 (Ogburn and Wallace). But *The Michigan Journal* re-engaged with service-learning and writing studies in earnest in 1999, publishing both Bacon’s “The Trouble with Transfer” and Deans’ “Service-Learning in Two Keys” in that year’s issue. *The Michigan Journal* has continued to reflect writing studies’ place in service-learning scholarship since then, reviewing Deans’ *Writing Partnerships* in 2001 (Melanson) and his service-learning rhetoric, *Writing and Community Action* in 2003 (Melanson). More recently, *The Michigan Journal* has continued its focus on the theoretical underpinnings of service-
learning across disciplines, further refining Dewey’s role in his theorizing (Clark Maddux and Donnett; Keith) and extending discourse on service-learning to graduate study in their Fall 2017 issue (Doberneck, Bargerstock, McNall, Egeren, and Zientek; Harris; Hubrig, McWain, Meade, and Shah; Goodhue; Lima). Interestingly, Hubrig et al. extend Mathieu’s application of Certeau’s tactics and strategies to Graduate service-learning initiatives, suggesting that, while The Michigan Journal has never focused on writing studies over other fields, that discourse has made meaningful marks on the larger conversation.

The Michigan Journal has kept its scope wide\(^2\), but Reflections, which was founded in 2000, took up the mantle of writing studies and service-learning specifically. The journal was born within writing studies—it emerged from the work of the CCCC Committee on Community Literacy and Service-Learning—and has always been edited by scholars in English Studies. But that does not mean that Reflections treated the discourse of service-learning, community engagement, and writing studies as monolithic. While they focused fairly acutely on service-learning at their outset, the journal has responded to and participated in the community engagement’s trend from the composition side of the discipline to the rhetoric side and spread its focus to include many other forms of community engagement, as an overview of their issues would show. In fact, in Spring 2000, when Bacon and Roswell opened the first issue of the journal, it was called Reflections on Community-Based Writing Instruction, and the first sentence of the first article read: “In the past fifteen years, American colleges and universities have embraced service-learning with active enthusiasm” (1). The name of the journal points specifically to community-engaged teaching, and the opening line names that teaching “service-

\(^2\) Though the journal published a slight uptick in the amount of articles focusing on writing studies around the year 2000, not so coincidentally, and not so long, after the American Association of Higher Education published Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters’ collection, Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition in 1997.
learning.” By 2001, the journal had dropped the word “instruction” from its title and was called *Reflections on Community-Based Writing*, which promised a wider scope for the focus of *Reflections*. In spring 2008, the journal published two volumes under the title *Reflections: Writing, Service-Learning and Community Literacy*, and in spring 2011, it was published as *Reflections: Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service-Learning*. In 2018, at the time of my writing, the journal is called *Reflections: A Journal of Public Rhetoric, Civic Writing, and Service-Learning*. Service-learning (or at least teaching) in writing studies has remained a focus of *Reflections*²⁷, but the name has—no pun intended—reflected the journal’s widening focus on community publishing²⁸, civic writing²⁹, and identity as it intersects with rhetoric³⁰. Even at a glance, one can note that the word “service-learning” has by now moved all the way to the end of the title, tacitly communicating that the pedagogy’s importance had given way to that of other forms of community engagement.

Indeed, what lies beyond the cover pages of issues of *Reflections* show in gradual transition towards community/academic partnerships that do not involve students. *Reflections’* internet archive goes back to spring 2000, Volume 1, Issue 1, and that issue includes entries such as Deans’ “CCCC Institutionalizes Writing Instruction” and Adler-Kassner’s “Service-Learning at A Glance.” In fact, of the 11 entries in the issue, six of them have “service-learning” (complete with hyphen) in the title. In comparison, Volume 1, Issue 17 the most recent issue as I write has 12 entries, one of which has the word service-learning in the title. Of course, this could have something to do with a change in nomenclature, but the entries in issue 17 overall focus more on community voices, such as Montgomery and O’Neil’s “Writing Our Own América: Latinx

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²⁷ See Phelps-Hillen
²⁸ See Shepley
²⁹ See Montgomery and O’Neil
³⁰ See Bateman
Middle School Students Imagine Their American Dreams through Photovoice” and Golden’s “Subalternity in Juvenile Justice: Gendered Oppression and the Rhetoric of Reform.”

That is not to say, however, that Reflections no longer publishes service-learning scholarship or that the majority of the scholarship they do publish has no application to service-learning theory. Fall 2017’s issue of Reflections includes Phelps-Hillen’s “Inception to Implementation: Feminist Community Engagement via Service-Learning” in which Phelps-Hillen addresses the power dynamics that arise when institutions initiate service-learning relationships with community partners and narrates her experience co-developing and teaching a service-learning course with Allison, the executive director of a youth-based nonprofit in South Florida. In order to ensure the course met the needs of Allison’s non-profit as well as Phelps-Hillen’s institution, The University of South Florida, they wrote the syllabus, planned the course, and taught as a team, and Phelps-Hillen found that the partnership had profound effects on the course and students’ experience. Namely, students faced a moment of dissonance when their expectations for course support did not match with the type of support Allison provided, as they felt she was not as communicative as they expect faculty to be (123). Students had to rethink their expectations.

While “Inception to Implementation” comes from the perspective of Phelps-Hillen—she reports largely on the influence of the partnership on student writing and course writing—this perspective has a reason. When Phelps-Hillen approached Allison about writing an article about their partnership, Allison chose not to contribute, a choice that offers real, critical insight into the nature of community-academy partnerships. Phelps-Hillen reflects that “the credibility of publication often does little, if anything, for our community partners” (125). Allison benefitted from the status for her organization and legitimacy that comes with partnering with a university,
but she did not need publications to legitimize her work, as academics often do. That legitimacy is earned through the time and considerable effort of publishing, and while Phelps-Hillen initially found herself at a loss for why Allison would not want to continue their partnership into the publication phase of an academic endeavor, upon reflection, it became clear to her that, for Allison, this was not an academic endeavor. She had neither the time nor the need to publish.

In 2015, Irene Lietz and Erin Tunney’s “Service Learning as Social Justice Activism: Students Help a Campus Shift to Bystander Awareness” explores a more “domestic” approach to service-learning insofar as students took to the campus rather than the streets to address the problems of sexual assault and rape culture on a small liberal arts campus in Pennsylvania. Dionne’s Project, an initiative started by students and faculty on the campus after a student, Dionne, did everything advisable to protect herself from her abusive partner, but he, her partner, entered her house and murdered her anyway (65). Dionne’s Project for Safe Relationships is meant to address the larger, underlying issues to blame for intimate partner violence; rather than promoting education that places the onus of safety on the innocent (more often than not women in abusive relationships), Dionne’s Project works to effect change in potential perpetrators of such violence. By educating the campus public on bystander awareness and encouraging “positive peer pressure” (67), and partnering with faculty teaching courses in Professional Writing, Sociology, Women’s Studies, and Communication, Dionne’s Project designed web sites and marketing plans, rolled out a social norms campaign, wrote newspaper articles, conducted an environmental scan, wrote a strategic plan, presented at campus events and even a state English conference, and organized peer workshops, all eventually focusing on bystander intervention efficacy, often for service learning credit in designated courses. (70)
With this arrangement, the Dionne’s Project service-learning initiative could work towards social change without encountering power dynamics that arise when academic representatives partner with community organizations. Students effected change in their own campus community.

Similarly addressing issues of gender, power, and social justice, in 2010, McCracken writes about a course, *Gender, Sexuality, Race, and Marginalized Communities*, examining the intersectional nature of marginalization while acknowledging the ways in which existing power structures embody misogyny, heterosexism, racism, and classism individually. She invited speakers from organizations such as “Metro Charities, an organization that works in both St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay area to educate and provide services to the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT) communities” (133), “the Community Education Coordinator for the Pinellas County Coalition for the Homeless” (134), as well as “representatives from Coalition Immokalee Workers (CIW) and the Student/Farmworker Alliance” (135) to speak in her class. Here, the language of the academy was set aside so that members of these organizations could discuss the mechanisms of oppression they faced with students in their own terms.

It seems important to note that McCracken’s contribution to service-learning discourse further highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the pedagogy, especially when an instructor attempts to interact with a queer community like that of sex workers. When describing where she finds herself as an academic and an activist (especially when designing this service-learning
course), McCracken uses a Venn diagram to represent her overlapping concerns, as shown in Figure 2 (118 119).

![Figure 5: McCracken “Community Intersections: Civic, Sex Work, and Academic” (118)](image)

Here, it is obvious why a service-learning course would need to consider the intersections of multiple communities, including that of (in this case) sex workers, students, teachers, and the academy, and this is an abbreviated list. Note that while McCracken’s diagram resembles my taxonomy, her work organizes the stakeholders in a community/academy partnership to explore where she stands in this complicated middle ground, and I use a similar diagram to organize the values that compel academic stakeholders (faculty and students) to take on community engaged projects.

Also in 2010, Bateman describes a service-learning course he taught as a graduate student at the University of Colorado at Boulder, which included many LGBTQ students and exposed them to oppression they faced. Indeed, the location of this college and course is necessary to consider as Bateman taught Queer Rhetorics in a year that saw a flurry of statewide political activity in Colorado in relation to LGBTQ issues…. In the semester that preceded the
course, national politics soured in ways that LGBTQ Coloradans found particularly disconcerting. On January 24, Colorado Senator Wayne Allard reintroduced a constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage, and representative Marilyn Musgrave from Colorado’s 4th Congressional District announced her intent to take similar action in the House ([cited from] Soraghan). Even though the “Marriage Protection Act” ultimately fizzled, it coincided with the beginnings of a successful campaign sponsored by groups like Focus on the Family to amend Colorado’s state constitution to ban same-sex marriage, which Colorado voters approved in the 2006 election. (94)

Indeed, Bateman’s course by necessity diluted the language of the academy with that of the community (and government), as he and his students began their work in a place where policy was against them.

Regardless of these political challenges, and even though Bateman felt that his students’ service-learning project in a Boulder homeless shelter did not quite unite two marginalized groups in the ways he and the students had hoped (91), Bateman felt proud of “especially those results that reflected the students’ evolved sense of themselves as sexual and gendered citizens” (90). Significantly, this sense of themselves specifically as sexual and gendered citizens came out in a service-learning course where student activity in communities broader than the academy plays a central role because it potentially disrupts heteronormative political and social norms. In fact, Bateman ends his account of the course by describing one more instance of oppressive heterosexism. After he taught his course, he discovered that conservative writer David Horowitz had included it on a list of “particularly reprehensible college courses” (109). According to Horowitz, Bateman’s course was among a number of courses Horowitz examined, determining
that “the university liberal arts faculty offers a significant number of courses that are neither academic nor scholarly, but blatantly ideological” (cited from Bateman 109). Horowitz viewed a course in rhetoric that asks students to consider themselves as rhetorical agents ideological because the entirety of the self in question included, in part, sexuality.

While these texts represent much of the work Reflections has published in the last decade on service-learning, work that often takes head-on the ever-present problems of power and resources present in community/academy partnerships, the journal’s publications on non-service-learning community engagement often add insights applicable to service-learning. For example, Nathan Shepley’s 2017 contribution “‘They Want to Tell Their Story’: What Folklorists and Sociologists Can Teach Compositionists about Linking Scholarly Research to Non-Academic Communities” explores the idea of a “reciprocal researcher-researched ecology” (14) that at once allows academics to work with non-academic populations in a relationship of mutually beneficial knowledge-making without imposing on those populations a researcher’s gaze or representing them in as agentless, non-academic others. Shepley turns to Heath’s 1983 study, Ways with Words as an example of valuable ethnographic research that nonetheless compels researchers to create their own narratives and disempowering or objectifying those they set out to study (12).

Ultimately finding that researchers can “use critical, conventional steps to position [their] work as also the work of the community [they] study” and they can “reach out to the living members from that community [to] re-see that research’s significance” (14), Shepley uses examples of such research to show how his idealized research ecology is possible. One striking example of this reciprocity is the one of Eve, a sociologist researching how veterans at a research hospital perceived their military experience, who explicitly and critically acknowledges the effects gender and ability (as well as possibly age) have on the researcher-researched dynamic,
specifically her role as a researcher. Eve recalls that, while she saw herself as a researcher writing a dissertation and her interviewees as subjects, the veterans saw her as a translator of their experience and themselves as misunderstood (20). Considering Eve was a graduate student at the time and a woman, the male veterans took it upon themselves to place her into a role she had not anticipated, but she used that newly-defined role as a way to both conduct sociological research as well as forward the veterans’ narratives. This would be just one of Shepley’s examples, but it makes clear that academic representatives (students as well as researchers and faculty) can consider their positions within the academy as up for interpretation by their non-academic partners.

As shown by these Reflections entries as well as the journals very title, the focus has shifted from pedagogy (composition) to public sphere academic work (rhetoric). I specifically stop here to note the shift in Reflections because much of the research that has led to my study has come from this journal, and my introduction into this subfield came in large part from reading these articles. While my study attempts to draw attention towards the composition side of the coin, I appreciate the rhetorical work that Reflections has published over its nearly twenty-year run.

Reflections has varied in its focus over time, and while it has somewhat moved from classroom-based community engagement since its inception in 2000, Community Literacy Journal has arisen as well to cover another broadly-defined, but relevant concern, this one specific to community engaged writing studies discourse: community literacy. In the opening 2006 issue of Community Literacy Journal (CLJ), founding editors Michael Moore and John Warnock indicate that, while the fields of English, Rhetoric and Composition, Education, and Linguistics themselves may not have been calling for a new print journal in 2006, conversations
practitioners in the field as well as members of community organizations compelled them to introduce *CLJ* (7). Moore and Warnock note that, even though academic institutions work hard to serve as many citizens as possible, their structures (semester schedules, for example) hinder them (8), and so they introduce *CLJ*, as well as the online forum, to focus precisely on community literacy and literacies outside of traditional academic spheres. Their work had begun ten years before they introduced the journal, and they adopt their definition of community literacy from one they used in a Practicum in Community Literacy they taught in 1995 at the University of Arizona:

For the purposes of the Forum, “community literacy” is understood as the domain for literacy work that exists outside of mainstream educational and work institutions. It can be found in institutionalized programs devoted to adult education or lifelong learning or work with marginalized populations, but it can also be found in more informal, *ad hoc* projects. (8)

Acknowledging that terms like “literacy” and more specifically “community literacy” leave plenty of room for fruitful interpretation, Moore and Warnock note that they hope *CLJ* and the associated online forum will allow for a broad, multimodal scope for submissions engaging community literacy.

While *CLJ* certainly plays a role in rhetoric and composition’s development of the rhetoric side of community engagement, it would be inaccurate to say that the journal itself has shifted; though *CLJ* has given some attention to service-learning in its run, it began as a result of the sea change. The first issue of *CLJ* took up the task of further defining the term “community literacy” with Lorraine Higgins, Elenore Long, and Linda Flower’s “Community Literacy: A Rhetorical Model for Personal and Public Inquiry,” which builds upon the work of the
Community Literacy Center as well as Higgins, Flower, and Peck’s 1995 *CCCC* article, “Community Literacy” to develop the concept “in the theoretical and practical context of local publics” (9). And they add to existing definitions of the term, sketching out a deployment of the term that

- Uses writing to support collaborative inquiry into community problems;
- Calls up local publics around the aims of democratic deliberation; and
- Transforms personal and public knowledge by restructuring deliberative dialogues among individuals and groups across lines of difference. (10)

While Higgins, Long, and Flower expand upon working models of community literacy using theoretical and practical applications of local publics and public/private spheres, Michelle Comstock contributes “Writing Programs as Distributed Networks” to this issue of *CLJ*, an article that explores community literacy in the form of university-community digital literacy projects. Comstock refers to James Paul Gee’s concept of “distributed systems” to extend the notion of community literacy to digital spheres and interrogate “shifts in literate practices and labor within university-community digital literacy partnerships” (46).

Unlike *The Michigan Journal* but much like the later *Reflections*, *CLJ* does not limit itself to service-learning or other forms of institutional, classroom-based community writing and literacy. In fact, *CLJ* has published multiple special issues dedicated to literacies often overlooked by the academy, including a 2007 issue on Appalachian literacies, a 2013 issue on sexual literacies, and a 2015 issue on food literacies. Though *CLJ* has focused on a broader conception of community literacy than the comparatively narrow intersection of service-learning and writing studies, the journal had not excluded the pedagogy. Even in the 2010s, as the larger discourse of community literacy and writing studies has shifted away from service-learning
specifically, *CLJ* has continued to include work that explores the significance of developing understandings of multiple literacies on service-learning and where or how the pedagogy still fits.

In 2011, for instance, *CLJ* published Rumsey and Nihiser’s “Expectation, Reality, and Rectification: The Merits of Failed Service Learning,” in which the authors respond to a call from Cushman and Grabill in the Spring 2009 issue of *Reflections* to consider difficult questions about the value of community-based work. Rumsey and Nihiser take on this challenge by reflecting on a service-learning project they undertook, and which failed insofar as it proved unsustainable. Their project was part of an upper-level undergraduate and graduate course called “Literacy and Family History,” in which students partnered with the local Cottage Lake History Project, a community organization documenting the history of the local Cottage Lake, which felt the effects of the real estate boom of the 2000’s in the form of new construction that threatened the existing residential area surrounding the lake (135). The students collaborated with the group to collect family histories as the neighborhood changed, but they found that the expectations of the students and community members did not align, and community members may not have felt comfortable sharing their histories with outsiders. And so, Rumsey and Nihiser applied this experience to tackling the hard questions Cushman and Grabill noted in 2009, and they devised a way to make this failure (and therefore future ones) productive in refining others’ approaches to service-learning. They lay out a continuum of “expectation, reality, and rectification” to help those interested in engaging with local publics expect and plan for things to go wrong as two or more groups enter a partnership with their own set of expectations, those expectations clash when the partnership becomes reality, and the groups are left with the choice to dissolve the partnership or rectify it. It is in this rectification that mistakes in service-learning partnerships,
according to Rumsey and Nihiser, can become successful (147). While Rumsey and Nihiser offer students’ reflections about their positive learning experiences as an answer to whether or not a failed service-learning project should preclude others from trying their own, I am reminded of Mathieu’s reconsideration of strategies and tactics in “After Tactics, What Comes Next?” and the value of the setbacks in her partnership with *Spare Change News* to community publishing discourse.

More recently, Remley published “Re-considering the Range of Reciprocity in Community-Based Research and Service Learning: You Don’t Have to be an Activist to Give Back” in Spring 2012 to build upon Ellen Cushman’s 1996 “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change” to show that explicitly teaching students about the reciprocal benefits of service-learning and how to attain them contribute as much to a partnership’s chances for reciprocity as the nature of their work. In 2016’s “From Reciprocity to Interdependence: Mass Incarceration and Service-Learning,” Ryder re-examines her own ten-year dedication to service-learning courses (and therefore social change) critically, arguing that often, service-learning discourse and action fail to examine the roots of racial social injustice intrinsic to the system of North American mass incarceration. In 2017, Rosenberg explores the problem of sustainability in classroom/community partnerships from the perspective of students participating in such partnerships in “Navigating Difficulty in Classroom-Community Outreach Projects.”

While I have claimed that service-learning is out of vogue with compositionists roughly two decades into the 21st century, research into service-learning partnerships does still exist. For example, Rachael Shah published “The Courage of Community Members: Community Perspectives of Engaged Pedagogies” in the September 2018 issue of *CCCC*. Shah’s contribution looks into the perspective of community members—not organizations or university stakeholders,
but, like Rosenberg above, the members of the community—by reporting on the students’ perspective in a partnership between a class at the University of Arizona and a local high school in which the college students and high school students work together to arrange writers’ workshops, poetry readings, and other joint writing projects. Shah finds that the students involved in this partnership worked best with the university students when the former sensed that the latter was invested in the partnership, and she names three characteristics of service-learners that communicated their investment: affirmation, rigor, role fluidity, and personalismo, or an outward personal investment in a partnership that values the people involved over the tasks at hand (84).

While Shah’s study is in some ways anomalous in 2018 as it speaks directly to service-learning partnerships at a time when service-learning does not attract the critical attention of other community-engaged projects, Lindenman’s work in 2018 does so as well. The 2018 Reflections article, “What Changes When We ‘Write for Change?’: Considering the Consequences of High School-University Writing Partnerships,” co-written with Lohr, directly addresses such service-learning partnerships between universities and high school, as does her chapter in 2018’s Writing for Engagement: Responsive Practice for Social Action, “From the Center to the Sidelines: Responsive Leadership in a High School-College Writing Partnership.” In fact, Lindenman’s is the only chapter of this edited collection that contends specifically with service-learning, and she focuses on the responsibility of university stakeholders to take responsive leadership roles in high school-college partnerships (153). But nonetheless, student learning plays a lesser role than the responsibility of academics to make sure such partnerships are equitable.
Also in 2018, but not specific to writing studies, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), an American organization that conducts an annual National Survey of Student Engagement to determine best practices for university practitioners, highlighted an article from New Frontiers in Education called “Activists, Non-Activists, and Allies: Civic Engagement and Student Types at MSIs.” Fasset, Priddle, BrckaLorenz, and Kinsey examine service-learning and civic engagement at Minority Serving Institutions. They cite previous research that shows that service-learning and participation in civic action leads to more complex thinking about social change, but they add with their study that at minority serving institutions, students tend to fall into three categories after civic actions such as protests: activists, non-activists, and allies (Fasset et al. web). Here, as with Shah, the focus of the study was not community organizations, but rather the students who take part in community/university partnerships, and much like my study, the research aims to explore in more detail the often-overlooked effects of service-learning on the ones directly involved in it.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, service-learning in composition enjoyed considerable academic attention in the late 1990s and early 2000s in response to the sense among educators that academia did not serve the public in the best way it could as well as in response to the rapidly emerging pedagogies composition was contending with, including critical pedagogy. Writing studies scholars saw an opportunity in service-learning and community engagement to develop practice and theory in writing studies that challenged the boundaries between the academy and community, and some—like Bacon, Deans, Wurr, and Cushman—made seminal contributions to this work the focus of their early scholarship, while others—such as Long, Reynolds, Mathieu, and Goldblatt—continued to contribute and help the discourse evolve. This
evolution meant a broadening of the term “community engagement,” which drew attention away from service-learning in writing studies so that scholars could theorize and implement scholarship that explored the implications of community publishing, the teaching of public writing, and community writing center work. Flower’s contribution of the term “community literacy” meant a long-established scholar had lent a credible name to the more rhetoric-oriented work of community engagement, propelling academic discourse in that direction. Though the scholarship in community engagement and writing studies has grown exponentially since the year 2000, it is possible to gather a snapshot of the rhetorical turn of community engagement in writing studies by looking at how three journals have intersected with writing studies and service-learning, namely *The Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *Reflections*, and *Community Literacy Journal*. In a sentence, and at the risk of oversimplification, *The Michigan Journal* included the topic of writing studies in service-learning between 1995 and 2000 when *Reflections* gave the topic its own scholarly forum while developing the concept of community literacy, which became large enough to inspire *Community Literacy Journal* to dedicate itself to community literacy.

Service-learning is no longer the topic of the hour in rhetoric and writing studies. While I do not lament this—in fact I have found studying the influence of service-learning discourse on writing studies and the emergence of community literacy knowledge absolutely fascinating and exciting—I am interested in learning more about how service-learning has influenced students who took part in service-learning courses. The study that follows was designed to look into just that.
Chapter 3: The Study

Background and Methods

To provide the raw data for this study, I conducted two rounds of data collection. First, I sought and secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for a short, online, and anonymous pilot survey of students who took service-learning composition courses at UConn between 2014 and 2015. The students were selected from two sections that I taught at UConn’s Stamford campus in the Fall of 2014 and two sections taught at the UConn Storrs campus in 2015. Of these latter two sections, one was taught by Tom Deans and the other by a graduate student instructor in partnership with Professor Deans. For the second round of data collection, I again went through the IRB approval process and invited students from the sections from the pilot survey as well as additional sections. As I will explain in further detail, interest in the pilot survey was minimal enough—a finding in and of itself—that I thought it necessary to cast a wider net to attract participants in a round of one-time, in-person interviews. So, in addition to the students invited into the pilot survey, I also invited UConn students and alumni from service-learning courses going back as far as 2008—or ten years previous to the time of the study—as well as students from two sections of my non-service-learning First-Year composition course at UConn from the Fall of 2015 and Spring of 2016.

Undertaking this research is a choice I made based on personal experiences teaching service-learning courses at two different institutions. I will go into further detail about those experiences later in this chapter, but I want to address my presence in this study early on because, as a researcher, I am present throughout the study. Be it in the classroom, in the study design, or in the interviews themselves, my influence is inescapable, no matter how objective I try to be or how minimal I try to make my interference with the process. Therefore, I have drawn
inspiration from a study Stacy Tucker-Loner reported in her 2014 dissertation, *From Service-Learning to Post Graduation Service: Insights from University Graduates*, in which Tucker-Loner follows up with college graduates who participated in a service-learning program at Washburn University in Topeka, Kansas. Tucker-Loner cites Moustaka’s 1990 *Heuristic Research: Design Methodology, and Implementation* as a guide for her study because, given her 16 years of experience with service-learning programs, she was significantly invested in the results of the study (9). According to Moustakas,

> The heuristic process is a way of being informed, a way of knowing. Whatever presents itself in the consciousness of the investigator as perception, sense, intuition, or knowledge represents an invitation for further elucidation. What appears, what shows itself as itself, casts a light that enables one to come to know more fully what something is and means. In such a process not only is knowledge extended but the self of the researcher is illuminated. (Moustakas 10-11)

Though Tucker-Loner does not research a service-learning program tied to any specific class, her approach is similar to mine in that it relies on, among other things, one-time interviews with students, and it reports those interviews in the form of short case studies. Significantly, though, Tucker-Loner has a professional investment in the pedagogy of service-learning—one more deep-rooted than mine—and her use of heuristic research methodology allows her to “lean in” to that aspect of herself as a researcher rather than allowing it to put her findings into question. In short, by inviting herself, as a researcher, into the study, she makes her biases and investments known at the outset, allowing the reader to judge how they interact with her findings. I, too, plan on being upfront about my biases and investments, though my study differs from Tucker-Loners insofar as my investment is more recent, and my focus will be on service-learning in writing
studies specifically. Since my study focuses on measures of growth germane to writing studies, I will also veer from Moustakas’ description of heuristic research. I will detail these differences in more detail later in this chapter.

But for now, it is important for me to explain the reasoning behind why my narrative comes so early in the chapter. I begin with this short narrative to make my biases clear early on and rationalize my two-tiered approach to analyzing my data. In short, I want service-learning to have positive effects for students because I have taught service-learning courses. Between two universities, I have taught roughly seventy students between four sections of service-learning courses, and I want them to have had a positive learning experience. That desire might very well color my perception of the data, as it very well did compel me to do the study in the first place. For this reason, I will conduct a more objective study in chapter 5, in which I code and analyze the streams of language I collected from the online survey and interviews in a more objective way.

Heuristic Research and How It Applies to My Study

In this chapter, I present myself as a researcher, and because my narrative as the researcher for this study necessarily involves me collecting the data, I will begin to introduce that data. Moustakas lays out six phases of heuristic research: initial engagement, immersion, incubation, illumination, explication, and creative synthesis. Initial engagement is when a researcher “discover[s] an intense interest, a passionate concern that calls out to the researcher, one that holds important social meanings and personal, compelling implications” (27), and that passionate interest in a subject leads the researcher to form an essential question to answer. Immersion occurs after that question is discovered and “the researcher lives the question in waking, sleeping, and even in dream states. Everything in his or her life becomes crystalized
around that question. The immersion process enables the researcher to come to be on intimate terms with the question—to live it and grow in intimate knowledge and understanding of it” (28). In the Incubation phase, the researcher “retreats from the intense concentrated focus on the question” and works out problems surrounding the question subconsciously. Moustakas uses the example of losing one’s house key and not being able to find it while specifically looking for it (28). Illumination takes place when the researcher is sufficiently “open and receptive to tacit knowledge and intuition” or when “corrections of distorted understanding or disclosure of hidden meanings” occur (29). In other words, returning to a problem after considering other problems and their solutions could help illuminate for a researcher new approaches to that original problem. Explication is when “a more complete apprehension of the key ingredients is discovered. Additional angles, textures, and features are articulated; refinements and corrections are made. Ultimately, a comprehensive depiction of the core or dominant themes are developed” (31). When the researcher applies what was illuminated in the previous phase to their understanding of the question, explication becomes possible. In Creative Synthesis, the researcher “is thoroughly familiar with all the data in its major constituents, qualities, and themes and in the explication of the meanings and details of the experience as a whole” (31). According to Moustakas, this creative synthesis can take the form of a poem, painting, story, or some other form (32), and in this case, the form will be the dissertation.

I do not plan to flawlessly map these phases onto my process writing this dissertation, as this has not by any means been a linear process. However, certain phases and Moustakas’ descriptions of them have resonated with me as a I have learned how to write an academic study in the process of writing one, and as I have pursued a line of research important to me as a
teacher. I begin describing my initial engagement and immersion phases, as they are the source of the exigency for this study and it may offer some insight into the biases I bring to it.

Initial Engagement and Immersion via Teaching

In fall of 2013, I had completed a teaching practicum course at my Master’s institution that allowed me to begin teaching one section of First-Year Writing per semester for my graduate funding. During the practicum, I had taken a particular interest in the pedagogy of service-learning for composition courses. That interest drove me to begin researching the practice in earnest; I wrote a short literature review on service-learning in composition as the seminar paper for the teaching practicum, and the professor for that course invited me to teach my section of First-Year Writing as a service-learning course. My Master’s institution, located in Downtown Brooklyn, NY, had an existing partnership with an organization called the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA), a non-profit offering people in trouble with the law alternatives to incarceration. The professor of the practicum course, who was also my advisor and the Director of First-Year-Writing at the university, had been in contact with administrators at the CCA offices who worked with youths, offering after-school programs that they could participate in as an alternative to jail time or probation. At the time of the contact between the university First-Year Writing office and the CCA, the latter had recently lost their tutoring coordinator, and they were in search for a temporary replacement until they filled the position.

My advisor had taught a service-learning course in partnership with the CCA, and students from that class tutored writing as well as other subjects to the high school-aged clientele of the CCA as part of their coursework. I was invited, given my interest in the subject, to help coordinate that partnership while I was still taking the practicum, and I kept in contact with the student service-learners to make sure they were abiding by CCA policies and to debrief with
them from time to time to see if they were making connections between their work and the work of the class.

After the practicum was over, I continued the partnership my advisor handed off to me and taught my section of First-Year Writing in partnership with the CCA. I changed some of the readings for the class, helped the office administrators at the CCA build an infrastructure for their tutoring facilities—which included creating and printing tutor intake and session record forms for record keeping—and sat with the CCA’s Youth Director to work out how students from my class could best partner with the CCA community. A representative from the CCA would visit my class early in the semester to introduce the office to the students, and after four weeks of classes, they would begin their two-hour per week, six-week long activities with the CCA. Their CCA tutoring activities would serve as the subject matter for their end of semester research essays, and I noticed that once the service-learning activities began, students’ investment and participation in class picked up. For the most part, it went wonderfully. I continued the partnership for two semesters, and in that time, students did research projects on incarceration rates for youths of color and the rate at which those youths are tried as adults, tutoring stigmas and why some students do not pursue it, and other topics related to their service-learning work.

Indeed, it went wonderfully for the most part. In my first semester teaching the class, however, the risks of such a partnership became apparent to me when one student had to drop the class because her family had lost their home. The demographic at this campus is largely students of color and/or first-generation students, and many are commuter students who struggle to

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31 Again, I wanted to see this. In fact, my study includes my reflections on the interviews I conducted as well as more formal, coded linguistic analysis to avoid the problems my investment in the study could pose to the credibility of my findings.
balance work, home, and school lives. The student who had to drop the class was a star in the classroom and at the CCA, and it struck me that the service-learning aspect of the course was, in her case, unjust. She was struggling to stay in school, and I was asking her to do community service.

I was not aware of any other students in my two semesters teaching a service-learning composition course at this institution who found themselves in the same situation. When relocation to Connecticut meant that I in turn relocated the class to UConn’s Stamford campus and taught two sections of it as an adjunct for one semester, I was not aware of a similar problem with any of those students. Regardless, this student’s situation left me acutely sensitive to the binds such a course can put students in. Since beginning my career as a college instructor on that note, my research into service-learning has examined different intersections of service-learning in composition and student demographic, ability, identity, and institution, but it has, for the most part, focused on how the pedagogy affects the students who participate in it. Though I do not intend to diminish the importance of concern for the community side of the partnership, I have found concern for the student side both immediately compelling and often either assumed positive or simply not the focus of existing research. So, it is in response to that gap in the research as well as my early-seeded conviction that student-centered learning must remain a priority in service-learning that I began my study into the long-term effects of service-learning on composition students.

Explication: The Pilot Survey

In November of 2017, about a year before the interview stage of my study, I received IRB approval to conduct a small pilot study of students who had taken service-learning courses at UConn in the Fall of 2014 and the Fall of 2015. While my intention was to gauge interest in a
round of interviews, I also found that the results were telling and provided raw data for the overall study. First of all, I found that interest was lukewarm. I invited 65 UConn students to participate in the confidential, online study, and I offered to enter them into a raffle for a $20 gift card to the UConn bookstore. The survey included some multiple-choice questions, but the majority asked participants to enter short responses of their own. The questions were:

1. How many years ago did you take your First-Year Writing (FYW) course?
   a. 2
   b. 3
   c. 4

2. What do you remember most about it?

3. What writing strategies do you value most from the course and why? Is there anything you wish had been covered but was not?

4. Which writing project from the course means the most to you and why?

5. What do you remember about the service-learning (SL) component of your FYW course?

6. Among the assignment you did in FYW, which do you feel better prepared you for your future writing?
   a. The community projects were more valuable
   b. The academic projects were more valuable
   c. They were equally valuable
   d. Explain more

7. Have you kept in contact with your SL community organization?

8. Have you participated in any community action/activity since your SL course? (If yes, to what degree do you attribute this to your SL activity? Explain.)
9. If yes, to what degree do you attribute this to your SL activity? Explain.

10. Would you recommend an SL component for other FYW courses? [Likert] Why or why not?
   a. Yes (Why?)
   b. Maybe (Explain)
   c. No (Why not?)

The questions were designed to be as open-ended as possible, allowing participants to include whatever details that they felt most important to their experience in their service-learning composition class. For example, question #2 asks participants what they remember most without suggesting any writing or community project for them to recall; they could remember the room was too cramped or a friend they made in class if that was most memorable. The chance to recall an important writing project or community action comes later, and as a matter of fact, students are asked more guided questions as they survey narrows down from questions their experience of the class to ones specifically about community engagement.

Of the 65 students invited, 6 participated in the survey, and while all but one claimed that they would recommend service-learning components in other FYW classes, two of the five that said they would recommend it justified their answer with claims that it’s “important to learn how to give back” or “It made me more invested in the project,” responses that echoed sentiments of noblesse oblige or appealed to perceived instructor expectations respectively. The participant who did not suggest a service-learning component responded simply that, “It was not a very interesting class.” There were three responses, however, that gave more insight into their experiences. For example, one respondent claimed that the service-learning activity required
writing that was more applicable to their Nursing major. Other, more detailed answers included insight into discourse community expectations and public/classroom writing:

> It's completely different to write something for a person that you know will actually be using your writing than to write for a professor that will read it and grade it in a somewhat arbitrary way. The real test of your success was your client's happiness and it was important to learn how to please various different people through your writing instead of writing in a way that you know is academically correct and will get you an A.

This respondent did their service-learning activities with the Community Licensed Co-operative Kitchen (CLiCK) in Willimantic, CT—which provides public access to culinary arts and nutrition education as well as space for local farmers to process their goods for market—an experience that the student listed along with reading Judith Butler for the first time as among the most memorable aspects of the class. In fact, the student says of the service-learning activity: “It was my favorite part. I loved being able to connect with real people who needed my writing to benefit their business. I got to conduct lots of interviews and turn that into an informative, persuasive final project.” Audience, genre, and methodology remained pronounced concepts for this writer two years after taking their FYW course.

Another student, who had already been involved with their service-learning community partner before the class, recalls that weaving that existing partnership into the fabric of a service-learning class helped solidify a long-term relationship with a group on the UConn campus advocating for solar panel use. This student recommended a service-learning component for other classes because
it forces you to interact with ideas and people in a different format. Academic papers force you to become better thinkers and writers. The other learning experiences (like creating interview questions or thinking critically about pressuring key players in the university's administration you can have with a SL project create a new dynamic and layer to writing.

Here, while the student had already been socially active, even with the class’ specific community partner, that activism becomes more informed as the student learned which “key players” to pressure in order to instigate change and how to do it. Interestingly, of the six respondents, all answered question #6 by indicating that the community project was most valuable or the community and academic projects were equally valuable. However, the respondent whose community action researching and promoting solar energy on campus began before the class and extended beyond it—this person indicated that they were still in contact with their organization—noted that “[t]hey were both valuable, but in different ways. The academic projects pushed my writing skills and intelligence while the community projects forced me to engage with real people in a new platform.” This person chose to explain more about the question while others chose to leave it at its simple, multiple choice answer.

Again, these results were positive in a sense but also somewhat disappointing at first. With a less than ten percent response rate, it seemed that a service-learning class in 2014 or 2015 had left even so little an impression that a short survey—as it turns out response times averaged at 366 seconds or roughly six minutes, though one the respondent above who had already been active in solar energy clocked in 1025 seconds (17 minutes), skewing that average—was not worth the chance of winning a $20 gift card. And of those who did participate, enough of the answers seemed to echo the language of volunteerism or that of the Good Student that it seemed
the data would provide little in the way of insight into rhetorical development resulting from service-learning. In short, most of the responses were positive, but they were also friendly.

I sat on that data while planning the interview phase of my study. At first, I planned on inviting the same group of students for in-person interviews held at the UConn Writing Center, and I applied for and got IRB approval for that in May of 2018. This time, I would not call the response lukewarm because there was none. Of the 65 students I invited, offering a $20 gift card as incentive, one responded to learn more information but did not follow through to the interview. As a graduate student preparing for a dissertation in rhetoric, I am surprised my sensitivity to Kairos had not compelled me to avoid sending out invitations to surveys and interviews at the end of the college semester, both in the fall and the spring. Indeed, I significantly revised my IRB application that summer, which I will describe below, and I invited that larger pool of people to in person interviews in September of 2018, at the beginning of the school year, and for a number of potential participants, in the first semester of their senior year, when this survey would give them a chance to reflect on their undergraduate careers as they come to a close. The response was significantly better.

Explication: The Interviews

As noted above, the lukewarm interest in the pilot survey compelled me to expand the range of my IRB proposal for the interview stage of the study. I had invited 65 students to participate in the pilot survey, and six participated with responses to my questions that were overall positive, though not terribly specific, indicating to me that, at best, less than ten percent of the students who took the service-learning courses liked them enough to opt in to a survey for only the chance at a modest gift card. Therefore, I increased the incentive from $20 to $50 and expanded my pool of potential participants to include students who took service-learning courses
as far back as 2008—or going back ten years—as well as to students who took a non-service-learning FYW course that I taught at UConn’s Storrs campus in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters. The new pool of potential participants was 154 students and alumni, and of that pool, 18 individuals responded. Of those 18, one responded after the interview and transcription phase of the study was over, and three did not follow up to schedule an interview after I sent them IRB-approved Informed Consent forms. I did conduct one interview with a student who had taken a writing course in the Fall of 2012, but she had not taken a First-Year Writing course with a service-learning component. As it turns out, I accessed the incorrect roster for her contact information, and in our interview, we spoke about a literature course she had taken as an undergraduate student. I therefore exclude the data from this interview from the case studies and the linguistic analysis in Chapter 5.

That left 13 participants, and the breakdown of the participants was satisfying. I interviewed students and alumni from non-service-learning courses as well as service-learning courses from 2008, 2012, 2014, and 2015. I interviewed one former UConn undergraduate student from a 2008 section, three from 2012, and one from 2014. The majority of respondents who followed through to the interview stage were seniors, seven of whom took their FYW courses in the Fall of 2015, and two of whom took them in the Spring of 2016. Of the nine seniors, five took FYW courses with a service-learning component, and four took non-service-learning FYW courses. Of the 13 included interviews, five of the interviewees had been students of mine: one from a Fall 2014 section of a service-learning course at the UConn Stamford campus, two from a Fall 2015 non-service-learning FYW course at the Storrs campus, and two from the same non-service-learning course in Spring 2016, see figure 1. Of the 13 included interviews, 12 were held in person, and one was held via Skype.
The analysis of the interviews can be more in-depth than that of the survey first because they yielded more data than the online survey, but also because the survey was anonymous, while the interviews were confidential. In other words, because I was able to keep identifying data separate from survey responses, the study was anonymous, while the interviews were necessarily confidential because they were in person, and I knew who the respondents were and keep that information secret. Each survey respondent provided me with a signed Informed Consent form as well as Data Release form, and each chose a pseudonym and pronouns I could use while referring to them in this study. Therefore, I present here miniature case studies of each participant, relating the contents of their interview and reflecting on the significance of their responses. As noted above, a more linguistic, and possibly more objective, analysis of their
words will follow in the next chapter. As much as possible, I would like to present in this chapter each of the participants as a person before using their words as fodder for a larger study.

The one-time interviews took place between September and October 2018, and they consisted of the 19 questions listed below. While Seidman warns that interviewers who conduct one-time interviews with people they may have not previously met “tread on thin contextual ice” (17), I chose to conduct just such one-time interviews while balancing the time constraints of a dissertation and the likelihood that my call for participants would garner meager responses with the benefit of the contextual information that I was bound to miss out on. I decided to stick with the one-time interviews because this is one of the first studies of the long-term effects of service-learning on students’ writing and rhetorical development, and therefore, the findings from this study can present opportunities for further research, helping me or others more knowledgably design a longer-term, truly longitudinal study. I did, however, take into account Seidman’s cautions and designed the interview questions to approximate his Three-Interview Series model into a one-interview effort.

In the Three-Interview Series model, Seidman recommends that interview one focus on life history, asking participants “to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time” (19). Interview two focuses on “concrete details of the participants’ present lived experience in the topic area of the study” (18), and interview three asks respondents “to reflect on the meaning of their experience” (19). While Seidman’s model relies on the passage of time to help familiarize the interviewer and interviewee, and while he schedules 90 minutes for his interviews (17), I felt that for the scope of this study—which was wider rather than deeper—the Three-Interview Model could be adapted for a snapshot into the lives of those who took First-Year Writing courses with and without a service-learning component. In short,
while Seidman’s model factors in context by plotting out its three-interview series, I felt that some valuable context could be established by asking respondents to reflect on their history with First-Year Writing, the present context, and reflection on the meaning of their experience in one sitting, even if some of that context was sacrificed for the feasibility of my study.32

Therefore, the questions move on to become more or less related to the service-learning aspect of the course, and this focus on service-learning resists a linear “ramping up” on the topic of service-learning. This is because the aim of my study was to learn what sort of long-term effect these courses have had on those who took them, following Seidman’s model to achieve this. Therefore, the questions begin with a look to the past (questions #1-8), moving on to the writing practices or habits of mind or action that have stuck with them since the class (questions #9 and 10), then moving on to an inquiry into the kinds of writing and/or community action the respondent took part in at the time of the interview (questions #11-17), and ending with reflections on the experience of first-year writing and a chance for the respondents to fill in any gaps or answer questions that they felt I ought to have asked. Since the questions were meant to encourage the respondents to reflect on their growth more than to evaluate the service-learning aspect of their courses, and since not all respondents took service-learning courses, I chose not to progressively narrow the focus on to service-learning as the questions went on.

Some questions were intentionally left open-ended so that respondents could include what they saw pertinent in their answers. For example, question #4 asks what the respondent recalls the most about the course and/or what was most memorable early on in the interview

32 While larger studies, such as those of Beaufort’s Tim and the writers from Writing in the Real World and McCarthy’s Dave follow students over time, involving multiple interviews to draw conclusions about how writers learn, others have relied on single interviews or surveys years after the courses took place, such as Deans’ “Course Evaluations, Years Later” and Tucker-Loner’s 2014 dissertation. Deans’ text shows the value of “time-tempered evaluations” allow instructors insight into the longer-term effects their teaching makes (web), and Tucker-Loner’s single-interview sequence supported her claims that service-learning experiences in college promote social awareness and support the development of professional communication skills.
rather than directing the conversation towards the students writing. This left the response open to significant memories including the reading, assignments, instructor’s focus, relationships formed during or after the semester, or, if applicable, the service-learning activities of the class. Similarly, I ask if the respondent has kept in touch with anyone from the class in question #5 to learn whether or not the class intersected with the respondent’s social life and to get a sense of whether or not their memories of the class could have anything to do with their relationship with their peers. For example, it would be reasonable to guess that students who keep in touch with their peers have better or even more positive memories of a class where they made lasting relationships. The questions are listed below:

1. What year and semester are you in your college career?
2. Can you tell me a little about yourself as a writer back when you came to UConn, before you even started classes?
3. How many semesters ago did you take your First-Year Writing (FYW) course?
4. What do you recall about that course? What is most memorable?
5. Do you still keep in touch with anyone from that class?
6. Do you remember any of the projects, large or small, you wrote during FYW? Please describe them.
7. Which assignment(s) had the most memorable effect on you thinking, writing, or reading?
8. What do you remember about the process you used when writing your FYW projects?
9. Have any of those process habits (for example, drafting, peer review or revision, which may have been required) stuck with you as you now approach academic writing tasks?
10. Can you tell me what, if anything, is most memorable about the community project/service-learning (SL) component of your FYW course?

11. Have you kept in contact with your SL community organization? If so, how?

12. Have you participated in any other community action/activity since or now? Do you attribute that in any way to your FYW experience?

13. Did you learn any new writing or reading strategies in your FYW course that you have used since?

14. What about your FYW course, if anything, do you feel prepared you for your college courses after that, and even now?

15. How did you come to major in ____________?

16. What kinds of writing do you normally do in your courses now?

17. What about outside of coursework?

18. Looking back now, would you recommend that FYW instructors include a mix of typical academic assignments + a community project like the one you did? Or would something else have been preferable? Why?

19. Is there anything else you can share that would help me understand the long-term effects your FYW experience, and especially the community project part of it?

I conducted each interview based on the set of questions listed above. I tried to interfere as little as possible with the participants’ answers unless a question pertained to them in ways that were not immediately apparent. If the participant was no longer in college, I altered questions about their year and semester in college, and if the participant did not take part in a service-learning course, I rephrased the question to make it applicable to their First-Year Writing experience. For example, question #18 asks respondents to reflect on their course and decide
whether or not they would recommend a service-learning component, and for those who did not take service-learning courses, I asked respondents to use their imagination and talk about whether or not one would have been desirable.

I began each interview by asking the respondent to read and sign both an IRB-approved informed consent form and an IRB-approved media release form. I explained each form and reminded them of their rights as study participants, including the right to end the interview at any time, decline to answer any questions for any reason, their right to review transcriptions of the interviews, and their right to strike any information they wished from those transcriptions. Once I completed transcribing the interviews—which was one to two weeks after the interview took place—I sent those transcriptions to the respondents, asking them at that time to provide a pseudonym and the pronouns I could use when referring to them in my study. Therefore, the respondents will be referred to by those pseudonyms and pronouns in this study to protect their anonymity and properly reflect their gender identity.
Chapter 4: Case Studies

Reports on 13 Student Participants

Before I move on to the individual case studies, I will point to some general trends I noticed that may not apply to each respondent, but that I noticed enough of to justify mentioning. First, I noticed among some respondents, either explicitly stated or communicated tacitly, a sense of guilt when I arrived at question #11, asking if respondents who took service-learning courses had kept in contact with their organizations. Often, those who were not still in contact with their community organizations moved on to question #12—whether or not they took part in any other sort of community activity—without being prompted to do so, reassuring me that they were still active, albeit with different organizations. On the other side of the coin, a couple of respondents remarked in response to question #18 that they would encourage instructors to include service-learning components for First Year Writing classes, but only if those activities were listed in the course description so that students unable or unwilling to participate in community activity would not feel entrapped in doing so.

What follows are the case studies I wrote based on the interviews and their transcriptions. Whenever possible, I’ve tried to take tone of voice and body language into account, though I did not videotape the interviews, and so I do not recall every aspect of an interaction. As noted above, five of the 13 respondents had been students of mine, and I try to account for that prior relationship when creating the case study. Often, that relationship resulted in references to past events that I had to ask students to recall in more detail so I would be able to record more thorough responses. In short, while I acknowledge that those prior relationships had an effect on the interviews, I try in the case studies to minimize that effect.
I have also sequenced the case studies chronologically, with the large group of students from Fall 2015 arranged alphabetically (see Figure 6 in Chapter 3). The case studies of those who did not take service-learning classes are titled “Non Service-Learning,” and they span Fall 2015 and Spring 2016, when I was teaching at the UConn Storrs campus. I keep them in chronological order to get a sense of any trends in how students’ and alumni’s recall or value their service-learning classes. It is interesting to note that every alum I interviewed was either in graduate school or had completed a graduate program, and that many of the UConn seniors had plans for graduate school. This might suggest that those inclined to participate in this study were more interested in education, or it might show that graduate school-bound seniors may be eager to reflect on their undergraduate education before moving on. I am not sure it suggests that service-learning experiences have any significant effect on whether students plan for graduate school because the sample size is too small and many UConn undergraduates plan for graduate school without service-learning courses in composition on their transcripts. I do think it is interesting to note the differences in how alumni and current seniors remember their courses. For example, Michael could recall pronounced experiences in his 2008 course and how they affected him, but he admitted to not remembering some of the day-to-day details of the class, while Skai (Fall 2015) recalls the influential experiences as well as the day-to-day work of the class.

Though I’ve organized the case studies chronologically, I do not assume that learning is linear or uniform process that can be traced over multiple people, each representing a stage in the learning process. Eyler and Giles tell us that learning happens over time and in small increments that can affect a student’s trajectory rather than in dramatic or transformative experiences (18), and Sternglass finds that, among her case studies, “there was no clear linear pattern of writing development,” but that they “shared critical experiences, leading to appropriate methods of
inquiry, although the particular, facilitating events may have occurred at different times in their college careers” (289). Finally, Beaufort shows us Tim’s non-linear learning process through college and in the workplace, and suggests teachers encourage habits of mindfulness and metacognition to equip students for their shifting learning environments (152). Learning is clearly not a linear process with regular and predictable successes, but there are stages that learners share, such as the “point of departure” noted by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (105), and I therefore begin each case study considering that point in the writer’s development.

Throughout the case studies, I have bolded the key terms from my taxonomy in Chapter 1 as they arose. Though the terms may not have been explicitly used by respondents, it is worth noting when students’ recollections and value statements intersected with the terminology used in the scholarly service-learning discourse community and reflect the values I outlined in Chapter 1. Reported below are the highlights of these interviews as they pertain to my study. Unless otherwise noted, the interviews happened face-to-face in a private office located in the Writing Center at the University of Connecticut.

**Michael: Fall 2008**

Michael took his service-learning course in the Fall of 2008 and graduated from UConn in 2012 with a bachelor’s degree in English. When he arrived at UConn in 2008, however, Michael planned on majoring in History, and saw himself as a good enough writer to get a good grade. He referred to his attitude at the time as “arrogant,” but he attributed that arrogance to his belief that writing was transactional and only done for a grade. For Michael, his “point of departure”—the “primary point of reference” he had for himself as a writer as he entered university (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105)—was the mistaken assumption that his previous grades reflected a static, transient writing talent. But, his decision to major in English rather than
History came simply from his experience in and outside of English courses. For example, he credited his love of reading as a factor as well as the kinds of class discussions that took place in his English classes as two main factors. He also attributed his decision simply to enjoying the larger discourse community of undergraduate English majors outside of the classroom, as he pointed to enjoying the company of his English major friends as a factor in his decision. While Michael did not explicitly point to this experience as playing a role in his decision to switch to majoring in English in his second year of college, he noted that in his First-year Writing class—with a service-learning component—he was tasked with meeting and interviewing a professor from his then major, History. This was such a significant experience in his memory that he even remembered the professor’s name ten years later, and this could be because the professor said that he wished he had not gone into academia. It seemed clear, however, that Michael did not so much give up on a major in History as he pursued a major in English, and he pursued that major to the completion of a master’s degree in literature in Chicago the year after graduating from UConn.

Michael did not remember with much clarity his service-learning course, or at least not the service-learning component of it. He did recall working at the No-Freeze Shelter, a homeless shelter in nearby Willimantic, Connecticut, writing brochures for the shelter in groups, a service-learning activity that would fall under Deans’ writing for the community paradigm (53). While Michael, in writing for the community, created public texts, the predominant outcome from his perspective was that he became more of a citizen-writer than he would have had he not taken the class. Indeed, when I asked Michael to reflect on the service-learning component of the class he responded,

33 Note that this assignment was a part of Deans’ service-learning course in 2008 but not in following semesters. The effects this assignment had on Michael, therefore, cannot be tracked across the rest of the respondents.
I guess to put it kind of cruelly, I'm a lot more left-wing now than I was back then. Um, so to the extent that I think that if, if you have the ability to write well, you should use writing to improve the station [...] of people who are in some way deprived or suffering or oppressed. Um, and regardless of how stridently you do it or whether you're [...] sort of progressive or just way out in the anarchist zone, I do think that a sort of first year writing experience that focuses on service-oriented stuff is important [...] especially because it's also helpful for people who don't want to be English majors. Like if you have to, [...] later on in life write grants, if you have to later on in life, I don't know, write [...] a newsletter or anything. Um, I think that the, the sort of more outward facing [...] way of teaching is preferable to something else. (Michael)

Tucker-Loner notes that the participants in her study “collectively believed that service-learning leads to a broader sense of community awareness” (161), and that sense of awareness may be what Michael meant by his being “more left-wing.” Michael also echoes Tucker-Loner’s findings that students in her study credited service-learning with job opportunities in the future (159), but Michael also seemed to sense that wedding service-learning pedagogy with writing had value insofar as it was, in his words, outward-facing, and could make writing process knowledge more readily applicable for non-English majors.

While Michael explicitly named the feeling of guilt that I mention above about not still being more involved with the No-Freeze Shelter, he saw his experience as having shown him the value of social engagement as a writer and student. In his graduate program, for example, he became involved in a community initiative to bring a trauma center closer to a socio-economically oppressed neighborhood near his campus in Chicago. At the time of our interview
and back in Connecticut, Michael worked for the UConn Health Center’s Area Health Education Council’s Urban Service Track, editing documents that the organization used for promotional and informational purposes and teaching summer writing workshops for rising freshman through UConn Health. Again, Michael opted to share with me his community-based activity out of what seemed like a sense of guilt for not keeping up with his work at the No-Freeze Shelter, but in so doing, he supported Tucker-Loners’ finding that exposure to community action in college can lead to both career opportunities (159) as well as an increased sense of community awareness (161), as his work since college has been community-oriented.

Though Michael did not recall in much detail the community action component of his First-Year Writing class, he did recall the influence the attention to writing in the disciplines had on not only his decision of a major—after his conversation with a History professor—but also his writing during and after college. He recalled that peer review in large part changed the transactional value he placed on writing—writing for a grade—when he first arrived at UConn in 2008. He noted that peer review and “exposing […] anything I write to other people […] and welcoming their feedback […] are two things that I value a lot more than when I first started writing […] as an undergrad.” In fact, the sharing of texts with others influenced Michael in a more significant way than simply disrupting his assumption that writing earned grades because it made him aware of the value of outward facing texts, which contributed to his more public use of writing as a college graduate for UConn Health, and he was aware of this change. This seems a far cry from the writer who came to UConn so confident that he would be able to write for a grade that he looked back years later to call himself arrogant. It seems as if Michael internalized the threshold concept that “all writers have more to learn” (Rose 59) over the years since his
service-learning class. Indeed, when I asked him what else he would like to share to help me understand his First-Year Writing experience he added:

I would say that presumably to the extent that I now [...] think that writing should sort of have a purpose [...] and make an argument [...] and sort of face outworld, outward into the world, [...] then chances are good that the first year writing experience is sort of part of the preponderance of experiences that made that [...] outlook possible. (Michael)

Though Michael did not solely or even explicitly credit the service-learning component of his First-Year Writing class with his post-graduation writing and community-oriented activities, he acknowledged community action as one among the “preponderance of experiences” that shaped his values years later as a citizen-writer editing documents for the UConn Health Center.

Michael’s case struck me as telling insofar as he had been out of college longer than the other interview subjects in my study; indeed, even those who their writing courses as recently as 2010 were in graduate programs at the time of our interview. Michael, while he had gone on to earn a master’s degree in English, had been out of college and in the workforce for a number of years by the time we talked. Michael’s comment about the “preponderance of experiences” that have shaped him gave me pause because it seemed he was keenly aware of the post-college development that Beaufort noticed in her case study of Tim, where he learned discourse community knowledge (117), subject knowledge (121), genre knowledge (127), rhetorical knowledge (133), and writing process knowledge (138) in his Engineering workplace setting that he had not learned in his undergraduate history career. Surely, this upholds previous findings that learning is dynamic and active (Yancey et al.; Bransford, Brown, and Cocking) as opposed to
static and transient. This also suggests that, while service-learning has nameable benefits to students, it remains only one among a preponderance of experiences.

Juneau: Fall 2012

Juneau took his service-learning course in the Fall of 2012 and completed his bachelor’s degree in 2016, majoring in Spanish and writing an honor’s thesis on the short stories of Jorge Luis Borges. At the time of the interview, he was pursuing a master’s degree, which he planned to complete in the Spring of 2018. When he entered UConn, Juneau saw himself as a writer with a distinct style—he enjoyed comedy and what he called “analytics” writing—but he knew he had not yet honed that style. So, for Juneau, his point of departure (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) was uncertain; he knew what kinds of writing he enjoyed, but he did not feel confident in his ability to write in his own voice. But, when I asked him what was most memorable about his First-Year Writing course, he did not reflect so much on learning how to cultivate that voice, but rather reading texts about the levels at which social change occurs.

[T]he thing that stuck out the most about [the class] was there was a text we went over that [...] discussed [...] varying degrees of change you can make, [...] and it was like systemic level, [...] some medium level and then like, [...] the ground level, and the ground level was like working in a soup kitchen, and [...] systemic was like planning cities or legislative changes. And that was something I hadn't [...] I hadn't ever encountered before. (Juneau)

Juneau does not explicitly mention any sources that organized community action by the kinds of social effects they can have, namely Morton’s organizing model of charity, projects, and social change (Morton 19-32), but he sensed that he could and should choose his actions based on the changes he wanted to effect. While Juneau wrote his honor’s thesis on the topic of literature, it
would make sense that writing projects asking him to write about literature would stick with him, and they did. But six years after the fact, Juneau also recalled the value of his final project for the service-learning course, where he was tasked with writing brochures for the No Freeze shelter in Connecticut, one of the community partners for the service-learning class, a project that would fall under the category of writing \textit{for} the community (Deans 53) and an example of a project, as it attempts to raise awareness of a service that addresses the immediate, material needs of social inequity (Morton 21).

In fact, Juneau recalled this project having a long-term effect on his thinking precisely because he was writing about people and trying to elicit donations for the shelter. He commented that, “the No Freeze shelter [project] had an impact on how I wrote because I was trying so hard to accurately represent a nuanced version of some of the people at the shelter [...] and [...] selectively put things in that would maybe promote donations.”\textsuperscript{34} Like Michael, Juneau took part in a writing \textit{for} the community project (Deans 53), creating \textbf{public texts} but also, as we will see, Juneau sensed his responsibilities as a \textbf{citizen-writer} quite keenly. Indeed, Juneau was aware of the real-world consequences of his writing—the chance that his writing could elicit or discourage donations—and he felt pressure to accurately represent the residents of the shelter while appealing to those who may not have understood the root problems that cause homelessness\textsuperscript{35}.

This was a problem of communication and context, as Juneau conducted interviews with No Freeze shelter residents, and felt compelled to “curate what [he] read and what [he] was getting in these interviews” to both accurately represent the shelter residents’ words while appealing to

\textsuperscript{34} See Lunsford’s threshold concept, “Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences (20) from \textit{Naming What We Know}.

\textsuperscript{35} Insofar as the writing Juneau and his colleagues did had to balance the expectations of the community organization, the possible perception of a larger public, and the truth as Juneau saw it, this project could fall under Long’s further distinction of writing \textit{with} the community projects, institutional pedagogies (48), which require students to learn the methodologies and delivery that will speak to such a diverse group of stakeholders. And this kind of balance required Juneau to explicitly learn how to write across contexts.
the possibly uninformed expectations of potential donors. As Juneau expressed surprise at this dynamic of public writing, it appears that he had not yet encountered such direct and immediately important ethics of representation in his academic writing before taking on this project.

Juneau was one of the respondents I mentioned above who seemed to show signs of guilt when I asked if he had kept in contact with the class’ community organization. He seemed eager—even before I asked about further community action or activities—to share with me his volunteer work teaching intermediate English to migrant farm workers in the Storrs, CT area, an activity he sought out as a Spanish major at UConn. He has also volunteered to be stand in as a mock patient for clinical trials in the UConn Nursing Program. Feelings of guilt associated with service-learning experiences prove common, but they do not necessarily feed a sense of noblesse oblige that service-learning scholars call out as problematic (Bennett, Deans, Sementelli). In fact, Kiely notes that service-learning can induce feelings of guilt, shame, and anger that can prove transformative for students (16), and if they reflect on the causes of these feelings, they can become more empathetic and socially active (12-13).

This learning may not be overt, however. Though Juneau did not explicitly credit his current community activity with his First-Year Writing experience, he did credit the experience for giving him insight into the kinds of social effects one can work towards. When asked whether or not he recommended a service-learning or community activity component like the one he did for other writing courses, his answer was complex:

Hm, I don't know that...um...[pause] I think [pause] maybe not. But I think I do my best writing in, when I'm alone, rather than working in a group. And I remember working in a group, and we all contributed [...] and it was a good
group, but […] I think another alternative would be like writing […] specific for that class where you can do systemic change, like write to congressman or something […] like drafting letter after letter to hone […] what it is you want to get across. (Juneau)

Juneau continued to describe a situation in which individuals could work on their writing projects to submit to a larger body of texts that another student could compile and present to the appropriate people to effect systematic change rather than entirely collaborative projects, which he felt eliminate personal style from writing.

Juneau’s stylistic concerns were reflected in his graduate work. While his undergraduate major was Spanish and he wrote his honor’s thesis on a literary topic, Juneau moved on to a master’s program in Molecular and Cell Biology, and the writing habits he developed in his undergraduate career continued to inform his graduate work. For example, he had taken workshops at UConn and Columbia University—where he plans to apply for an MD/PhD program next year—on Narrative Medicine. Juneau described narrative medicine with more knowledge that I can:

So Narrative Medicine is […] the idea that you can apply literary […] or critical analysis […] and, you know, close reading skills to, to patients. And if you teach physicians […] to analyze text and, and read subtext, and they'll be better at […] seeing trends in, or seeing things that don't immediately present themselves in their patients. (Juneau)

Juneau ultimately credited his literary education for helping him learn to write in a style conducive to Narrative Medicine, which he believed was important because such training and narrative savvy made him better prepared and emotionally stable for patients who need that
stability. Such a blurring of the lines between medical and literary writing genres and subsequent creation of the “Narrative Medicine” genre, as well as Juneau’s awareness of this process, reconfirm Wardle’s observation that “[g]enres arise when particular exigencies are encountered repeatedly” (768), and such an explicit encounter with the demands of genre that Juneau experienced writing for the No Freeze shelter helped him note that awareness. In short, Juneau’s literary and writing education combined with his early experience writing for a public while taking into consideration the needs of the residents of the No Freeze shelter had influenced his keen awareness of the practical, ethical, and social outcomes of writing.

In fact, after I stopped recording the interview, Juneau and I chatted about New York, graduate school, and Columbia University for a moment until Juneau asked me to restart the recorder. Below is the transcription of this addition:

Chris Iverson
Okay. Juneau, you made a note about the first-year writing course and the service learning aspect, I think having an impact or an effect on you professionally?

Juneau
Yes. […] I think this course made me consider the level of impact I'm going to have with my job. And while previously, I may have been looking at a minor or low-level impact—and I don't mean to diminish the importance of it—[…] to more of a systemic level impact. And I have been very intentionally trying to situate myself so that I'm going to be in a systemic level of impact in, in the jobs I'm looking for […]

134
Chris Iverson

Great. Thank you for that [...] addition to the conversation.

Juneau directly credited his service-learning experience with teaching him how much and what kind of effects his work could have on social change, referencing Morton’s Charity, Project, and Social Change model (19-32). While this may not have instigated an identity as a social activist, it certainly had sway in how Juneau embodied that identity. In his pursuit of narrative medicine, Juneau both responded to what he saw as a need, but he also shaped his own professional identity through writing, showing an internalization of the threshold concept, “Disciplinary and Professional Identities Are Constructed Through Writing” (Estrem 55). And while this identity construction did not happen in his service-learning class, the class seems an influential one among his preponderance of experiences since his first college semester and into graduate school as a citizen-writer.

Tucker: Fall 2012

Tucker took his service-learning course in the Fall of 2012, graduating from UConn in 2016 with a bachelor’s degree and double majoring in Sociology and Psychology. Tucker then took one year off before beginning a Sociology PhD program in Indiana, where he was at the time of our Skype interview. Looking back, Tucker described his writing before he arrived at UConn as “free flowing” and less concise than in graduate school, and concision/concise was a word that he used eight times during our half-hour interview. Like Juneau, Tucker’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105), was one of mixed confidence and awareness of limitation, in this case writing that lacked concision arising from a limited sense of audience. Interestingly, though, Tucker attributed that lack of concision to a “self-focused” approach to
writing, rather than a “reader-focused” or “audience-focused” approach. Indeed, when I asked what was most memorable from the course, Tucker noted that his professor gave him practical ways to be more concise that stuck with him. For example, Tucker mentions that his professor noted every unnecessary use of the word “that” in his writing, and he remained careful with that word, often finding that editors recommended adding it to his prose. While this may seem like a small detail to remember, it is possible that the memory stuck with Tucker because it represented his exposure to what Adler-Kassner and Wardle label a “threshold concept,” or a concept that is both transformative and necessary for continued learning in a field (2). In this case, Tucker began to see how writing was not for himself alone—learning that he had to acknowledge in a small way the expectations of an audience and internalizing the threshold concept that Lunsford lays out when she notes “writers can address audiences—that is, actual, intended readers or listeners—and invoke, or call up imagined audiences as well” (21). While Tucker’s emergent awareness of audience may not have invoked imaginary ones, he did address the audience by internalizing the importance of developing a writing style that spoke to others than himself. His seemingly profound experience learning to pay attention to innocuous words like “that” stuck with him; he can’t un-learn it because it marks a significant shift in his approach to writing—a shift that he has found fundamental to his continued growth as a writer.

But when I asked about any projects that stuck out in his memory, Tucker recalled the service-learning partnership with the No-Freeze Shelter in nearby Willimantic, CT. He recalled that the shelter shared a building with an adult video store, and that the students in his group were creating a bulletin to spread awareness of the art that many of the residents of the shelter

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36 Adler-Kassner and Wardle borrow this term from Mayer and Land, but they apply it specifically to writing studies to both show what writers need to learn in order to succeed and to continue to frame out the body of knowledge that informs writing studies.
created. Tucker noted that many of the residents of the shelter were artists, and that, in fact, the
downtown Willimantic area had a large artist community, but the area was also known for
homelessness and a heroin problem at the time. The bulletin was meant to draw attention to the
community as one of artists. Again, as with the case of Juneau, this project would fall under the
category of “writing for the community” (Deans 53), but going even further, it would again be
what Long names an “institutional pedagogy,” (48) as it required Tucker and his colleagues to
balance the expectations of the class, the community organization, and the public. In fact, while
Tucker recalled the No-Freeze Shelter project most readily, he did not credit it with having a
large influence on his writing after the class and in other classes precisely because the writing,
according to Tucker, was so specialized that he had not found a chance to apply it to academic
writing. Rather, Tucker recalled the project and that it placed him and his peers on location,
making the purpose of the writing clear, likely a valuable moment of cognitive dissonance for
Tucker37, who acknowledges his writing was previously “self-focused.”

But, when I asked Tucker whether or not he would recommend a service-learning
component for other First-Year Writing courses, or if something else would be preferable, he
responded:

I would probably lean towards the something else side. I mean, I think I still got
value out of the class with the service learning, but I think it was a difficult
application for the lessons that we were learning. Um, and […] we were writing a
brochure, which, you know, didn't necessarily play towards the things that we
were trying to […] learn in class. I don't know if distraction is the right word, but
it seemed like there was a sort of break in between the two. So, like, this is, like,

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37 See Chapter 2 of this dissertation as well as Long’s description of productive cognitive dissonance (198).
writing for academia. And then this is [...] a service project, which was, you know, it was a good for the No Freeze Shelter, and so a nice use of the student labor [...] but I don't think it necessarily was [...] the most effective bridge between the two aspects of the course. (Tucker)

Ultimately, the sociologist in Tucker acknowledged the value that the service-learners potentially offered the No Freeze Shelter creating public texts, but he did not report any direct connection between his academic and public writing, nor did he seem to identify as a citizen-writer. And, while Tucker did not report any tension between himself and the community organization, Shah notes that such a disconnect could have dire consequences for community members, as she notes that genuine interest in community partnerships helps service-learning embody personalismo, or a sense of genuine investment as perceived by community members (93). In short, when service-learners do not perceive a link between the writing done for a community partnership and that of the class, then Tucker would be right in recommending another form of engagement for those writers.

Even though he did not credit the service-learning aspect of his course with this—and even though I suspect his work for the No Freeze shelter helped facilitate this development—Tucker saw his First-Year Writing experience as valuable insofar as he developed and carried with him writing strategies that have made his writing process more aware of audience. He had brought with him to graduate school not only a habit of writing as concisely as possible, but also awareness of a writing process that involves drafting and revision based on the commentary of peers, instructors, or other reviewers, a change from what Tucker himself calls a “self-focused” approach to writing. Tucker also saw himself shifting in terms of his identity as a member of academia as he was moving forward in his PhD program, and he took inspiration from his
undergraduate writing as he planned this transition. When I asked Tucker if there was something else he could share to help me understand the long-term effects of his First-Year Writing course, he talked about himself on both sides of the classroom:

I would, uh, say like, again, […] the foundations that I learned from the course was something that I still draw upon today, and […] taking that course has put me in a mindset where I, I see myself as an advocate for students taking a first year writing course because I do think it helps so much. And […] the professor I TA for now […] had his intro to Sociology, freshman class [do] daily Strunk and White lessons […] and he goes over prose lessons and daily, like, writing tips for his class every day […] I'll look at, uh, what he's got on the board. I'll be like, “These are the same lessons I learned in that […] academic writing class back in UConn.” So, I think it is important. […] I see in the writing, the students who take those lessons to heart and are able to use them create much better […] papers with much clearer arguments than those students who […] don't and just keep going with the mindset that they had […] coming in from high school. So, I would say, […] I would strongly encourage anyone to take an academic writing course. And it's something that I think about when I'm going to teach my own class of Intro [to Sociology] students next year. […] And I've been toying with the idea of, before the first paper is assigned, just having a day where we don't talk about sociology, where it's just like writing and talking about, like, how you want the essay to be structured and get a little English lesson in there. (Tucker)

When I followed up with a question about if and how Tucker’s First-Year Writing experience helped him write in his discipline of Sociology as opposed to other disciplines and
classes, he reflected on the importance of staying concise and argument-focused even while the subject matter—which he describes as somewhat philosophical at times—can tempt writers to put too much effort to writing overly elegant prose or speaking to larger philosophical truths rather than communicating their data and arguments. Here, Tucker showed that he had, by the time he began his first year of graduate school and was preparing to enter the classroom again as an instructor, developed an understanding of writing akin to Thaiss and Zawacki’s third stage of rhetorical development, "in which the writer understands the differences [in teachers' expectations] as components of an articulated, nuanced idea of the discipline." (110) While Tucker did at the time of our interview show a knowledge of academic writing in line with Thaiss and Zawacki’s third stage, he had not yet expanded on this awareness to discover the threshold concept that “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity” (Roozen 17), and that part of that socialization is seeing the elasticity in writing rules and style in different—often non-academic—contexts. In short, Tucker entered his composition class to learn how to write, and by focusing on class writing during the semester, as well as reflecting on his service-learning writing afterwards, he could critically engage with audience expectations and genre as it pertains to both the subject matter and conventions of the academic discipline of Sociology.

Maya: Fall 2014

Maya took a service-learning course I taught in the Fall of 2014 at UConn’s Stamford campus, an urban campus in the city of Stamford and about a 30-minute train ride from New York City. Unlike the First-Year Writing courses that I’ve described thus far, Maya’s was a course for writers whose SAT writing scores did not place them into the standard First-year Writing course, but it was also open to students who wanted to take an extra section of writing in their first year, and it was mandatory for all international students. Also unlike the other service-
learning courses described in this study, Maya’s was more in line with Deans’ writing *about* the community model than the writing *for* model the other courses followed. In the other courses, students produced materials such as press releases encouraging donations or emails and phone calls supporting the use of solar power that were created in cooperation with their community organizations. In Maya’s course, students engaged in community action and used that experience to inform their final writing projects for the semester. Writing *about* the community-style courses potentially compel students to think critically about their privilege, and in Herzberg’s writing *about* the community course, student writing revealed “a growing sophistication about the social forces at work in the creation of illiteracy” after students began tutoring writing at The Pine Street Inn, a homeless shelter in Boston (“Community Service” 65). It is important to note in Herzberg’s case, that the students required explicit instruction as to the community benefits of their work as well as what they themselves stood to learn, namely that exposure to such social forces (63). Deans also notes the importance of such explicit instruction in writing *about* courses, detailing Herzberg’s course at Bentley College near Boston as well as courses from McGuiness’ at Loyola College, Novak and Goodman’s at Pepperdine University, and Arca’s at Foothill College, and each description highlights the importance of students’ awareness of larger social forces creating inequity, and often in their favor (106). For Maya, however, learning to examine her own privilege and sense of what is “normal” may have been valuable, but more valuable was the experience of exploring the area surrounding Stamford.

Maya had moved from Jordan to Connecticut that year, and was therefore placed into this course. While this was Maya’s first semester in the United States, this was also my first semester teaching outside of Brooklyn, NY, and that semester, I had moved the course that I designed for my Brooklyn students to UConn Stamford. As noted above, I reached out to organizations in
Stamford, and students could do their service-learning activities within walking distance of campus. Maya chose to do her community activities with the Stamford Public Education Foundation’s Stamford Mentoring Program, a program that facilitates mentoring and tutoring for middle and high school students in the Stamford Public School System. Maya tutored a middle school student twice a week, a project that would fall under the category of Deans’ writing about the community (85), because even though Maya worked directly with community members, her writing projects for class were informed by that experience. Unlike the other participants in this study, Maya did not create public texts, but Maya grew as a citizen-writer while she made use of her service-learning experiences to find a place in her new educational community and even move outside of that community to work with an early childhood education organization near UConn’s Storrs campus.

Maya knew when she arrived at UConn Stamford in 2014 that she planned to transfer to the Storrs campus and pursue the UConn Neag School of Education’s dual degree program, which places qualified undergraduates directly into a one-year master’s program, or their “grad year.” At the time of our interview, Maya was just beginning her grad year, and had already done one year of student teaching as an undergraduate. Because she already planned on going into education when she began at UConn Stamford, she chose the Stamford Mentoring Program when given the opportunity to choose between several community partners because she knew it would help her prepare for pursuing an education degree and becoming a teacher. In fact, having recently moved to the US, Maya had not been accustomed to the educational system here, and she reflected on the service-learning activities forcing her to get out of her “comfort zone.” Even though the education system in the United States differs from that of Jordan, as does higher education in Stamford, CT, she felt that the chance to get out of the college classroom and into a
middle school setting helped her get a sense of what that setting looked like in the US. Maya’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105), then, was both uncertain and determined; she saw herself as a writer in an entirely new community, but she knew where she wanted her writing to take her in that new place. And since completing her service-learning course and eventually transferring to the UConn’s Storrs campus, Maya had been involved with Jumpstart, a national early education organization that partners with UConn to prepare three to six-year-olds in Connecticut for school preschool and middle school.

Maya directly connected her educational and community work since her First-Year Writing Course with the community activity she’s done along the way. When I asked her whether she would recommend a service-learning component for First-Year Writing courses or if something else would have been preferable, she recalled that connection:

I like the community project just because it got me out of my comfort zone. And it was unexpected. I remember like when it was assigned, all the students were not very excited, like to go out of the university, like to go out, just work outside of class. But […] I thought it was very beneficial. And it's one of the things I remember the most. And I just remember how awkward I was when I was doing the mentor part, the mentor thing. And I, now I can see the difference between after Neag and before Neag, because I remember being very awkward, and very uncomfortable to sit with a student one on one. But that helped me […] know what I needed to work on as I continued. Even though not everyone did something with mentoring. But that's just what I did. But I thought it was very useful, especially since […] students can pick something that they're interested major wise, since it was freshman year. And a lot of people were undecided. So,
they could do [...] community work regarding their major and that would help them decide if they want to pursue it or not. So, I thought that was a good experience. (Maya)

There is a reciprocity here that Maya pointed to when she recalled the difference in her perception of the Stamford Mentoring Project before her Neag work and after it. Similarly, she saw not only value for her in her major, but the potential for such community action to work in tandem with other first-year students and their majors, whether they had chosen them or not. In fact, Maya reported having conversations with international students from the class and coming to a consensus about the community action providing an exigency for getting off campus and starting to make ties outside of the university and in Connecticut. Maya’s case specifically and directly supports Tucker-Loner’s finding that service-learning activities support students professionally (159), and here, Maya not only made connections that could have been useful, but she also practiced skills and strengthened her application to Neag.

Aside from the service-learning component of the course and the community action’s intersections with Maya’s academic interests, she recalled how her approach to research changed because of the writing assignments. Maya told me that research and writing in her high school in Jordan were rather prescribed: “We did have to do research, but it was just [...] in high school, they give you like the format, you know, like, section one has to look like this. And I've never done anything, or was just like, okay, you pick it, and you do it without any guidelines.” In First-Year Writing, however, Maya remembered conducting what she called “exploratory” research, or research that involves not only facts that pertain to a prescribed topic but also creativity insofar as the researcher chooses and explicates based on personal experience—in this case, in their service-learning activity. While this was a shock to Maya because it was less prescribed
than she was used to, she also noted that this type of assignment was challenging to many students not only because of the difference between high school and college, but also because many students were international, and they were used to different types of work in their home countries. But Maya also noted that the service-learning component of the class was useful for her and the other international students in the class specifically, because it gave them concrete, nameable, but also social, tasks to complete in the process of the less strictly-defined coursework. Maya’s claim supports Fan’s finding in a study of ELL teachers in training engaged in service-learning programs that trainees developed sociolinguistic, pedagogical, and cultural knowledge that integrated them into mutually beneficial educational settings (88). While Maya did not indicate that she needed to learn English in my class, she explicitly stated in our interview that she and other international students found that the service-learning activities engaged them more with the Stamford community than classroom-based activities.

Maya recalled that some of the skills she had brought with her as a writer—for example, how to plan and begin a text—transferred over to her work at UConn Stamford, but she may not have been entirely at ease with the notion of writing as a process. Indeed, when I asked what writing habits—such as peer review or revision—had stuck with her as she approached later writing tasks, she remarked on the essay “Shitty First Drafts” by Anne Lamott and that she “wasn't very comfortable in writing something that looked so horrible at the beginning, because [she] just didn't know where to start with that. So [she] like[d] the idea of being comfortable with the really bad first draft, and then just going over it and making it […] work […] and making it better.” I assign “Shitty First Drafts” in most of my First-year Writing courses to show students that not only is writing a process that will require them to write multiple drafts and possibly have false starts and stops, but also why this approach is necessary and that most writers draft and
revise significantly. It appeared that, since I assigned this short text at the beginning of the 2014 semester, the idea of writing as a messy and possibly anxiety-inducting process was a threshold concept for Maya. While Tucker and others crossed the threshold of writing for diverse audiences, it seemed Maya crossed that of the pedagogical value of failure (Adler Kassner and Wardle; Brooke and Carl 62) and the importance of revision to writing (Adler-Kassner and Wardle; Downs 66).

Ashley: Fall 2015 – Non-Service-Learning Course

At the time of our interview, Ashley was in her senior year of college, majoring in Sociology and minoring in Criminal Justice. She took a First-Year Writing course without a service-learning component in the Fall of 2015, her first year at UConn. I taught this class, and it was my first semester teaching at the UConn Storrs campus. Ashley recalled that when she arrived at UConn in 2015, she found the idea of taking an English class intimidating because of UConn’s prestigious reputation, and she simply found the idea of taking College English, in her words, scary. But Ashley had taken AP English in high school, and while she did not test out of First-Year Writing at UConn, she had arrived with academic writing experience. Again, like with many writers in this study, Ashley’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) was both uncertain and confident; she had done well as a writer in high school, but she knew that UConn was a new community and that new expectations were in store.

The assigned text for the course was Bartholomae and Petrosky’s Ways of Reading, and Ashley remembered it early in the interview. She noted that, while she did not readily recall the readings for class, she recalled the writing projects, both the process of drafting and the topics she chose. In her case, she specifically recalled the essays she wrote about her hometown of Boston. Specifically, she wrote an etymological and linguistic analysis of the word “wicked” and
a multimodal photo essay about the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013. Ashley noted that writing about something she not only chose but also something literally close to home for her made the process of writing for college English less daunting and more memorable. In fact, she noted that, while she had learned revision strategies in AP English in high school, her First-Year Writing course required involving peer review in that revision process, a habit she has continued in her academic, and as we will see below, professional writing. It seems interesting that Ashley would offer to participate in an interview about a class she recalled so little about in terms of reading, but it is worth considering that this course was an opportunity for her to rely on her regional identity to inform her in a new place. Here, Ashley may have learned, though not explicitly, that “Writing Provides A Representation of Ideologies and Identities” (Villanueva 57) as a threshold concept. By choosing to write about one identity marker—the word “wicked”—and one significant historical event that she would clearly remember—the Boston Marathon bombing of 2013—Ashley was able to share distinct insider knowledge with a group that otherwise would have intimidated her.

But while she did not recall the specifics of her reading for the First-Year Writing course, she did recall the effects of that reading, and how that reading practice influenced her in other classes and contexts. Ashley described her reading since the course as being more “critical” and less about passively absorbing information.

So I think what I did a lot of times in first year, like, some of the material that I would read is, I would read it once, and then would reread it again, because [...] you're going to find more things you know, and then you're going to be able to understand it more, and I feel like what even happens with me today, like I was just doing some homework, but and I had to [...] read something. So, what I do is
I read it and I take notes on it. And then I'll go back and like, I go to those notes that I took, and I'll go back to the reading material itself and just see like, if it correlates and if I actually understand what's going on. Because, yeah, I can take notes as I'm reading something, but maybe I'm not actually processing it. (Ashley)

Ashley seemed to note a critical difference between simply annotating for class requirements of highlighting quotes for future use, as she used her annotations to punctuate that reading and, in a way, put it to the test when she reread. Of course, annotation and highlighting are discrete skills taught in her FYW course, but the particulars matter less than the learning habits she brought with her into other contexts. Much like Beaufort, who found that her research subject Tim did not specifically use the genre conventions he learned in college English in his Engineering workplace discourse community (127), Ashley seemed to recognize the ability to learn how to critically read and access the subject matter and genre knowledge (Beaufort 19) necessary to read critically and cull information from texts in other classes.

While Ashley’s class did not include a service-learning component, she became involved on campus in her undergraduate career. She mentioned that she has been involved in her sorority and even taken leadership positions. For example, she served as the Social Chair and served as the Senior Members Coordinator for the sorority at the time of our interview, writing reports of her activities to the sorority boards, and she credited some of the peer review work of First-Year Writing for putting her in the habit of sharing her written texts with peers or, in this case, fellow sorority leaders. And this peer review habit had spread to her professional life as well, as she shared reports with the social workers she worked for at an internship she did in her senior year. Ashley showed a focus on professional writing that suggests real transfer had begun to occur. Of course, the writing conventions that we covered in her First-Year Writing course, such as MLA
citation and multimodal writing (as in the case of her photo essay) may not apply to the writing Ashley did for her sorority or internship, but the “habits of mind,” as per Sullivan (156-157) had. For example, Ashley shared with me that she regularly seeks feedback from sorority members as well as internship supervisors on her written texts, suggesting a persistence—or “ability to sustain interest in and attention to short and long-term projects” (Sullivan 157)—and flexibility—or “ability to adapt to situations, expectations, or demands” (Sullivan 157)—in her writing projects outside of the classroom. And while this can be said of any participant in this study, Ashley’s eagerness to participate in a study that asked her to reflect on a class she took years after she had taken it suggested the willingness and ability to think metacognitively—or “the ability to reflect on one’s own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge” (Sullivan 157; see also Beaufort 152). While such habits of mind could be attributed to any of study participant Michael’s above-stated “preponderance of experiences” in education that shape how one thinks outside of the classroom, Ashley used that habit towards metacognition to give me an honest commentary on the theory and practice of community-engaged pedagogy.

When I asked Ashley whether she would recommend First-Year Writing courses adopt a service-learning component or other form of community engagement, or if it would have been a welcome addition to her class, she was guardedly in favor of the idea. She saw it as a positive addition insofar as it would give students the chance to leave the classroom and focus their writing on their experiences, but she also acknowledged that it seemed difficult to manage such a class, specifically to include a community activity as only a small unit of a larger course.

[I]f you were to make a course like that […] you would have to have students like automatically be signed up to know, like, "Hey, you're going to do community
service, and you're going to go out and then write about it," Rather than, like, that's just going to be a unit that you're focusing on. Because I feel like the people who are going to be the most passionate about it are people who are going to want to do community service. (Ashley)

Ultimately, Ashley picked up on an important caveat for service-learning practitioners: that students need to know beforehand that they will be taking a service-learning course, and that the course itself must prepare students for the service-learning work that they will be expected to do. This caveat for service-learning practitioners has grounding in rhetoric and writing research, as Shah notes the problems with engaging students uninterested in service-learning activities in a college class and the personalismo necessary to establish genuine connections to community members (39), but it also poses—without answering—the question of whether or not a non-service-learning course educates future citizen-writers. Ashley’s college writing experience showed that she was able to experience writing in different contexts—for classes, her internship, and her sorority—but there was little indication that such writing had as its end goal social change, like the work of Juneau in perpetuating the genre of narrative medicine and Maya in increasing access to education.

Brad: Fall 2015 – Non-Service-Learning Course

Brad also took my Fall 2015 First-Year Composition course without a service-learning component. At the time of our interview, Brad was in his senior year at UConn majoring in Marketing. When he arrived at UConn, he was undecided, but he chose to major in Marketing because he saw it as a chance to work creatively and collaboratively. Brad also applied for a competitive spot in the UConn School of Business and, much to his relief, got in. Brad recalled that before he arrived at UConn, he was not terribly interested in writing, but some supportive
high school teachers helped him learn what he needed to know to do the work. It seemed Brad’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczk 105) was difficult for him to recall, as he did not consider himself as a writer at all as he entered UConn; it was only after arriving at the university that he developed a sense that writing was less a simple act and more an involved process (Dryer 27) or even identity marker (Roozen 50). And from First-Year Writing, Brad remembered most the feedback from the instructor as well as the group activities that helped him and others seek out and develop topics for their writing projects.

While Brad’s course did not have a service-learning component, he had, at the time of our interview, taken a course with a community activity. He recalled an Urbanization course he took in his sophomore year in which the students were tasked with forming student groups and doing some sort of community service on campus. Brad and his group chose to do trash pickup on the UConn campus, and Brad reflected fondly on this experience as one of the few chances he’d had for community action since coming to UConn. Given Tucker-Loner’s 2014 finding that service-learning (regardless of the discipline) afforded students the chance to learn the perspectives and needs of communities outside of their university, and that this opportunity allowed the subjects of her study to report increased social development (167), such an experience seems necessary for those college students who, when not answering the demands of college studies and campus life, would seek out diverse perspectives, like Brad. In other words, the demands of college itself can uphold the imagined rift between colleges and communities, and in cases like Brad’s, even when students wish to bridge those gaps themselves, they can find themselves entrenched on one side of, as Reynolds would call them, “artificial splits between the classroom and the real world” (43).
Indeed, Brad admitted that before college, he was much more active and engaged with community service projects. In fact, when I asked Brad whether he would recommend a service-learning component for other First-Year Writing courses or if some sort of community action would have been a welcomed addition to his First-Year Writing course, he was unguarded in his support for the idea.

I think that's a good idea, with a community project. I really do. I think it's, I mean, like I said [...] I'm a people person, I like meeting people and stuff. So I think one: that's a good way to just meet people, especially as a first year student. [...] And tying it in with writing: I think [it] allows someone to actually think about what they're doing [...] with the project for the community. You know [...] it's easy to just do something and then just be done with it, and not really think about it, you know? But if you have to write about it, and like, talk about [it], I feel like it kind of [...] syncs with you more [...] Resonates. Yeah. It makes you think about it.

While talking about his work doing trash pickup for his Urbanization class and while recalling community activities before college, Brad tended to use the language of “giving back,” which suggested a sense of noblesse oblige (Bennett, Deans, Sementelli), or a duty to help the less fortunate, but when he considered community activity in the context of a writing class, he began to consider the value of critical reflection as a component of community action. Brad’s consideration of service-learning in a composition course does tie in with the research into reflection on social action and writing together (Deans, Mikolchak). Indeed, while Brad’s experience shows that, without a service-learning course, students can grow as active citizens in college, this does not necessarily translate into growing as a citizen-writer, as Brad’s work did
not require the reflection inherent in learning the genres and demands of public texts or the longer-term effects of his work to influence social change.

Freya: Fall 2015

Freya took her composition course with a service-learning component in the Fall of 2015. At the time of this interview, she was a senior at UConn majoring in Marketing with an English minor. Freya recalled writing for high school as being transactional insofar as she wrote to complete the essays that would get her through to graduation, but when she arrived at UConn, she was surprised by the amount of feedback she received on drafts that focused on quality rather than quantity of writing. So, Freya’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) worked in her favor, as she found herself excited by the engagement her professors took in her writing after years of more transactional writing in high school. She also recalled in the interview that she and her peers were exposed for the first time to an academic article, and they reached the consensus that the genre was uniquely challenging.

[T]he entire class agreed that it was the most difficult thing we've ever had to read, just because it was so long and convoluted and, uh, non-concrete thinking that you know, you were just lost in this, this article and yet ended up at the end of it like, "What the heck did I just read?" (Freya)

In fact, Freya mentioned that an analysis of this article was the first writing project the class took on, and at the end of the semester, when given the chance to revise and resubmit a writing assignment from the class, she chose this analysis because she had developed more sophisticated reading strategies and learned to revise more thoroughly, even going so far as to bring in sources from other classes she was taking to support her analysis.
This course was also one of the first times she worked on a collaborative writing project. For her service-learning project, Freya and a group of her peers partnered with the Town of Mansfield—a town near the UConn Storrs campus—to gain support for and ultimately build a new playground behind the Mansfield Community Center. Freya and her group were charged with a multi-faceted writing project that involved conducting interviews with those involved in the project and using them to inform their public text, which, in turn, was written for a purpose outside of the class, a project that would land under Deans’ category of writing for the community (53) and, again, Long’s institutional pedagogy (48). Freya recalled that, because she was one in a group of four, and all four members were collecting data and writing based on their interpretations of the writing task, the document needed careful revision when they put it all together.

[W]e kind of divvied […] up the work as groups usually do. You know like, ”You do this part, we'll do this part, and then we'll kind of just combine it at the end.” So, we did, and it was very clearly four different writing styles. Um, it was very jarring to jump from one section to another […] and reading back over that first draft, even I can see how disconnected everything was because we were all writing from different perspectives with different objectives in mind of what we wanted the project to look like. (Freya)

Interestingly, Freya credited this experience, or the collaborative nature of the service-learning writing project, with her choice of English as a minor. When I asked about how she came to choose her major, Accounting, she noted that both of her parents were CPAs, or had been in their

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38 See Lunsford and Ede’s collection, Writing Together: Collaboration in Theory and Practice for a reflection of their years-long writing collaboration, and specifically, see their chapter “Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship” for an inquiry into the exigencies of writing collaboratively. See also Adler-Kassner and Wardle’s first threshold concept: “Writing Is A Social and Rhetorical Activity” (17).
careers, and that along with positive experiences in Accounting classes at UConn compelled her to choose her major. Freya freely reflected on her English minor as well, saying that the level of attention to writing, analysis, and approaching projects with an open mindset in her service-learning class specifically inspired her to choose this minor.

While Freya did not still keep in touch with the Mansfield group who built the playground, she had done other community-oriented work, such as volunteering for the United Way, where her mother was also involved. But the service-learning project left its mark.

So that was one of the projects that I very clearly remember because it was a hands-on experience. We were not just getting information and writing it. We were talking to people who were involved. We went to the building of the playground, which was a community event, and we helped build it. Um, it was just it was a long process, and there were so many elements of it that we went to and talked to, um, people who had been working on this for years that it was a really, really memorable project, you know, in terms of the other projects. (Freya)

It was unclear how much Freya identified as a citizen-writer since she came upon her United Way work through her family ties and did not seem to share Michael and Juneau’s sense of “guilt” about not keeping in touch with the Town of Mansfield, suggesting that she did not as well share their inclination to such writing. However, when I asked Freya if she would recommend a service-learning component for other First-Year Writing courses, she said that she would without reservation. Not only had the experience and approach to writing that the community project necessitated remained with her for her undergraduate career, but it also surprised her at the beginning of that career. Some discrete writing habits, such as concision or the ability to decode denser, more academic texts, stuck with her, but importantly, her reflection
on collaboration and responsibility for the real-world effects of her writing struck me as akin to Sullivan’s habits of mind\(^{39}\) (156, 157) that students take with them between discourse communities. Freya did not expect college writing to be as collaborative as she discovered it to be, and the experience also exposed her to the possibilities of being involved with a community in a new place, new class, or new context.

**Amanda: Fall 2015**

Amanda was a senior at the time of our interview majoring in Math at UConn. She recalled that when she came to UConn in 2015 and took her Composition course with a service-learning component, she loved creative writing and was looking for a course that would push the boundaries of what she knew about writing and had done in high school. Even though she was a Math major, she felt a standard prerequisite writing course, though it would satisfy a requirement, would not be enough for her, so she sought out an honors option and chose the service-learning course. In fact, Amanda had been active as a citizen-writer for years in her religious organization, writing and delivering talks to youths about the group’s traditions, values, and culture, and one goal of the talks was to communicate as much as possible in a short amount of time, so Amanda had experience considering rhetorical concerns in her speaking/writing before entering the class. Amanda’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) was an interesting one, as she saw herself as a writer in both the academic and creative senses, but she also saw herself as a public writer and speaker, since she had plenty of experience writing and speaking for her religious organization.

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\(^{39}\) Bacon interrogates the notion of transfer to posit that course content is less important for writing transfer than academic and social understanding to inform their rhetorical choices, and she specifically ties this rhetorical agility to service-learning pedagogy (449).
In the service-learning class, Amanda did her community activity in partnership with Husky Sport, a partnership between the UConn and some Hartford North End communities that partners UConn students and K-12 age students in reciprocal service-learning relationships. Amanda worked with young people during afterschool programs, serving as a mentor and writing about their experiences in the program in a newsletter that went out to donors and sponsors of the program as well as UConn campus affiliates, a community activity that would fall under the category of writing for the community (Deans) in a course built around institutional pedagogy (Long 48), much like the work others in this study did for the No Freeze shelter in Willimantic Connecticut. The public text newsletter writing was not the only opportunity Amanda and her colleagues had for reflection on their community activity, because the course readings and some writing projects required the UConn students to contend with the language and attitudes of community action. For example, When I asked Amanda about some memorable aspects of her composition course, she critically recalled the language of community action, terms like “volunteerism,” “charity,” and the language of “giving back” that affected their approach to community action and writing about that community action as well as their biases it betrayed in their writing. This echoes the language of noblesse oblige that much service-learning scholarship calls out (Bennett, Deans, Sementelli), but Amanda’s recollection of this rhetorical preparation for service-learning and her awareness of perspective in this case suggested she had internalized Sullivan’s metacognitive habit of mind, as she was aware of the “individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge” (Sullivan 157) and, in this case, how that affected her and her colleagues’ approach to communities outside of the university.

For Amanda particularly, this critical attention to syntax had proven influential in her college career as well as her activities outside of school. As I noted above, when Amanda arrived
at UConn, she looked for something that could add to her already considerable public writing experiences, and her composition course required her to consider how her writing style betrayed certain biases in her writing as well as how those choices worked internally in her texts to create cohesive and concise writing. She recalled her professor asking her about how sentences work together, a question she had not considered in high school. And though Amanda did not write so much for her major courses in Math, she did plenty of writing for her religious organization, only more informed by her college writing experiences than she was before. Here, Amanda sharpened her awareness of Lunsford’s threshold concept, “Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences” (20) by allowing what she learned in her work with Husky Sport to inform her writing and speaking at her religious organization. Again, we see a transfer of not specific knowledge, such as the discourse conventions of an English class, but rather habits of mind such as flexibility, which Sullivan names “the ability to adapt to situations, expectations, of demands” (157; see also Bacon 449) in different contexts, which Amanda exemplified by applying the concise writing she practiced in her FYW class to her own religious community as well as using those lessons in her work with Husky Sport.

Though her major courses did not allow her much time to work with Husky Sport during after school hours in the years after her service-learning class, she had volunteered with another community organization in Hartford, the Actuarial Foundation, where she tutored math to high school students. At the time of our interview, Amanda was working with elementary school students in Harford, tutoring science. Clearly, from her experience with her religious organization to her service-learning activity to her extensive community involvement in Hartford since that course, Amanda had a passion for working with publics outside of her schooling, and this tends to confirm Tucker-Loner’s finding that students who are motivated to work with
publics before, during, and after their service-learning experiences get the most from them (167). In fact, since Amanda found ways for her service-learning composition course to inform her community activity with her religious organization and after the class, through her connections in Hartford, this relationship was entirely reciprocal for her; she intentionally sought out ways to further her rhetorical education publicly and continue to operate in publics outside of the college while a student. Tucker-Loner’s findings, especially when applied to a case like Amanda’s where a student understands what community action is and how to do it, could use the caveat that such motivation might not be there, not because a student does not have a predisposition to community action, but because they might not know those opportunities exist.

So, when I asked if Amanda would recommend a service-learning component for other composition courses, she said that she would, but she answered with some awareness of the benefits of her experience.

I definitely think something service-learning-based and community outreach, [...] it's good, because [...] some people are, they have time on their hands [...] and they don't, they don't generally know [...] who to reach out to, to, you know, get in touch with community outreach, and [...] underclassmen generally are more available for that, and they're definitely willing, they just don't know where to start looking. And if they're exposed to that in their class [...] they might build a connection that will last them a lifetime with these organizations, which I mean, I've seen left and right, with people who volunteer. Um...they always seem to, you know, build that connection. I think even having like the project like I had in my [...] writing course, that sort of forced me to get in touch with Husky Sport, and learn their mission and why they do what they do, and how they accomplish their
goals[...] So even if [...] the underclassmen say they're not looking for community outreach opportunities, having to go and learn about them and see what they really do [...] can inspire them to make change and give back.

(Amanda)

Amanda continued to describe community service as an idea that might not strike first-year college students as necessary or even possible. In fact, given her experience, she suggested that students might not even know that opportunities such as the ones she took part in exist, and by introducing these opportunities early, in a required first-year course, those opportunities can be made apparent to them.

When I asked Amanda if there was anything else she could share that would help me understand the effects of her First-Year Writing experience, she further stressed the importance of early exposure to community-engagement in college, this time with a focus on her experience. As noted, she had been involved as a citizen-writer with her religious organization before arriving at UConn, and she valued community action, but she was not confident that without early exposure to community action through her composition course, she would have known where to go to seek out that sort of engagement. All throughout her undergraduate career, she had successfully sought out those partnerships, in part because she learned how to find them in her first semester. In short, it seemed that Amanda entered college as a seasoned writer of public texts, but her critical attention to syntax and the effects that language can have on attitudes towards publics helped her grow as a critical and attentive citizen-writer.

Peter: Fall 2015

When I sat down with Peter, he was a senior in his seventh semester of college, and planning to graduate one semester early. His major was Accounting, but he had switched in his
first year from Electrical Engineering after taking a general education course in Accounting. He said that when he first got to UConn, and when he began his First-Year Writing course with a service-learning component in 2015, he habitually wrote in the five-paragraph model he learned in high school, but he recalls his FYW professor worked to help students break away from that model. Peter’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) in writing was that he wrote for defined goals, normally writing for himself and employing writing habits that he found successful, and as we will see, he had not abandoned those habits by his senior year in college; he did, however, learn to employ new ones, such as revision and collaboration. Indeed, Peter noted that the writing projects in his service-learning class, and especially the service-learning project, proved more involved than other projects he had done before or since.

For the class’ service-learning project, Peter and his group advocated for ConnPIRG, a consumer organization based in Hartford that stood up against large corporations when their practices threaten public health and civic participation. ConnPIRG has a chapter in Storrs, UConnPIRG, which is student-led and funded, and some students from Peter’s class chose to work with UConnPIRG to advocate for solar energy use on campus. Peter recalled that their writing for this project was collaborative, and that they put together a document encouraging UConn to invest in solar or other forms of renewable energy. This project, interestingly, straddles Deans’ writing for the community (53) and writing with the community (110), as UConnPIRG serves the UConn community, but it is a part of the larger ConnPIRG, which serves the greater Connecticut community. Peter’s project differed from others also because it would align itself more with Long’s “tactical pedagogy” (48), in which students circulate their own public texts to effect social change. Peter noted that this project required him to rethink his approach to writing and readily admitted that he tended to write “the night before” (Peter) a
paper is due. But with this project, each member had to draft their contributions, and the group had to assemble those contributions into a larger text that they would circulate more broadly than they would a term paper. Peter also reflected that this project was important to him because it, in his words, “actually mean[t] something” (Peter). I find Peter’s words here significant, not because I believe that he felt his own academic work did not mean anything, but because it seemed he sensed a larger meaning to work created collaboratively and not “owned” by the university. Ede and Lunsford’s reflections on their collaborative partnerships includes not only the specific exigency of collaborative texts, but also the emergence of corporate universities’ ownership of materials and published texts (173). Of course, Peter’s coursework is not university-branded—as this dissertation will likely be—but its circulation was limited to a university audience⁴⁰; therefore, it could be said that these texts are for the university. But the public nature of Peter’s UConnPIRG texts make them more widely circulated and as a result, more meaningful because his collaborators could take ownership of the public good they could do.

Peter readily admitted to writing the night before a college paper is due even at the time of our interview. Regardless, he felt the service-learning experience was important, firstly because he contributed to a text that could potentially make change on campus, but also because he learned, though revision and feedback from his peers and professor, how to write more concisely and with more style because of that collaboration and broad audience; he noted that the project required him and his group to manage the demands of an organization outside of the classroom. Bacon notes that demands such as these can represent a conflict for students who do not appreciate the value of learning to manage demands that they perceive as at odds with each

⁴⁰ See also Bacon’s comments on “authenticity” in students’ service-learning writing in “Community Service Writing: Problems, Challenges, Questions.”
other (“Community Service Writing” 45), but Peter seemed to have come to terms with that experience in the years since his service-learning course, at least when it came to his writing ability. Similarly though, Peter valued his writing experience during the service-learning activity, even though he did not acknowledge transferring writing the habits of revision and collaboration too extensively to his academic writing. While this may seem like Peter did not learn anything from his service-learning writing, the value he placed on the experience and the public text writing processes and outcomes he valued suggest he was aware of another of Adler-Kassner and Wardle’s threshold concepts: “Learning to Write Effectively Requires Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort” (Yancey 46). For the purpose of writing texts “that matter,” Peter valued the collaboration and revision he participated in to meet the demands of UConnPIRG, even if he chose not to pursue that kind of writing further in his academic career.

Interestingly, when I asked him if he had participated in any community action or activity at the time of the interview and, if so, whether or not he attributed that action to his service-learning experience, he said he did engage in community action, but he does not attribute it to the service-learning activity.

I have. I don't really attribute it to that just because [with] our service learning, we were kinda hands off with ConnPIRG. Like they, they basically told us like, "This is what we want." And then we just went out and did it. (Peter)

Peter valued the service-learning experience insofar as it exposed him to collaborative writing that required more of a process than he was used to and had the potential for influence larger than a term paper shared within the boundaries of the classroom. And Peter does engage in community activity in his own town, though not necessarily as a citizen-writer. His family’s
small business held an annual fundraiser for an animal shelter in town, and Peter also volunteered at the shelter year-round.

Regardless of the lack of agency he felt he had over his writing in his service-learning experience, Peter valued the class. When I asked if there was anything else he could share that would help me understand his First-Year Composition experience and the effects it had on his writing, he mentioned the value of the course for his writing:

[I]t was helpful to take this class just because my roommate, he didn't have to take the English class, the first English class, and his writing, just kind of, it's kind of bad, just because he's kind of still stuck on like that high school writing, just because he never experienced [FYW]. So I've had to […] help him a lot with the writing like he'd […] have me read over a lot of his stuff and revise that. And then the service-learning one, one of the biggest things I thought that it was helpful with was learning how to write in a group because it taught us that you can't just […] split up the writing and then just throw it together because then […] it's just going to read weird when you have different flows and styles just kind of packed together, no real smoothing it over and making them blend if you just kind of take this paragraph, put it here, followed by this person's followed by this person's. I thought it was really good just for group work. […] I don't know if it's typical that high schools have, like, group writing projects, but I've never done anything like that before. And I thought it was really helpful for me. (Peter)

It seems that for Peter, the service-learning activity and writing instruction informed each other. It was unclear whether the partnership with ConnPIRG influenced Peter to become more engaged with communities outside of the classroom than he was before, and his commentary on
his writing processes suggested that he did not see himself as a **citizen-writer**, but when I asked what I needed to know to understand the long-term effects of his FYW course, he offered me the longest response he had given in our time together, explicitly linking instruction and service as crucial for his growth as a writer in college.

**Skai: Fall 2015**

Skai took her composition course with a service-learning component in the Fall of 2015, and by the time she sat down with me, she was in her senior year double majoring in Cognitive Science and Political Science while also taking graduate courses towards a master’s degree in Public Health. In the spirit of full disclosure, I had met Skai two years before our interview, when she began her career as a tutor in the UConn Writing Center and I began mine as the graduate assistant director. In her first year, she had proven herself more than competent as a tutor, and in her second year, she earned the position of Writing Fellow, a competitive position—of the roughly 30 undergraduate tutors that Writing Center has any year, only four of them are Fellows—in which selected Writing Center tutors are embedded into sections of First-Year Writing designed specifically to support first-generation students or those from underrepresented backgrounds, a position she took up again in her third year as a tutor. Also in her second year, Skai co-wrote and co-presented a panel presentation on the value of Writing Fellows in First-Year Writing courses at the Northeast Writing Center Association (NEWCA) annual conference.

In addition to her writing accomplishments at the time of our interview, Skai identified as a writer long before coming to college, writing poetry and novels from the age of 12, and still writing creatively at the time of our interview. Skai added, however, that she had developed her academic writing since arriving at UConn in 2015 and took her composition course with a service-learning component. In fact, Skai did not have to take a writing course when she got to
UConn because her AP scores exempted her from the requirement, but she chose to take the course because she wanted to continue to refine her academic writing in her first year. She decided to try the course for one week and leave if she felt it unnecessary to stay, and she was glad she stayed. Skai’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) proved rather anomalous, as she had been so experienced as a writer that UConn exempted her from a composition course, but she elected to take one despite being told she was equipped to handle college writing; for Skai, her writerly identity proved ever-emergent, and in our interview, she reflected on that emergence metacognitively, noting the differences in expectations she had encountered as well as how she learned to address those expectations.

In fact, she pointed precisely to the differences between her high school writing instruction and that she experienced in college to explain the value of this experience.

I think the cool thing about that class is, instead of unlearning things in high school, we've replaced those with new skills that are more adaptable and […] more effective. And I really appreciated that from the first day. It was like, "We're going to talk about concision. And like, we've never spoken about concision before." So that's pretty much how that class went, and I stuck with it. (Skai)

Her service-learning project played a role in her learning new writing strategies that could work in conjunction with those that she practiced in high school. Skai partnered with the UConn Women’s Center for her service-learning project, and her group took on the task of redesigning the one of the Center’s webpages. Skai made it very clear that designing a web page is academic writing of a public text, noting that such work must be more deliberate and rhetorically aware than other kinds of college writing, as it will be public and serve the purpose of informing that
When I asked Skai what was most memorable about her service-learning experience, she recalled being impressed with how varied the projects and work associated with them were. Three years after the class, Skai recalled one group that made phone calls and another that compiled oral histories, though she did not recall the names of their partner organizations. She did, however, recall that all of these projects did truly academic work that needed to speak to a larger audience than the typical term paper does.

Skai also recalled the work she did with the UConn Women’s Center, and at the time of the interview, she was still in touch with her liaison at the Center. Since Skai concentrated on International Women’s Rights in her Political Science studies at the time of our interview, this partnership was particularly important. Skai was also involved with other community action at the time of our interview, though she claimed this was “not entirely on purpose.” Skai reflected on the work she did for internships and in her major and noted that she often began to think in a more community-oriented or public way, and her efforts tended towards making her work publicly accessible. For example, the summer before our interview, Skai had traveled to Seattle, Washington through her Public Health program to conduct community assessments, and she found herself wondering how the texts they created could work in a larger community:

> And then I was like, "So let's say we already do the assignments over, how can we write them in a way that everyone understands?" And I was also looking at how that community goes out of their way to make sure that the writing and the literature and graphics are culturally competent and connect to the people in that community.

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41 Skai’s observation here supports claims from scholars such as Wysocki, Sirc, and George, and it seems worthwhile to inquire into the increased possibility of multimodal, more specifically digital, composition practices in first-year writing courses. In fact, George notes that one main obstacle for digital composition’s success in classrooms is the cost of materials or hardware (228), and partnerships such as Skai and the UConn Women’s Center may be able to handle such costs.
area. Because we went to communities around Seattle that were very ethnically diverse. So, do they have things in different languages? What do the graphics look like? Do the symbols and signs mean something? Can someone who doesn't speak English tell that this is compost, this is trash, this is recycling? And it really does influence a lot of my public health thinking when I'm thinking about community-based writing, because literature is communication. (Skai)

Indeed, Skai very clearly understood how the course affected her in her writing as well as community engagement. Although, her comment that the community-engaged aspects of her work were not “entirely on purpose” suggests that she brought with her habits of mind (Sullivan 157; Bacon 449) that compel her towards social action in varied contexts. That is not to say that she learned these habits from a service-learning class alone; she seemed to have begun to develop those habits before her first semester at UConn. While it would be folly to see the development of such habits as linear, her service-learning class could be one of the preponderance of experiences that have shaped her as a citizen-writer who sees the potential for social change in writing without having it explicitly pointed out for her.

Indeed, when I asked what she could share with me that would help me better understand the long-term effects of her service-learning composition course, she noted that those effects continue to reveal themselves. She began her reflection noting that the learning “kind of just sneaks up on you” and proceeded to tell me about her own writing style and the skills that she had noticed emerging in her peers as they continued to be socially active. Years after her service-learning course, Skai was aware of how the effects of her learning continued to pop up in unexpected ways, much like Michael noted his “preponderance of experiences” as more influential than a single course. Similarly, in her awareness of knowledge developing in a non-
linear way, Skai demonstrated how “Writing Speaks to Situations Through Recognizable Forms” (Bazerman 35), as she and her peers demonstrated abilities to take on writing tasks as they entered new ones. This lack of immediate results, however, does not represent a discouraging finding for service-learning practitioners, as Eyler and Giles noted in 1999 that educators should not expect all or most of their students to experience dramatic and transformative experiences in one class because these small transformations can simply affect a student’s trajectory, which itself can have significant influences over time (18; see also Beaufort and Sternglass).

But Skai provided another insight into the value of the service-learning composition course, that she took as an honors student:

[T]he unfortunate part of that class is that it was for honors students, which is good and bad. Like, I understand why honors classes are configured in one way or another. But they're also configured in ways that are better for someone to digest information or leaves room for discussion and, and leaves room for people to kind of just sit and work with something a little bit more so than some of the first, as a fellow, I get to see how some of the First-Year Writing classes are structured. And, and they're a little bit more like a factory type setting. It wasn't...even though they're about the same number of students, it wasn't this, "Let's just sit down. Here's some some 'well' for you all. And let's think about this, let's talk about this." It doesn't seem to have that same air, which, and is also dealing with a very specialized population. So SSS\textsuperscript{42} students, and in my case, as an Honors student, so the connotation amongst that is very different. But in terms of my identity, I'm

\textsuperscript{42} The Student Support Services (SSS) office at UConn arranges the Writing Fellows partnership with the Writing Center, and the students in those First-Year Writing classes enjoy additional support from SSS throughout their time at UConn. In fact, the Writing Center routinely hires students from the SSS program as writing tutors and Fellows.
not that different from the SSS students. My dad just happened to get a Masters in this country. If he didn't, then I'd be considered first gen, too, and that would have been a completely different academic experience. And what does that say? [Laughs] Like, it was him getting his degree and not really much to do with me, which could be the same thing for a lot of our, for a lot of our students, because he wasn't any more helpful for me in school, than most of my students’ parents were for them. I kind of just had to piece things together on my own.

(Skai)

As I mentioned before, Skai had been a Writing Fellow, and she was beginning her second year in the position at the time of our interview, so she was familiar with First-Year Writing courses other than the one she took as an Honors student. The Student Support Services (SSS) office offers support to first-generation and students from otherwise underrepresented groups support through their college career, and integrating a Writing Fellow into their classrooms is one of those forms of support. However, Skai noted that the kind of thinking, reading, and conversing that happened in her Honors course would particularly benefit this group. While there has been some research on service-learning in basic writing courses (Pine, Arca), the experience has traditionally been considered a chance for students to reflect on their social privilege (Herzberg “Community Service”; Jones, Gilbride-Brown, Gasiorski), and this focus situates the potential learning opportunities of service-learning as available to the already privileged, rather than offering these opportunities to students who could benefit from them as well as opening the conversation up to students who could contribute to service-learning discourse in subversive, substantial ways. Here, Skai pointed to an irony in such placements, because students who are

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43 See also Herzberg’s account of tracking and how it influences student access to resources and instruction (“Service-Learning” 442).
perhaps more prepared for college than others are offered challenges that other students could very well use, such as the ability to play with writing or write in potentially surprising circumstances and ways. Skai’s comments and insight into the implications of the honors structure at UConn are yet more examples of Skai finding ways to be socially active in contexts where social action may not be explicitly called for. One final note about Skai’s professional trajectory: I saw her months after our interview, and she told me then that she had been accepted into the graduate program of her choice at UConn, studying public health, and it is exciting to know that she will apply that same attention to social thought in her graduate studies.

Tess: Fall 2015

Tess took her composition course with a service-learning component in the Fall of 2015, and at the time of our interview, she was a senior with a double major in Economics and Human Rights and a minor in Public Policy. Though she took writing courses in high school, including AP English, and she enjoyed writing and reading in general, she did not feel very motivated to engage with what she felt was surface level writing in her senior year; she felt her writing was serviceable. Tess’ “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) in writing was one of patient disinterest, as the expectations made of her could have been more challenging, and she saw herself as a writer who fulfilled academic requirements. But when I asked her what was most memorable about her First-Year Writing course, she told me that it was the class that stands out most in her memory from her first year, largely because every writing project taught her something new. In other words, years after the course, Tess recalled most that it exposed her to writing as a topic in and of itself (Wardle, Adler-Kassner “Writing Is an Activity and Subject of Study), one that she had already known well, but about which she discovered she had more to learn (Rose).
Again, in the spirit of full disclosure, I met Tess two years before the time of our interview, at the same time I met Skai. They both became Writing Center tutors the same year, and they both became Writing Fellows in their second years. Unlike Skai, Tess did not choose to remain a Fellow in her third year with the Writing Center, as she was busy with other campus activities. Tess did, however, co-write and co-present at the NEWCA conference with Skai in their second years at the Writing Center.

When I asked Tess about any specific writing projects, large or small, that she recalled from her First-Year Writing course, she mentioned her service-learning partnership with ConnPIRG and the report that she and her group were tasked with creating to report on how other universities were making use of solar power, straddling the writing for (Deans 53) and writing with (Deans 110) the community paradigms much like Peter’s activity. While Tess reflected on the challenges of writing one public text in a group of four, and the revision necessary to make a cohesive report, she also reflected on the social aspects of data gathering and research and the challenges inherent in that. In fact, Tess recalled being nervous about conducting the phone interviews with administrators from other universities necessary to gather the data for the report. She recalled that her professor did practice interviews with the class, going so far as to have students leave the room and come back in, acting out the interviews from beginning to end and giving feedback. In this case, her professor exposed the group to the social aspects of writing, allowing them to practice “rough draft” interviews in advance of the higher-stakes interviews they had planned. Even with all of this support, Tess recalled pacing back and forth before making her first call and hoping the person on the other end of the line would not pick up. When the person did answer, she conducted the interview and, years later, recalled that doing that interview represents an instance of productive cognitive dissonance (Long 198) that
allowed Tess to learn the social tools she needed to pursue the social action she already had the inclination to do.

Indeed, Tess was still involved with ConnPIRG at the time of our interview, making phone calls on behalf of ConnPIRG and presentations as a member of UConn’s Mock Trial Society. As a matter of fact, Tess had expanded her involvement with ConnPIRG by her senior year.

And I've done several things with my position. So UConnPIRG, although […] we are a nonpartisan, student-directed student advocacy group […] we have several campaigns, so I volunteered on different campaigns under UConnPIRG. This includes obviously new voters project and affordable textbooks, but I've also kind of […] done a little bit of work […] with like zero waste and […] ABX, which is […] banning […] antibiotics in […] meat from like Subway, KFC. (Tess)

It seemed Tess credited her service-learning experience with helping make this level of community involvement possible. From a college senior who recalled not feeling invested in her high school writing, the vivid memories of emotional and intellectual investment in research and writing for a purpose⁴⁴ seem significant. When I asked Tess whether she would recommend a service-learning component or something else for a First-Year Writing course, she responded with a personal reflection:

I personally really like the service learning activity, because it showcased academic writing to me in a place where […] the same skills that I applied to write that report, like I use now on a daily basis. And I think it was an exercise in skill building and confidence building for very practical things, like, how do you

⁴⁴ Again, see Lunsford and Ede’s commentary on collaboration and ownership of texts.
talk to somebody, how do you interview somebody, how do you […] take
information that somebody gives you and make a persuasive report to prove to
somebody else, so they should do something? [S]o […] that, like, persuasion, I
think is important, and like purposeful. And I think having something real to do
made things…not, I guess…make it more real, but make it, it had a purpose,
because I knew that the report that I was going to be writing […] could have an
actual effect somewhere one way or another. [A]nd it had implications beyond
just the classroom, because we're talking about, like, the solar energy of a
university. And we're a very large university, and we take up a lot of energy. And
if our university was to make a commitment to either do solar energy, or like
renewable energy, that would save so much […] energy. (Tess)

In Tess’ case, her commitments to social change were clear; she took the opportunity to talk
about the good groups like ConnPIRG can do to effect social change in an interview where she
was invited to talk almost exclusively about herself. It was clear that this commitment was
intrinsic to Tess and not entirely a result of the service-learning class, but Tess did lay plain how
the service-learning projects helped empower her to enact the changes she saw necessary, in
effect giving her the knowledge to become a citizen-writer. It is worth noting here that a student
who did not enter a service-learning class with the inclination to engage in community action
might not have taken the initiative to overcome anxieties and learn how to perform that action;
recall Shah’s observation that students inclined to do community work were able to embody
personalismo, a social literacy that communicated to community members that they were
invested in the work (93).
That is not to say, though, that Tess benefitted from the course only insofar as she learned ways to be a more effective **citizen-writer**. Her reflections on her serviceable writing in high school at the beginning of our interview stood in stark contrast with the more invested approach to reading and writing she spoke of later. For example, she noted reading Judith Butler as a specific learning experience.

> [T]he reading that impacted me the most had to be the Butler reading. And I remember I printed it out twice, because I printed it out once, and then I wrote all over it. And I didn't understand what I wrote on it, because I just, I didn't understand it. It was so difficult at the time. And so, I reprinted it and went through it so many times, just to understand the little pieces. I'm forgetting exactly which [...] piece of her writing we were looking at. But I just know that that made me a better reader, because I had never read anything before that I just didn't understand. That was a very new experience to me. (Tess)

Tess told me that learning to annotate had proven valuable while reading and writing for her other classes, and that learning to encounter a text she did not understand at first was something missing from her high school experience. She also reported paying specific attention to concision while writing, in part because her professor made that a primary focus in writing feedback, but also because she found it necessary in crafting **public texts** for ConnPIRG and the Mock Trial Society. While these are nameable and discrete writing skills Tess brought with her to new contexts, they transferred to less academic spaces as habits of mind (Sullivan 157; Bacon 449) that Tess saw valuable and broadly applicable.

I would like to add a note about Tess similar to the one I added about Skai above. I spoke with Tess months after our interview, and she accepted a full-time position with ConnPIRG to
start after her graduation from UConn. So not only is Tess an example of a service-learner who sustained a relationship with her service-learning partner, she is an example of one who made a career out of that partnership.

**Jon: Spring 2016 – Non-Service-Learning Course**

Jon had been a student of mine in a non-service-learning First-Year Writing course in the Spring of 2016. When he sat down for an interview with me, Jon was in his first semester of his fourth year, planning to take an extra semester and graduate in the Fall of 2019, completing a double major in History and Communications. When he began his undergraduate studies at UConn, Jon felt that he was a fairly strong writer, so he did not feel very nervous about taking a college writing course. He did, however, want to take the class and work on making his writing clearer, and he looked forward to the opportunity to work with more abstract or philosophical concepts than he was used to working with in high school writing courses. Jon’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) is similar to Juneau and Tuckers’ insofar as he knew he was a proficient writer, but he felt that there was more to work on. In fact, when I asked him to describe a writing project that stood out in his memory, he recalled working with Mary Louise Pratt’s “Arts of the Contact Zone” and connecting Pratt’s observations about power and cultural appropriation to the power dynamics in *The Shawshank Redemption*. Jon recalled that this project was the first time he had the freedom to make connections between academic material and cultural products like the film.

Jon also recalls a reading that he did in the class by David Foster Wallace, the essay “Authority and American Usage,” and how it first compelled him to consider the challenge of inventing complex and original ideas and then communicating them to a readership that he would have to assume was unfamiliar with his ideas. In this essay, the students were assigned to
write an entire essay about one word, exploring how the meaning of that word is constructed socially or politically, and describing how and why different sources define and deploy it in different ways. Jon chose the word “freedom” and explored how political entities, such as nations, define it as well as how individuals define the word and state of being free. Here, Jon had to consider how a readership might already define the term and negotiate that previous understanding with the one he sought to propose. Jon seemed to have internalized, at least three years later, what Smit calls an “opaque” theory of writing as social practice (81), largely in part because I had not explicitly taught his class to pull from their “points of departure” to help them negotiate meaning-making with an unnamed audience. In short, Jon’s work on this essay drew from class discussion at the time of its writing but also on the knowledge that he brought with him into the class.

During our interview, Jon seemed to return to the idea that writing takes a lot of deliberation, considering an audience as a writer, and considering oneself as the audience when reading. Prewriting, in fact, seemed an important touchstone for Jon as he continued to write in the years following his First-Year Writing class. When I asked him what writing strategies he learned in that class he had carried with him in later writing classes, he at first struggled to name prewriting, but when I suggested the term, he opened up more:

Right. Um, but just to get an idea of […] what we're covering and some of the—I mean, if you're talking about a book— […] some of the biases and motivations of the author and […] considering all that. […] [I]t's just about for me […] when I'm, you know, consuming […] material […] it's about getting through it with clarity, and trying to understand the best I can, you know, the points that the author was trying to make, and […] how they're building that […] between […] style or
actual, like, plot device […] and usually, depending on what it is. If it's a movie, and I'm going to write about it, I watch it a couple times. If it's a book, I might not read through it twice. But I'm certainly going to go back to the things that...that caught my attention most, the things that I'm focusing on most, and read through it a few times, and then you know, you do [...] a bit of secondary research on it, and...and try to develop your ideas and...and see what you could best support [...] and then it just becomes about just putting it down on paper and [...] trying to [...] to effectively [...] establish or point out something that's not, and I don't want to say that it's not obvious but that I mean maybe you don't want to like rewrite a new idea. You don't want to rewrite same ideas that other people have tried to cover. [...] [I]t’s always trying to find something different to break down about it.

(Jon)

Jon returned to his essay about “Arts of the Contact Zone” and *The Shawshank Redemption* when he described how he saw his job as a writer rather than a reader, and said it was his job to make the connection between an essay on the effects of Western Colonialism and a film about the United States between the 1920s and 30s clear, not wanting to make any assumptions about a clear connection between the two. And though this is a specific instance where he felt compelled to play the reader and the writer during the prewriting process, he noted the value in his Communications and History classes years later. Jon repeatedly returned to the idea that as a writer, it was his job to make his abstract connections clear for readers45, since this was a skill he brought with him to his film courses, and since this did not seem for Jon an easily nameable thing, it lends itself to a habit of mind (Sullivan 157) rather than a discrete skill. Even though I

45 See also Adler-Kassner and Wardle’s Threshold Concept—explained by Bazerman—”Writing Expresses and Shares Meaning to Be Reconstructed by the Reader” (21).
had not explicitly taught this habit of mind in the FYW course three years previous, Jon returned
to is as a skill he needed to develop as he exceeded his point of writerly departure.

Though Jon did not take a course with a service-learning component, he did express
interest in being involved with writing projects outside of the classroom. For example, he
planned to get involved with organizations like UConn’s TV station in his last semesters as an
undergraduate. When I asked him if he would recommend a more community-oriented approach
to First-Year Writing, he mentioned that writing for a wider audience would have helped him in
particular think more pragmatically. Whereas he valued the more theoretical approach to writing
he developed, his comments on his thinking during his prewriting suggest that a wider audience
would have helped him consider how to communicate to readers on a broader scale. And though
I specifically invited him to comment on the possibility of writing for a community organization,
his responses were largely focused on writing in a professional setting or polishing his writing to
articulate or prepare for future goals. Jon did anticipate the potential benefits that Tucker-Loner
found in her study when she suggested service-learning prepared students for work in
professional settings (159). This focus on career writing as opposed to creating public texts or
the social change-oriented activities of a citizen-writer, though, might have been in part
because Jon had not taken a service-learning course in composition, and much of the class
reading and writing for such courses in composition covers the idea of service-learning itself. In
other words, service-learning courses, in addition to teaching the ways in which writing can work
in public or community settings, teaches about the very potential for writing to effect social
change and the potential degrees of that social change (Morton 19-32).

Finally, when I asked Jon if he had kept in touch with anyone from his First-Year Writing
course, he said that he had not. As it was a course not in his major, he did not have the chance to
have further classes with many of his peers from that class, and while he enjoyed their conversations and writing collaborations, the demands of college did not make it easy for him to pursue further relationships after knowing his peers for only a couple of months (Nathan). Jon was not thinking about service-learning or community engagement when he shared this with me, but it struck me as significant. Ultimately, the course was only one half of an academic year in his (at that point) three-and-a-half-years as an undergraduate student, and this time did not prove sufficient for him to form lasting bonds with one or more of the roughly twenty people who met for roughly four hours per week; it was one among a “preponderance of experiences.”

Furthermore, if this amount of time together does not facilitate long-standing relationships with peers, and if a non-major course means that peers go their separate ways after the course is over, then one can see how the scenarios Mathieu names as examples of community engagement gone wrong can happen. For example, Mathieu’s “What the Student Wants” scenario (Tactics 101), where a student wrote to an editor of a street paper to ask how the organization could help her fulfill her class obligations but not to show that she had done her research or inquire about what she could offer, likely resulted from lack of community engagement preparation in the classroom as well as the student’s very temporary identity as a service-learner. Similarly, the “Case of the Vanishing Intern” scenario (Tactics 104), in which a non-profit accepted an intern for a summer, but he only worked one day before leaving without prior notice, may be extreme in the case of service-learning shortcomings, it does show the intrinsic problems associated with the 12 to 14-week service-learning class model. In short, if an affable and smart student like Jon does not have the time to make friends with peers in the span of a semester, it cannot be expected that the student will forge **sustainable** community ties in that time.
When Miranda sat down for her interview with me, she was a senior planning to graduate one semester early, in the Fall of 2018, with a major in Accounting and a minor in Spanish. Miranda took my First-Year Writing course without a service-learning component in the Spring of 2016, and when she first arrived at UConn, she saw herself as a strong writer who felt confident taking a creative approach to both creative and academic writing. Miranda’s “point of departure” (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 105) seems anomalous, but in a different way from Skai’s; she was confident in her writing, and at the time of our interview, remained confident. In fact, her self-identity as a writer had not changed much by the time of our interview, and she shared with me her success in a writing course held in Spanish the semester before. While she felt she improved in college—learning to write in a second language, for example—she felt she came to college well-developed as a writer.

Though Miranda recalled feeling like a well-developed writer when she entered UConn, she still had a writing process that she continued to cultivate in her First-Year Writing course. For example, when I asked her about a writing processes that she picked up in her course in Spring 2016, she recalled a rather messy process in which she wrote down every thought she had on a subject and color coded each short bit of text to keep track of the different strains at work in her draft. She also recalled in-class peer workshops as being a time when she could take those messy drafts and present them to groups to help her decide how to clean them up. In addition to the workshops she experienced in her writing course, Miranda recalled the value of taking advantage of instructors’ office hours, though she could not recall if this was more useful in her writing course or in her Spanish writing course from the year before we met for the interview. Here, it seemed Miranda had encountered challenges for which she had to develop new
strategies, and since she approached these challenges with a secure sense of herself as a writer, this struck me as an instance of what Yancey et al. label “remix” (104), as she integrated prior and new knowledge to address a series of new writing tasks.

In fact, Miranda saw a few connections between her First-Year Writing course and her Spanish writing course. She pointed to the value of writing collaboratively—with peers or an instructor—and she noted the use of multimodal reading, specifically reading photo essays, and much like the transfer Amanda exhibited between her school writing and that she did for her religious organization as well as the transfer Jon exhibited between classes, Miranda seemed to have transferred the collaborative habit of mind (Sullivan 157) rather than a discrete skill. For her writing course, she remembered reading texts about Syrian refugees that included images, and “thinking about the ways in which the photographer kind of built the photograph […] and then looking at the deeper meaning of what those images [told] us.” Miranda mentioned the value of reading images critically in a Spanish course she was taking at the time of our interview. The course theme was genocide, and much of the work is multimodal:

So, we're looking at different images, and how those [images] kind of tell a different story than what might have happened historically […] [S]o it's more of looking at the interpretation of that particular photographer, or […] historian. And that was trying to document […] the events that went on, how they can kind of skew others to think how they're thinking, rather than looking at the historical facts. […] [S]o it's a very, I would say, artistic interpretation of [pause] what actually happened in history. […] [B]ut that was something that I remember from the English class that I took freshman year […] just kind of thinking of the
different elements that go into what creates an image and how those can influence our thoughts and interpretations of things. (Miranda)

As a Marketing major, Miranda did not find too much room for creativity in her upper-level class writing, but she did in her minor, Spanish, as well as her hobby, photography. In fact, when I asked her if she did a lot of writing outside of classwork, she admitted that she did not have as much time as she would like to write outside of class, but she did enter her work into photography contests, which required her to write short blurbs about her pieces.

When I asked Miranda whether or not she would recommend some sort of community activity in first-year writing courses, she cautioned that the requirement might be too much for unsuspecting students. She recalled her major coursework from her first year at UConn and thought that the idea of service-learning sounded more interesting than the reality of it for a non-English major who may not see the value in coupling their first semester of college writing with public or off-campus activities. Ultimately, Miranda suggested that service-learning courses in writing be labelled as such in course catalogs so that English majors or students interested in public writing and rhetoric have them available (see Ashley above as well as Shah). And in our conversation, I recalled service-learning courses I taught at UConn and my master’s institution that were not listed as such being a bit of a surprise to the students on the first day.

That is not to say, however, that Miranda had shied away from community activity during her time at UConn. She had been active in her sorority, and especially so in a fundraising campaign that her sorority conducted every year for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), and when I asked her to tell me more about CASA, she filled me on in the organization and her sorority’s work.
It's an organization where, [...] say, a child is [...] put into the court system for whatever reason, maybe they don't have a family member that's there to take care of them. [...] So this CASA provides volunteers that will go in and kind of act as an advocate for that child and go into court with them and make [...] talk to the judge, make decisions regarding their best interests [...] and it's a volunteer program so they don't get paid at all. So, the fundraising that we do directly benefits Casa as an organization and helps them to continue providing these services. (Miranda)

Miranda noted that members of her sorority did not have permission to work directly with the children, as that would require special training and supervision, but the sorority had been able to sustain a partnership with the organization for years. In this case, it seemed Miranda, without a formal service-learning class, had enjoyed some of the professional and social benefits Tucker-Loner notes (159, 161). Furthermore, since the community action took place in a sorority, it had the sustainability that a course-based community project did not, and since the work was heavily mediated through CASA—i.e. the students did not have direct access to those they served without the proper certification—the potential pitfalls Mathieu notes (100 Tactics; Shah) were mitigated.

While Miranda had developed a keen sense of community-awareness (Tucker-Loner 161) in her work with CASA and apart from any formal service-learning experience, it was unclear whether she took on the identity of a citizen-writer, reflecting through writing on how her actions could effect social change and, reciprocally, her agency as a writer of public texts could instigate such change. Her CASA work surely did good in a community, and as a sorority-led endeavor, enjoyed some of the sustainability that service-learning courses and programs
struggle to achieve, but it was unclear if/how Miranda’s rhetorical/writerly development and sense of community awareness informed each other.

Participant Recommendations

As I noted when introducing these case studies, many participants felt compelled to assure me that they still participated in some form of community action even if they had not maintained contact with the community organizations from their service-learning experiences. Those who had not had service-learning experiences were eager to mention the community engagement they had participated in before or since their First-year Writing classes. I cannot help but be aware of the chance that they were speaking to someone in a position of perceived authority, and that eagerness to share community action could have arisen from a habit of speaking to authority with the expectation of being judged or evaluated, even though this study seeks to evaluate programs rather than individuals.

I also noted above that participants, like Miranda and Ashley for example, expressed a concern about the idea that service-learning could be mandatory, noting that individual students are different and have different comfort levels with community action. Indeed, if students are compelled into service-learning experiences, those experiences may not translate into meaningful partnerships, for students or community partners tasked with working alongside unwilling students. See, for example, Shah’s research into the importance of personalismo and the critical role genuine investment on behalf of service-learning students plays in the perception of these partnerships by community members (93). On that note, I also turn to Tess’ response to the question, noting that her interest in community action did not necessarily stem from her service-learning experience. Instead, she would be an example of a community action-inclined student who developed skills and confidence that helped her pursue the public work she was inclined to
do before the class began. Presumably, Skai shared those inclinations, as she took a service-learning in writing course in her first year of college even though she did not need it, knowing she could switch to another course if this one did not have anything compelling to offer. As the service-learning aspect of the course was apparent from the outset, she had the chance to opt out with little to no risk. Similarly, Amanda entered the class already involved with her religious organization, and Maya saw the value in using the service-learning experience to familiarize herself with education in the United States and prepare for her planned track in education.

All this suggests that any sweeping judgements about the value of service-learning for undergraduate students would benefit from the caveat that students have different inclinations and abilities at the outset, and that the values will be different for individuals. In addition, a service-learning activity may not influence students to become more (or less) socially active. For example, Peter notes that the service-learning activity he did exposed him to collaboration and the process of writing while his writing habits had previously been more product-oriented. This suggests that the value for Peter manifests itself in more sophisticated writing habits. Similarly, Tucker reflected in large part during our interview on the writing exercises from his writing course and noted that he would not necessarily recommend a service-learning component for other writing courses. Here, he cites the significant differences between the genres of academic and public writing, and since his writing experiences had been largely academic throughout his undergraduate and graduate careers, that public writing did not necessarily inform academic writing in graduate school. While Michael valued his service-learning activities, he saw them, ten years later, as one among the “preponderance of experiences” that have shaped his values and outlooks over the years.
There were, of course, those who unreservedly recommended service-learning for writing courses. But even those unreserved recommendations differed depending on the respondent. For example, and though her recommendation differed from Tucker’s, Freya recommended service-learning and named an exposure to collaboration and different writing genres and expectations as the reason why. She noted that the process of collaborating with writers from her class as well as factoring the expectations of her community partner organization exposed her to writing processes that she had not expected. She also noted the culture shock of reading academic texts, so clearly, she valued some level of cognitive dissonance in her experience as a first-year student. Brad, though he had not taken a service-learning writing course, also recommended the practice in first-year courses because he felt that they were an excellent opportunity for people new to a campus to learn more about how to become active either on campus or in the surrounding areas. He mentioned his positive experience with another course that had a community activity component—even though it may not have included explicit instruction on the theory and practice of service-learning—and felt that such opportunities were tough for first-year students to come by without some guidance from faculty or advisors. Finally, Juneau highlighted the value he saw in community engagement, going so far as to ask me to restart the recorder after our interview was over to tell me on the record that the experience had a significant influence on his academic and career trajectory. Juneau reflected on the writing growth he experienced but specifically noted at the end of the interview that his exposure to the levels and qualities of social change one can make guided him in choosing a career path because he felt invested in serious social change.

Values and Outcomes: “A Preponderance of Experiences”

An individual course is, after all, one among a preponderance of experiences, and
We might not expect all, or even most, students to have experiences powerful enough to transform, but where programs engage students in important work in the community and provide continuous opportunities for reflection, service-learning may be a catalyst for a dramatic redirection of their lives. (Eyler and Giles 18)

It is in this reflection that Eyler and Giles point out that learning takes place. As Skai reminds us, and Beaufort and Sternglass among others corroborate, learning “sneaks up on you,” and it would be a mistake to rely solely on reflections from students who are still in their undergraduate careers to discover the long-term benefits of service-learning, even early on in the college curriculum. Michael reported an inclination towards editing and creating public texts years after completing his undergraduate studies, and Juneau’s emergence as a citizen-writer happened as he completed his Master’s degree and considered what to do with his career and doctoral studies. Indeed, given the same time frame, Michael and Tucker’s reports could eventually prove similar, as Tucker may in time take his Sociology writing public and find that the early experience in a service-learning course gave him the tools to do so.

While it seems clear that mandatory service-learning has drawbacks because of the potential for public failures such as those noted by Shah (“The Courage of Community Members”) and Mathieu (Tactics), it also bares mentioning that one service-learning in composition course is just that: one course. In aggregate, responses in this study suggest that service-learning experiences early in the college curriculum have potential sway over the trajectory of a student’s emergence as a citizen-writer, as in the case of Juneau and Michael, but not every student acknowledges that influence, as in the case of Tucker and Freya. And some students, such as Skai, were likely on their way to that emergence with or without a service-
learning course. Others, such as Tess and Amanda, benefitted from learning how to find that identity for themselves—learning to reach out to community members, for example—but that learning could have happened on its own, as Tess felt compelled to find it.

On the other hand, some respondents who did not have the service-learning experience early in their college careers indicated some inclination to effect social change or at least participate in community action. For example, Brad and Miranda each found ways to contribute to communities outside of the university through institutionalized programs. Brad’s work in a service-learning project for an Urbanization course gave him that chance, but it did not seem to offer the opportunity to reflect on how he could effect larger change and use his agency as a rhetor or citizen-writer to do so, an opportunity he considered when I asked if a service-learning component would be useful in a composition course. Similarly, Miranda engaged in fundraising with her sorority, but the experience did not encourage reflection as a composition course would.

In short, these case studies suggest that service-learning in composition courses can contribute to students’ emerging identities as citizen-writers, even if they do not always succeed, but no exposure to service-learning in a composition course—regardless of service-learning experiences elsewhere in the curriculum—guarantees students miss out on valuable support in that emergence.

A value that my taxonomy in Chapter One did not specifically assign to community-engaged scholarship or pedagogies was the value former service-learning students found in the collaborative nature of the writing they did in their courses. Freya, Peter, and Tess pointed specifically to the collaboration—more specifically, co-writing—inherent in their writing projects, Freya working in a group to collect insight from Mansfield community residents and compose a public text to support the building of a playground, and Peter and Tess working in
groups to influence UConn to invest in solar energy. Both of these projects fall under Deans’ writing for the community model (53), and more specifically, Long’s institutional pedagogy (48), which suggests that these kinds of course could be best suited for instilling in students a sense of the value of collaboration for social change as well as teaching how to collaborate on writing projects. In fact, Peter and Tess suggest that the collaborative writing of public texts means more since ownership of those texts lies not with the individual or institutions, but rather with the group and community organization. Note that Jon and Miranda also mention the value of collaboration in their classes, but this refers to in-class workshopping of texts they had drafted on their own and will submit to the instructor for a grade rather than co-writing; the ownership of the text still lies with them and the institution. While these findings suggest that service-learning courses that produce writing for communities using institutional pedagogies could support collaborative writing habits in undergraduate students, it would be presumptuous to say that such courses are best suited for such learning. Therefore, I leave the value and outcome of collaboration out of the taxonomy.
Chapter 5: Analysis

Interview Analysis

To add to the thick description provided in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 relies on the participants’ transcribed responses as the raw data for a linguistic analysis. I rely on a coded analysis of the students’ responses to determine how and how often notions such as public writing, citizen-writer, collaboration, and circulation arise in their transcribed interviews. This chapter will outline the second phase of my study and report the results insofar as they confirm or complicate the findings from the case study analysis. Such an analysis allows me to reconfigure my data and separately analyze the results from service-learners and non-service-learners; those who were students at the time of the study with alumni; and service-learners from writing for the community classes and those from writing about the community classes. As a reminder, the numbers were not equal here; eight students took the writing for the community course in part designed by Tom Deans, while one student took my writing about the community course, and only four out of the 13 took more traditional writing courses that I taught without a service-learning component. Therefore, my analysis will look at trends across these populations to determine what study participants have taken with them after their college composition courses.

To create this additional data set, I revisited the transcribed interviews I used as the primary material for the case studies and broke them down into t-units and topical chains. T-units are the smallest possible utterance that can stand on its own as a sentence. For example, a compound sentence with a coordinating conjunction will contain two t-units, one falling on 46 Deans taught this course in 2008 and 2010 as a “pod” course, meaning that he taught one section and another instructor taught one more concurrent section. Each section of the course was identical in design aside from the instructor. I did not ask interviewees who their instructors were, and so I will refer to this as Deans’ course, though he shared the teaching of it with other faculty members.
either side of the coordinating conjunction. A sentence with only one independent clause, however, will equal one t-unit. On the other hand, a topical chain can contain many t-units and sentences, because this type of segment contains everything the respondent says about a topic (Geisler 225). This type of segmentation allowed for a simpler coding structure that would still tell me in which directions respondents took the conversation. While segmenting and coding by t-units would have provided more data, the data it would have provided would have been superfluous to this study. I did, however, still segment the streams of language into t-units so that I would be able to see how many t-units—and therefore how much detail—each respondent dedicated to each topic, and when necessary, I have referred to the number of t-units participants dedicated to their responses.

For a sense of the scope of this data, I provide here a breakdown of the amounts of topical chains and t-units I segmented the responses into. There were a total of 19 questions, and I asked all 13 participants the same questions, although I omitted questions 10 and 11 from the interviews with participants who had not taken a service-learning course, and I slightly altered question 12 to ask if the participant had involved in any community action while at college rather than if they had done any additional community activity. This resulted in a total of 239 total responses in all. I did not segment or code questions #1 and #3, as they pertained to the time when the participant took their courses. This resulted in a total of 213 segmented and coded responses, 555 total topical chains, and 2,242 total t-units.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Topical Chains</th>
<th>T-Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>121</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Again, these numbers do not reflect the grand total of all data collected, as I omitted questions with simple answers such as when the respondent took their service-learning course and what year and semester they were in college. In fact, I in part determined topical chains depending on the questions asked, so questions like #15—see Figure 7 above for the breakdown—had relatively few topical chains even if they had quite a few t-units because the question—How did you come to major in _______?—was meant to gather a total of all majors represented in the study while establishing a rapport with the interviewee. In fact, question #15 had only two more topical chains than participants because two of the participants were double majors.

I have listed the interview questions in Chapter 3, and I will repeat the questions here as section headings. However, I will not give each question the same attention. I will omit certain questions not relevant to this chapter and present questions in a different order from how I asked them in interviews. The original questions sequence was designed to help the interviewee and I establish a relationship (see Chapter 4 for a description of how I arranged the questions), but that...
order and some of the questions serve little purpose in this chapter. Each question and section will contain my interpretation of the data based on the coding schema I used for each question. For each question, after segmenting into t-units and topical chains, I devised a coding schema for each individual question by reading through each topical chain to decide what the topic was and how it related to the question. I tagged each question with its provisional code and moved on. After tagging each topical chain in each respondent’s answer, I compiled my code lists and reviewed them for redundancy, lumping codes together when they were similar enough and retagging the other segments. For example, I found in question number 19—*Is there anything else you can share that would help me understand the long-term effects your FYW experience, and especially the community project part of it?*—one of the more open-ended questions, and I found that I had marked certain topical chains as showing discourse community knowledge and others as showing knowledge of genre, and chains marked with either one fell easily under “discourse community knowledge.” In another case in question 19, I found that the tag *writing strategies* described responses that were either open-ended, non-specific references to writing strategies they were exposed to in their courses. But some were more specific, describing how they navigated the expectations of varying classes, and so I split the writing strategies tag into *writing strategies* and *rhetorical agility* to demarcate when respondents had shown signs of actively determining the expectations of new rhetorical arenas and learning how to meet those expectations.

It is important to note that each participant came from one of three populations based on the course they took, and that those populations are not equally represented in the pool. Below is a breakdown of those populations:
The majority of participants had taken service-learning courses employing a writing for the community approach, in which the class partnered with a non-profit organization and wrote texts that the organization could use in non-academic contexts. One participant took a service-learning course employing a writing about the community approach and using the service-learning experiences to inform more traditional class writings. And four of the 13 total participants took more traditional, classroom-based writing courses with no service-learning component whatsoever. I list these numbers here to note early on that simple reliance on numbers or even percentages between the populations will not provide an accurate picture of trends across populations. For example, if every participant across all populations took a pottery course the semester after their writing course, a graphical representation of the numbers would wrongly suggest that writing for the community service-learning courses inspired an interest in working with clay because there would be 50% more pottery students in the writing for population. Similarly, if I relied on percentages alone, then any information I gathered from the writing about population would wrongly suggest that 100% percent of writing about students made such choices. Therefore, as I analyze data from pertinent questions, I will break that data down in a way that most accurately depicts the phenomena at hand, and I will make explicit how I analyze that data in the question’s section.

There were other similarities in how I segmented and coded the questions, however. For each question, I segmented the raw data from the transcribed interviews into both t-units and
topical chains. This way, I know not only what respondents mentioned in interviews, but also how much speech they dedicated to each topic. After normalizing each questions’ code schemas in Microsoft Excel, I saved the files and tallied each answer. I then broke each tally into columns: “for,” “about,” “non-service-learning,” and “total,” which broke the larger group into three demographics for comparison. Some questions, such as number 1—“What year and semester are you in college”—did not require a complex coding scheme, and so I simply tallied their answers and used that data to create Figure #1 in Chapter 4. But many of the other questions required more attention, and those questions are broken down below, each with a graphical representation and my analysis. In the case of question number 2, with which I begin, I chose terms from my *Taxonomy of Values and Outcomes* as codes for many of the topical chains. As in Chapter 4, those terms are in bold here to show how they relate to my analysis. Often, codes arose more than once in a respondent’s topical chains, and their responses often contained multiple topical chains. I have counted each code once in each response in my tally, and, as in the case of question number 2, individual respondents may have reflected on themselves as both *citizen-writers* and student-writers in the same response.

I begin with Question #2, as I find it interesting to think of these participants and their FYW experiences in terms of their own literacy narrative, and Question #2 asks participants to consider how they saw themselves as writers as they entered college. I borrow Yancey et al.’s term “point of departure” here to contextualize how participants identified in the context of their educational experiences and how they sensed they changed during or after their writing courses. Yancey et al. describe the “point of departure” as a place not where writers see themselves starting out as much as a place that they have been told they stand, and if a writer does not have a way to gauge their writing or abilities, they often turn to grades or other external, imposed, and
often codified ways to identify their abilities (105). Therefore, as we will see, this point of
departure, can be either existential, static, or a reflection of oneself based on the feedback from
teachers or other sponsors of literacy (Brandt), or it can be temporary or based on attitudes that
the participant brought to college with them.

Question #2: Can you tell me a little about yourself as a writer back when you came to UConn,
before you even started classes?

To this question about each participants’ point of departure (Yancey et al. 105), every
respondent described themselves as a student-writer, but that is to be expected, as this was an
interview about a first-year college class. The non-service-learners tended to describe themselves
existentially more often than the service-learners, meaning that they described themselves rather
than their actions, for example, “I was a good writer,” and all of those who used existential terms
use positive ones. This implies that the respondents, at least when entering college, envisioned
writing as a transient skill that can transfer to multiple rhetorical situations and that skill was
engrained into them. Two of the four non-service-learners responded this way, each describing
their ability to write stylistically, Miranda highlighting her writing “flow,” and Jon highlighting
his ability to express himself with written words better than spoken ones. In these cases, the
respondents’ static identity as a writer does not seem dynamic insofar as it has changed over
time; the writers see themselves as coming to UConn equipped with a certain innate ability, and
while they may have honed their writing in other ways, this ability has only helped them attend
to other aspects of their writing. One service-learner responded with an existential reflection, and
Tucker described himself in dynamic terms as a writer who began college writing without
concision or much consideration for the reader. Tucker differs from the two non-service-learners
insofar as his existential description of himself as a writer proves dynamic.
For this question, I established the tags “citizen-writer,” “student-writer,” private writer,” “public writer,” and “existential.” I derived these tags from the interviews, and therefore each tag arose in conversation. I did not determine the tags beforehand, and therefore, each tag has at least one topical chain in the total. “Citizen-writer” denotes any statement that indicates that the respondent saw their writing as potentially public texts having social value or able to effect social change. “Student writer” denotes statements that describe writing in a school context. “Private writer” denotes references to creative writing, journaling, or any other writing that the respondent does for themselves. “Public writer” denotes writing that takes place in a public context, but not necessarily to effect social change. And “existential,” as noted above, denotes participants’ descriptions of themselves in static terms such as “I was a good writer.”
As Figure 9 shows, respondents most often considered themselves “student writers” as they entered college. By a considerable margin, they thought of themselves as “private writers,” which I marked any reflections on creative writing or other personal writing that they attributed to themselves before their college writing courses. Again, the vast majority of participants had taken the writing for the community-style course, so those bars will be higher than the other two groups, but when taken in aggregate, we can see that the difference between the “student writer” column and the others is considerable, though not surprising, since these were students and alumni speaking with a representative of the institution where they had taken their writing courses.

Also interesting is the column that represents the participants who described themselves in existential terms as writers. As noted above, three participants described themselves in existential terms when I asked this question, and the two non-service-learners suggested that their learning in college had not fundamentally changed the writer who arrived at UConn, even though that writer learned more about writing. The one service-learner who described himself thus did acknowledge a shift in his approach to writing, even going so far as to credit his writing courses in college for not only making him more organized as a writer, but also for informing his own writing teaching in graduate school.

Yancey et al. describe the “point of departure” not as a place where writers see themselves starting out as much as a place that they have been told they stand, and if a writer does not have a way to gauge their writing or abilities, they often turn to grades or other external, imposed, and often codified ways to identify their abilities (105). More often than not, then, these messages about their writing come in the form of grades. At least, these are the messages that tend to resonate with writers whose educational and professional objectives rely on the
summative evaluation of grades to grant access to their chosen activity systems. It is therefore not much of a surprise that students and alumni would view themselves as existentially good writers, as their writing performance in high school was strong enough to get them into UConn. In other words, students look to grades as both high-stakes and summative evaluations of their writing and themselves, and it is no surprise that they would consider themselves in these existential terms when that summative feedback is by and large positive. Reason would dictate that students would not question the positive reinforcement they have enjoyed and the demonstrable opportunities that reinforcement has afforded them. And when that reinforcement situates them in their academic ecosystems and gives them a sense of belonging (Sommers and Saltz 131), that reinforcement is tied not only to past opportunities, but also future success.

However, it is telling that three of the four non-service-learners referred to themselves in these terms years after taking their writing courses, and only one of the nine service-learners did so. As we saw in Chapter 4, however, students in the writing *for* the community course became quite familiar with genre, differing expectations between audiences, and the myriad processes that fall under the scope of writing, and in light of that finding, it is less surprising that they would describe themselves in terms more active and pointed than existential and broad; they were exposed to enough complexity in writing practice to know that one is not a “good” writer as much as one has learned to navigate successfully various writing situations (Bacon; Sullivan). Indeed, the writing *for* the community course anticipated *Writing about Writing* pedagogy insofar as many of its writing tasks were situated in community organizations, and the demands of those writing projects came from community partners. Furthermore, as we have seen with Tess and Skai, many if not all of these projects showed students that they were indeed novices insofar as they had more to learn. In the case of Skai, she learned in part from her partnership
with the UConn Women’s Center that there were kinds of academic writing that do not mirror the more traditional writing tasks associated with college, and she learned it so well that she was able to explain it to me as a non-novice. Similarly, Tess found herself learning about the intrinsically social aspects of writing as she contacted UConn administrators to advocate for the use of solar power, an experience that she reports as trying but also educational. Sommers and Saltz explain the importance of students’ acknowledgment of their novice status as useful only insofar as it is temporary; students, like Tess and Skai, must shed that novice status, and acknowledge that change in status, to continue to learn after the first year of college (146).

Question #7: Which assignment(s) had the most memorable effect on your thinking, writing, or reading?

As we can see from question #2, many participants report years after the fact that they saw themselves primarily as student writers when they entered college, and that many from service-learning courses describe themselves in dynamic ways; or they acknowledge that they changed in the years following their arrival at UConn. Even more telling, those who did not take service-learning courses were more likely to use existential, static descriptors when recalling that “point of departure,” and this could be because that identity was likely imposed from without in the form of grades or other evaluations (Yancey et al. 105). That said, there were members from each population that described themselves in dynamic terms, and that leads me to consider what about their experiences has changed their perceptions of themselves. Therefore, I move on now to question #7 from the interviews in which I asked each participant to reflect on the assignment or assignments that had the most memorable effect on their thinking, writing, or reading.

For this question, I break down the data by looking first at the number of participants who responded to this question by discussing one or more of seven different topics. “Course
“Content” refers to responses about the topic of the course or when a respondent discussed the reading and writing together, not specifying either; “SL” refers to responses about the service-learning component of the course; “Writing” refers to explicitly-named writing tasks; “Lecture” refers to responses about an instructor’s class lecture; “Quizzes” refers to in-class quizzes as important assignments; “Feedback” refers to peer or instructor review of written work; and “Reading” refers to mention specific texts from the class. A breakdown similar to that of question #2 is below.

![Reflections on Memorable Assignments](image)

*Figure 10: Reflections on Memorable Assignments*

Of the participants who took service-learning classes, five out of nine (or roughly 56%) mentioned their service-learning experiences as ones that changed their thinking, writing, or reading. Looking purely at the total numbers for each response, it is clear that nearly half cited a writing exercise as an influential experience, while only one of the four non-service-learners did
so. The non-service-learners tended to be spread rather evenly among course content, writing, feedback, and reading as most influential years after the class.

In fact, responses seemed fairly spread out among the types of assignment, with writing figuring prominently on the graph above, though fewer than half of respondents mentioned it. By and large, there were outliers that respondents chose to identify as influential. For example, “quizzes” is included above because one respondent from a writing for the community service-learning course spoke solely about periodic in-class quizzes in which student were asked to practice their writing style. The example the respondent gave was when the group was asked to take a piece of text and make it more concise. In fact, this participant’s response and description of in-class quizzes ran a total of 15 t-units, suggesting that the respondent wanted to make clear that, while this answer may seem surprising—quizzes are often thought of as tedious busy work—the effect quizzes had on this writer was considerable.

But most surprising to me is the frequency with which former service-learners cited a service-learning assignment as influential in a study they knew was about service-learning in composition. As noted above, four out of a total nine service-learners, or roughly 56%, cited their community partnership as shaping their thinking, reading, or writing, and while this might have something to do with the question—I did ask about a single assignment rather than an experience that may have been more woven in to the fabric of the class—I notice that many of the respondents from the writing for service-learning course cite other ways in which that class differed from more traditional writing courses. For example, when mentioning writing projects, many respondents focused on demonstrable, nameable learning in writing, such as exercises that focused on concision, much like the quizzes that influenced one participant more than any other project. Furthermore, the student from the writing about course cited service-learning as
influential because this student had never approached a writing task in which a primary form of research was personal experience. In this case, one could argue that the writing project ultimately influenced the writer, as the research mentioned in the response was prewriting for a term paper, but it was the service-learning experience itself that compelled the former service-learner to mention the writing project in the first place. This argument could also draw indirectly from data published by Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) in 2019 that compared the success of students who had taken part in project-based learning experiences versus those who had not. In this case, I will hold firm that writing for the community-style service-learning courses are inherently project-based as I turn to WPI’s findings that students who took part in project-based learning tended to engage more in class and take positions of leadership (Dedman). Of course, this does not say that service-learners tend to value their service-learning over other aspects of the course, but it does suggest that students engaged in projects that have real-world outcomes or even circulation gain confidence to make more out of those other aspects of the class. And perhaps students who have not yet realized the full extent of their learning in a service-learning class value those aspects because they were able to make the most of them.

**Question #8: What do you remember about the process you used when writing your FYW projects?**

For question #8, I asked participants what they remember about the processes they used in their FYW projects, and, as is clear from Figure 11 below, revision had the overall largest impression on the study participants. For this question, I tagged topical chains thus: “Revision” refers to mentions of revision and/or drafting playing a significant role in writing in this class; “Feedback” refers to references to instructor feedback playing such a role; “Outlining” refers to prewriting practices; “Research” refers to specific research practices participants mentioned;
“Change in process” refers to an acknowledgement that the respondents’ writing processes changed as a result of the course; “Collaboration” refers to any mention of the role of group writing or cooperation with community partners; “Style” refers to instances when respondents talked about paying specific attention to style; “Genre” refers to times when a respondent mentioned the genre of writing they did in class; and “Reading” refers to an instance when a respondent mentioned included reading as part of the writing process.

Figure 11: Reflections on FYW Writing Processes

Here, while the most significant finding is that every non-service-learner and seven out of eight service-learners from writing for the community courses found revision worth mentioning in response to this question, it is worth noting that three out of the 13 respondents, or roughly
23%, mentioned a change in their writing process, though more than three spoke about themselves in dynamic terms when reflecting on themselves as writers when they entered college. This could very well be that any changes in their writing practices happened after or even as a result of this course, and they do not make a connection between whatever changes they see in themselves and the activities of their course. Regardless, three mentioned a change in their process during their course, and all of those respondents came from service-learning courses writing for community organizations.

The outliers seem significant here, though. Specifically, the service-learner from the writing about course was the only one to mention genre in response to this question, but the topic only arose because the respondent was discussing some more creative pieces students wrote and contrasting that process with the on-site service-learning research of the writing about course. Interestingly, one respondent from the writing for course included reading as a strategy that played a significant role in their writing process. Namely, the respondent opens their response to the question saying that they learned the importance of reading source material carefully and being intentional with choosing that material. In fact, this respondent moved on to talk about relying on instructor feedback, collaboration with the University Writing Center, and attention to style during revision for instigating a change in their writing process attributed specifically to that class. So, while this respondent was the only one to mention reading strategies in a reflection on influential writing processes, this respondent also mentioned a number of other keywords from my coding schema.

While this question is not the only one in which respondents referred to collaboration, I find it interesting that this is the one where more than one respondent mentions collaboration explicitly. Indeed, other responses include references to collaboration practices in writing, such
as revision, feedback, and peer review, but this one has the highest concentration of respondents explicitly mentioning collaboration, and each of the three that did mention it came from the writing for service-learning course. This could be because that course required students to collaborate beyond the inherent collaborative nature of peer review/workshops and incorporating instructor feedback into the writing process—the students had to co-author documents for their community partners (Ede and Lunsford). Two non-service-learners did mention collaboration practices, namely peer review, but the service-learners mentioned the group projects they wrote for their community organizations as memorable, collaborative writing experiences.

Indeed, though the research on service-learning and my case studies agree that collaboration is a key part of the service-learning experience (Deans; Cushman), the number of times study participants explicitly mention collaboration seems to suggest that the experience, while key, may not be as memorable (or positively memorable) as it is important. Case in point, question #14 also includes references to collaboration, but they are not explicit, and this suggests that the collaborative aspects of inherently collaborative writing practices do not outshine the utility of the practice.

**Question #14: What about your FYW course, if anything, do you feel prepared you for your college courses after that, and even now?**

Here, as I noted above, only one participant mentions collaboration explicitly, but that does not mean that inherently collaborative practices, such as seeking outside writing support did not strike a chord with these writers. As figure 12 shows, two students noted that seeking extra writing support from the UConn Writing Center was a practice that helped them in their college writing since taking the course. One of these students took a writing for the community service-learning course, and the other took a non-service-learning course, and one student from a non-
service-learning course mentioned the collaborative aspect of peer review and the effects that experience had on seeing writing, even the writing of a single-author text, as collaborative. Note, though, that the question does not explicitly name collaboration as a take-away from a writing course, nor does any other questions suggest that I was searching for information on collaboration specifically in the same way that question #9 mentions drafting, peer review, and revision. In short, those who mentioned collaboration did so on their own.

In fact, like the responses to questions #7 and #8, the responses to question #14 were rather varied. One participant from a writing for service-learning course noted that they learned more about making arguments; one from a non-service-learning course mentioned the role drafting plays in their writing after the FYW course; the former service-learner form the writing about class reflected on a specific project; a former service-learner mentioned reading strategies; a non-service-learner mentions multimodality; and another mentions the ability to make connections as important for college writing projects after FYW.
A noticeable number of respondents recalled the value of the experience they had writing in their course. Of the three who referred to writing practice, two had taken a writing for the community service-learning course, and one had taken a non-service-learning course. One of the former service-learners dedicated six total t-units (and the entirety of the answer to this question) to describing the stark difference they noticed between high school and college writing. This is unsurprising insofar as the service-learners seemed to have a solid sense of genre as a result of encountering and creating texts other than class writing and for purposes outside of the university setting\textsuperscript{47}. The former other service-learner, who had taken the course ten years previous to the interview, dedicated three nonconsecutive t-units to explaining that the volume and pace of writing in the college course prepared them for the professional writing that they describe for the

\textsuperscript{47} A finding that makes sense considering Feldman’s assertion that students can best learn genres as tools to achieve goals and, in the case of her research, “enact social motives” (5).
rest of their answer. Similarly, the non-service-learner dedicated four t-units to describing a
similar situation where they had come into college having never written so much at the pace of a
college course.

The number of participants who commented on reading strategies as influencing their
future work did come as a surprise, however, even though I explicitly asked about reading
strategies in question 13 below. The majority of our conversations had been about writing; the
courses they took were listed at writing courses when they registered for them; and for most,
creating **public texts** in genres meant to effect social action was the focal point of their writing
courses.\(^{48}\) In fact, two of the three respondents mentioned reading strategies learned in FYW that
informed their later writing came from such writing *for* the community service-learning courses
where this was true. One of the respondents who had taken a service-learning course spoke about
critically reading across genres and mentioned the difference between reading a philosophy text
and watching a play that communicated similar ideas, speaking only about such reading
strategies in their response, and dedicating four t-units to the response. The other former service-
learner spoke about writing strategies for a philosophy class as influential for 11 t-units before
dedicating seven t-units to how they became a better reader—and anticipate that reading skill
translating to a career in law—after learning how to navigate unfamiliar styles of text as a reader.
The non-service-learner spoke for 13 t-units on learning to question both written texts and visual
ones, such as films, in order to make connections between social thought and/or cultural products
that may seem unrelated on an initial reading.

\(^{48}\) Insofar as these projects were out of the ordinary and part of what made the course a service-learning course.
There were more “traditional” writing assignments, and as this was a First-Year Writing course, much of the
coursework addressed the learning objectives of UConn’s FYW office in more traditional ways.
Question #13: Did you learn any new writing or reading strategies in your FYW course that you have used since?

I note that reading strategies arose in question #14, but they did so in competition with writing strategies and preparation for writing in coursework since the class. As I noted above, I based all coding schemes on the topics that arose during the interviews, and therefore, since respondents only touched on reading strategies in question 14, I did not code those in more detail. This brief dalliance with writing strategies might have been because I more explicitly asked respondents in the previous question, question #13, about reading strategies, and the topics respondents shared with me in their answers support this hunch. As shown in figure #5, respondents mentioned, without much suggestion from me, that they brought with them both writing and reading strategies since their FYW courses, but the numbers seem contradictory at first glance. For example, two respondents who answered this question as a yes or no one claimed that they brought with them no reading strategies, but the other responses suggest that not only did participants from service-learning courses and non-service-learning courses alike bring reading strategies with them to other contexts, but they can also speak about multiple different strategies. For example, respondents referred to skimming, annotation, critical reading, and research as strategies that have informed their work since the course.
Aside from the reading strategies that rather surprised me, participant responses also introduced plenty of writing strategies to the conversation. As shown in figure #5, some respondents indicated that they did indeed bring writing strategies with them to writing scenarios after their FYW courses, and they offered more specific examples than they did in question #14, possibly because they had already offered specifics before moving on to that response. Participants named self-reflection in the writing process; they spoke about writing as a process vs. a product; they specifically mentioned development of counter-arguments; and they noted that paying attention to audience, drafting, research, and grammar had been influential for them as writers in new contexts.

Interestingly, though, the service-learners seemed to reflect more on writing strategies than their non-service-learning counterparts, while the latter seemed to reflect on reading strategies more often. This trend is also supported by the codes “Yes: writing strategies” and...
“No: reading strategies” above, as they describe those answers that began as yes or no responses. I’ve omitted the codes “No: writing strategies” and Yes: reading strategies” because nobody indicated that they had picked up no writing strategies, and those who mentioned the reading strategies coded above did not explicitly name them as reading strategies. The numbers suggest that non-service-learners were more likely to mention specific reading strategies than service-learners, and it appears that service-learners reported transferring useful writing strategies into new contexts. This indicates that there were differences in students writing knowledge overall. This may seem surprising given the attention to audience needs intrinsic to a writing for the community course that creates texts for use in community organizations, often to sway public opinion, as in the case of the No-Freeze Shelter partnership or UConnPIRG’s efforts to convince UConn to invest more in solar power. That is not to say, though, that former service-learners did not leave the course without any consideration of reading strategies—except for the one who explicitly denied such transfer—but rather it suggests that they were more likely to reflect on the writing strategies they brought with them.

Question #10: Can you tell me what, if anything, is most memorable about the community project/service-learning (SL) component of your FYW course?

While there are noticeable differences in the general learning that respondents from each group reported, some of my lines of questioning simply did not apply to the non-service-learners. For example, I was interested to learn from the service-learners if there was anything that stuck out as most memorable from their service-learning experience. I left this question open-ended specifically to see what respondents would offer without any suggestion from me. For example,

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49 Considering the amount of text Carillo dedicates to reading strategies and mindful reading in the opening pages of A Writer’s Guide to Mindful Reading (a student-facing text), it is not surprising that students would not recognize reading strategies as such; In order to write a student-facing text about mindful reading, Carillo must first introduce the concept that reading is more than the passive decoding of alphabetic texts (v).
if someone remembered culture shock more than the collaboration, then I wanted the respondent to feel free to offer that and not feel compelled to describe something more traditionally associated with writing. As a result, I ended up with responses as various as the people I spoke with, and one former service-learner who took the course ten years before our interview simply did not remember enough about the experience to respond. This in itself is a finding that both surprises and intrigues me, as this respondent was Michael, who told me that his service-learning influenced him, but that it was also one among a preponderance of experiences that did so; it makes sense that he would not remember too many particulars of a ten-year-old experience that may not have seemed out of the ordinary for a first-year college student who was experiencing many new things for the first time.

![Figure 14: Reflections on Service-Learning Project](image-url)
Two of the tags I culled from the responses stand out, however. Of the nine service-learners, four recalled their community partners enough to describe them, and four recalled their writing products in such detail. That is 50 percent of the writing for the community cohort, and it comes as little surprise when considered alongside this cohort’s tendency to recall writing processes; community partners set the expectations for writing products, and students work to meet those expectations. In fact, this comports with Deans’ 2001 finding that service-learners tend to concern themselves with the results of their writing and the needs of community partners, even over writing for a “real” audience (78). Another recalled the collaborative aspect of their writing projects from the writing for course, in which students worked together to create public texts. Still another recalled the variety of projects that students in the class undertook, dedicating three t-units to describing the fact that there were many and recalling two other groups’ projects and then moving on to dedicate 13 t-units describing the genre of their group’s project.

Some responses to this question seemed to move away from the topic of writing and touch on more social aspects of service-learning. For example, two former service-learners from the writing for course noted that the physical act of visiting their community partners had an effect on what their projects meant to them as they did them. I coded such responses “student interaction,” and one respondent noted that had their group not visited the No-Freeze Shelter, the reality and importance of what they were doing may not have resonated with the group. Another mentioned that they were not permitted to interact with the community members served by their organization (Husky Sport) but that they were permitted to work with representative from the organization, which put them in the Husky Sport offices and allowed them to learn firsthand what the organization’s goals were and what was expected of service-learners. Still another respondent, the one from the writing about the community course, commented on the culture
shock that came with the experience. This respondent, Maya, as noted in her case study, came from Jordan to take courses at UConn’s Stamford campus, and the American education system was new to her. Since she tutored young people in Stamford for her community activity, the culture shock was two-fold; she was being exposed to higher education in the United States as well as primary education, and she dedicated 10 t-units—the entirety of her answer—to this memory. Finally, one respondent recalled that their service-learning experience contributed to their personal and professional growth because of the prewriting necessary for the partnership. This respondent’s group partnered with UConnPIRG, and the experience of reaching out to University of Connecticut administrators was both anxiety-inducing (hence the “anxiety” tag) and educational, as it taught this student how to do such research.

I find these responses particularly interesting, as they come close to directly addressing an Activity Theory interpretation of service-learning partnerships. As per Russell, “[a]ctivity systems are 1) historically developed, 2) mediated by tools, 3) dialectically structured, 4) analyzed as the relations of participants and tools, and 5) changed through zones of proximal development” (54). In the case of a service-learning course, students enter into new or hybrid activity systems, and in these new systems, histories, tools, participants, and the tools they use are different from those of the classroom, and the dialectical nature of the systems means that each element of the activity system changes the role of all other elements. So even when students who enter these systems bring with them a sense of accomplishment from their previous writing experiences, how the tools are used changes with the goals of the activity systems, and a student’s novice status becomes recognizable in a new context. Even changing the location of the system has a dialectical effect on seemingly familiar tools (such as writing), and the social nature

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50 Emphasis in the original text
of the use of the tool of writing become more pronounced, as writers must rely on the historically situated knowledge of community members to learn how to use those tools. In fact, even those who have learned the threshold concept that all writing is social and rhetorical (Roozen 17) have that concept reintroduced to them as the social dynamics change.

Question #11: Have you kept in contact with your service-learning community organization? If so, how?

As interested as I was in learning about what was most memorable for service-learners, I was also interested in whether or not they had maintained contact with their service-learning organizations. This was in no way a curiosity about their dedication to community action and social change, but rather, I was interested to know if it is reasonable to expect that students will find it possible to balance the demands of college and the maintenance of the partnerships that they entered during their first year of college. The vast majority of respondents had not kept in contact with their service-learning organizations, though many of them were quick to add an explanation for why that partnership ended or a description of community involvement after the course.
As Figure 15 shows, seven out of nine service-learners had not kept in contact with their community partners, but two of those pointed out that they were involved with other community action. What is not shown in Figure 15 is the breakdown of these respondents by the year they took their course, which matters because some of the participants had graduated from UConn with their undergraduate degrees up to six years before the interview, and their partnerships were formed up to ten years previous to that time. Two UConn seniors had kept in touch with their community partners, however, both of whom had taken their writing for the community service-learning course in the Fall of 2015. One of these respondents maintained an informal relationship with their on-campus community organization, and the other worked with and for UConnPIRG at the time of our interview, parlaying that partnership into a larger role in the organization as
time went by, and then accepting an offer to continue that work professionally and full time after graduation.

These findings comport with those of a study Deans conducted in 2010 in which he sent an online survey to students who had taken his service-learning course in 2006 and 2008, totaling 28 students. I mention this study here because his inquiry was similar to mine and because his pool of respondents overlapped significantly with mine; I contacted students from his 2008 section of this course, and one of the students from that course, Michael, participated in my study (see Chapter 4), though I don’t know if he participated in Deans’. Of the 28 contacted, 18 former students participated in Deans’ study, and of them, more than half continued to be socially active in some way, and one of them continued their partnership with the community partner from the class (Deans “Course Evaluations). I cannot make much of the overlap in our research pools, as I do not know if Michael participated in the 2010 study, but I do know that Michael, at the time of our interview, was not still in touch with the No Freeze shelter in Willimantic, and he had difficulty recalling the specifics of that partnership ten years after the course. However, the numbers tend to support each other in several ways. For instance, Deans notes that one of his former students had maintained a relationship with the course’s community partner, and one out of my nine service-learning respondents said the same, though Tess—still involved with UConnPIRG—took the course in 2015. There is another similarity: Deans’ respondents were, for the most part, still at UConn when they answered his online query. Having taken the course in either 2006 or 2008, the 2006 respondents would have been in their senior year at the time of the 2010 study if they had taken four years to complete their degrees. Though our studies for the most part differ in the participant pools we pulled from (with some small overlap), we each found that one UConn student was still involved with their community organization while still at
the school, suggesting hope for **sustainability**. Additionally, Deans reports that more than half of his former students remained socially active, and, as we will see below, 11 out of the 13 students were involved in some sort of social action at the time of our interview, and that includes eight out of the nine service-learners I interviewed.

**Question #12: Have you participated in any other community action/activity since or now? Do you attribute that in any way to your FYW experience?**

I noted above that many of the respondents quickly moved on to answer question #12 after telling me that they were not still involved with their service-learning partners. I took this as an indication that former service-learners felt guilty about not having kept in touch with their partners (Kiely), but I also noticed that many of the service-learners were socially active in some way outside of their professional or academic lives. For this question, I changed the phrasing slightly in interviews with non-service-learners to inquire about any community activity they had been involved in since their FYW courses. As Figure 16 shows, nearly all respondents indicated that they were involved in some sort of community action or had been between when they took their course and the time of our interview.
Only two respondents indicated that they had not been involved in any community activity in the years between their FYW course and the interview. One of these respondents took a writing for the community course, and one took my more traditional writing course. The student from the service-learning course was, at the time of our interview, in graduate school and found little time for any activity outside of coursework, and the non-service-learner was a senior in college and also found little free time while balancing coursework and preparations for graduation. Both, however, regretted their inability to be socially active and looked forward to completing their coursework so they could take on community action. The former service-learner anticipated doing more community action as part of PhD research after completing the masters. The non-service-learner hoped to use his communications major to create texts or media for non-profit organizations, but he also lamented having not experienced a service-learning experience.
to show him how to take what he described as a theoretical knowledge about communication and apply that knowledge to settings outside of his educational one.

Two non-service-learners attributed their community activity to their first-year writing experience, and one non-service-learner attributed their community activity to their non-service-learning FYW course. The non-service-learner had been actively involved in her sorority\textsuperscript{51} and connected the leadership roles she took on in that organization to the peer review and writing workshops built into her non-service-learning writing course. Another respondent who attributed their community involvement to their FYW course is the same UConn senior who had become increasingly involved with UConnPIRG over the since the service-learning partnership three years previous to the interview. This respondent dedicated 12 t-units to describing how the service-learning experience had compelled her to use her sociological imagination more often than before, which she claimed compelled her to act. The other service-learner who attributed their community involvement to the course had maintained a mentor-style relationship with her contact at the UConn Women’s Center, and also attributed the experience with teaching her how often her internship and professional activities could effect social change. Even more strangely, two of the respondents who had taken service-learning courses and considered the question of attributing their community activity to the course did not feel their service-learning course contributed to this activity. Both of these respondents attributed their community activity to their families’ tradition of community involvement\textsuperscript{52}. It is entirely possible that these two respondents,\footnote{It is unsurprising that students would find an outlet for social action in groups like sororities, since these activity systems (Russell) come readymade with shared histories (as members are all UConn students), and acceptance into sororities does not compromise the historical situation and goals of the organization. Similarly, as we have seen, the majority of students in this study did not maintain formal relationships with their community partners, and a one-semester partnership as part of a college class cannot guarantee the long-term investment that students place in groups they plan on remaining part of for their entire college careers.}
both seniors who took their service-learning courses three years previously, had chosen service-learning courses based on their existing access to the means and knowledge necessary to perform community action.

My numbers seem slightly more promising than those reported by the University of California, Los Angeles’ Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) in 2005. In their study, “Post-College Civic Engagement among Graduates,” HERI reports that 74.4% of students engage in some sort of community service or action in their senior year of high college, and that number goes down to 61.3% six years after graduation (Vogelgesang and Astin 2). While 84.6% (or 11 out of 13) of participants in my study reported being involved in some sort of community action at the time of our interview, this may suggest that the post-graduation climate has changed since HERI conducted their study in 2005. In fact, HERI reports that the numbers were better in 1998, with 74.4% of graduates seeking out community action, and still better in 1994, with 80.3% doing so (Vogelgesang and Astin 3). This may very well suggest a slump in post-graduate community action at the turn of the 21st century from which we have recovered, though more up-to-date and “big data” research on post-graduation community action would confirm that suggestion. It would also be necessary to compare the post-college civic lives of alumni exposed to service-learning to those who were not, as the HERI report does not indicate that their data pool consisted of current and former service-learners.

Unsurprisingly, the kinds of community activity reported in responses were almost as varied as they respondents themselves. One former service-learner reported taking on tutoring, and though this respondent did not explicitly link that work with service-learning, she had mentored elementary school students as part of her service-learning partnership, also taking on associations rather than political organizations of advocacy groups (Vogelgesang and Astin 4). In other words, the associations they had for reasons other than community service compelled them to act.
mentoring in addition to her tutoring activities. One respondent saw valuable community work as part of an internship she had taken on during her senior year, and three more former service-learners volunteered for campus organizations, and this includes two former students from writing for classes and one from my writing about class. Two respondents noted that they had taken on community partnerships as part of their coursework. One of them, a student from my more traditional classroom-based FYW course, noted that he had taken another course with a service-learning component, and the other, from a writing for course and senior at UConn at the time of our interview, attributed a summer institute in public policy—in which she performed community outreach in at Princeton University—to her service-learning experience. These varied examples suggest that the opportunities for community engagement available to students ought to be multiple and varied. Since participants in my study by and large sought out ways to be socially active, and since the service-learners were able to take those opportunities as informed social actors, it is up to faculty and administrators to offer such opportunities in various contexts to appeal to students driven to act but possibly unsure how to do it.

Question #18: Looking back now, would you recommend that FYW instructors include a mix of typical academic assignments + a community project like the one you did? Or would something else have been preferable? Why?

Clearly, the participants of this study valued their service-learning experiences to different degrees and in different ways. Two study participants continued their relationships with community organizations for at least three years after the end of the course, and those two were both partnered with organizations based on campus. Others learned enough from their service-learning courses to know how to pursue other kinds of partnerships, and still others already had the know-how and means to establish relationships with either community organizations or knew
how to get involved in other ways. Considering that the respondents reported an overall positive experience with service-learning, I was curious to know how many of them would recommend such a pedagogy for other writing courses. Unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents, regardless of their FYW experience, recommended a service-learning element for writing courses.

As Figure 17 shows, a total of nine students out of 13 recommended service-learning for composition courses, and three did not recommend it. One non-service-learner did not have a recommendation either way, but he did, in his answer to a previous question, lament his lack of exposure to more public arenas in which to use the theory he had learned in his Communications major courses. I was glad to hear from those who had taken service-learning courses and
recommended them for other courses; many of them, including the non-service learners, felt that the experience would be valuable for first-year students to learn how to navigate the university, meeting new people and finding ways to get involved in community action. Still others—three service-learners and one non-service-learner—felt that the act of creating public writing justified the practice. Interestingly, respondents mentioned the benefit for students twice as often as they mentioned community benefit, but that may be attributed to the level of contact those respondents had with community organizations—if they were barred from contact with community members or did not see longer-term community benefits in the course of their one-semester partnerships, then they could really only speak with confidence about the benefits they can personally understand.

But I was, in some ways, more interested in hearing from those who did not recommend service-learning for writing courses, in part because I anticipated respondents telling me what they thought I wanted to hear, and those who did not recommend the pedagogy felt it necessary to explain why. To my surprise, one of the former service-learners who did not recommend the pedagogy was Juneau, who attributed many professional decisions to learning from his service-learning course about how to effect social change and the degrees of social change one can aim for depending on whether they engage in charity, projects, or social change initiatives (Morton). Juneau felt that undergraduates would learn more about writing and stand to effect more significant social change by taking public writing courses similar to the ones Madeiros describes in her dissertation. The other service-learner who did not recommend service-learning in writing courses felt that the type of writing done in a writing for the community course was dissimilar enough from the genres of academic writing that the work distracted students from learning how to use those genres. The non-service-learner who did not recommend service-
learning hedged in her response, adding that while she saw the value in the pedagogy, she felt that it should be reserved for specific sections of FYW and listed in the course catalog as a service-learning course because not all students would be able to participate in service-learning or would have time to begin partnerships while attempting to complete the general education requirements (Nathan). This strikes me as important considering Shah’s notes about how detrimental uninvested service-learners are to community/university partnerships.

Question #19: Is there anything else you can share that would help me understand the long-term effects your FYW experience, and especially the community project part of it?

I am, after all, concerned with the student benefits of service-learning with this study, and therefore I ended the interviews with a very open-ended question. Rather than encouraging them to focus on writing development or civic learning specifically, I asked them to reflect on anything that I would need to know to understand the long-term effects of their courses, and I invited service-learners to talk specifically about the service-learning aspect of the courses they took. Again, like the responses to question #18, the answers varied considerably. As Figure 18 below maps out, answers varied from learning writing strategies to gaining confidence in their writing to simply having the opportunity to practice writing for various audiences. In fact, service-learners and non-service-learners tended to have markedly different responses to this question, converging only on the value of the writing practice they enjoyed and the strategies, such as revision and peer review, that they learned.

Non-service-learners tended to call attention to reading strategies, such as annotation and critical reading, the ability to make social connections in a first-year class, and an awareness of Writing in the Disciplines (WID) as long-term gains from the course alongside writing practice and writing strategies. Service-learners, on the other hand, called attention to the role their
service-learning experience played in their transition to college life, their temporary roles as **citizen-writers** creating **public texts**, collaboration, and discourse community knowledge needed to become agile writers who determine and choose whether or not to meet the expectations of writing in different contexts (Bacon; Sullivan). In addition to this, one student reflected on the question in a meta-cognitive way, saying that the learning she enjoys from the service-learning course continues to present itself, as she found unexpected applications for knowledge and it “sneaks up” on her (Beaufort; Sternglass). This same student commented on the course itself, as it was an honors course, and she felt that such opportunities would be best made available to students who could benefit from the resources and teaching that the honors course provided, such as first-generation and underrepresented groups.
The most common answer among service-learners was that they took with them an awareness of service-learning and the theory that goes along with it. More than half of service-learners felt that they needed to stress at the end of our interview the value of experiencing a situation in which they created public texts that had the potential to effect social change. Others commented on the knowledge of how to effect change and what kinds they can reasonably aim to effect, and still others valued the chance to learn more about how organizations outside of the university worked. One former service-learner commented that she had not been aware of the role writing can play in social change, adding that she may not have realized it at the time of her partnership, but during the experience, she began to understand the role of writing in society. This strikes me as an important response in two ways. First, learning from a service-learner years after the course that she had not understood the important role of writing in society larger than
the university as she began college suggests that Wardle and Adler-Kassner’s threshold concept, “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity” (16), which was not immediately obvious to this undergraduate, and it took her time to internalize that truth. Secondly, it strikes me as significant because this truth took years to emerge for this student. Skai reminds us that learning “sneaks up on you,” and in this case, an awareness of writing as a social and rhetorical activity took time to emerge from the service-learning experience. Other longitudinal studies (Sternglass; Beaufort) support the notion that learning is a slow, uneven, and often deferred process, but Skai’s observation in the context of this study rings wider, as it includes the sometimes unanticipated application of community-oriented thinking to environments that do not necessarily call for it as well as the learning that Tess applied professionally in her continued involvement with UConnPIRG.

Conclusions

While the case study analysis allows for some insight into each of the respondents, the analysis in Chapter 5 shows how respondents from different populations compare to each other. For example, question #19 is not surprising insofar as students from service-learning and non-service-learning courses recalled different details because of the differences in the courses they took. It makes sense, then, that former service-learners would take that question as a chance to add more details about their service-learning experience while non-service-learners would reflect on details associated to more traditional courses. What surprised me, however, was that service-learners by and large reflected on a markedly different set of details than the non-service-learners. Reading strategies, social connections, writing confidence, and awareness of writing in different disciplines are all take-aways that the service-learners could have gotten from their courses, but only the non-service-learners chose to end with them. This could be in part because
the service-learners tended to value the special learning that came along with partnering with a community organization higher than the more “traditional” learning associated with writing courses. It could also be that respondents simply wanted to choose one or two additional details to share at the end of their interviews, and the service-learning-specific details took priority. In short, this could suggest that more traditional writing growth does happen in service-learning courses, but the more pronounced effects are those that come from the service-learning experience.

That is not to say, however, that FYW service-learning courses are the only way to inspire community action in undergraduates. Three out of four participants who had not taken service-learning courses reported becoming involved with some sort of community activity in the years after their traditional FYW courses, whether it be in the form of another service-learning course or involvement with a campus organization. Meanwhile, eight out of nine former service-learners reported the same. In other terms, 75% of non-service learners became or remained socially active, while 88.9% of service-learners remained socially active after the course. Though this is encouraging considering HERI’s 2005 numbers, this is an increase of only 13.9%, and given the small sample size, it does not show that service-learning alone can create a more socially active student body.

In fact, service-learning courses in the first year of college (regardless of discipline) may not even result in long-term relationships, as the vast majority of service-learners reported not maintaining their service-learning partnerships. Seven out of nine service-learners, or 77.8% of service-learners did not keep in touch with their partners, and one of those who did maintained an informal relationship, meaning they did not continue their service-learning work after the end of the semester. This suggests two things: first, because the demands of college life leave many
undergraduates little energy (Nathan), it is incumbent upon faculty and administrators to maintain service-learning partnerships if sustainability is the goal, or it is up to university and community stakeholders to agree upon the length of the partnership and what the outcomes will be. After all, while service-learning partnerships ought to be reciprocally beneficial arrangements in which traditional hierarchies come into question, “there has to be someone at the helm,” as Lindenman puts it (153), and university stakeholders are well positioned to take responsibility for equitable and sustainable work. Second, and more in line with the goals of this study, these numbers show that some sort of service-learning course early in the college curriculum is more important than it would be if students tended to maintain their service-learning partnerships. Between the case studies in Chapter 4 and the analysis in Chapter 5, it is clear that a service-learning experience early in one’s college career is beneficial not because it puts students into partnerships, but rather because it teaches students how to forge and maintain their own. Indeed, case study respondents from Chapter 4—such as Tess, Amanda, Michael, Juneau, and Skai—acknowledged that they learned how to do the social action they did after their courses from their arranged service-learning partnerships. Considering that 75% of non-service-learners from my study became socially active during their college years (and the one who had not planned to after graduation), it is clear that college students could benefit from an early college education in community action.
Chapter 6: Reflections and Conclusions

Reflections, Further Scholarship, and Conclusions

Service-Learning is one of eleven high-impact practices the Association of American Colleges and Universities acknowledges as having positive results for students of different backgrounds and interests. These practices include: First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Common Intellectual Experiences (or Core Curricula), Learning Communities, Writing-Intensive Courses, Collaborative Assignments and Projects, Undergraduate Research, Diversity/Global Learning, ePortfolios, Service-Learning/Community-Based Learning, Internships, and Capstone Courses and Projects (Kuh). Each high-impact practice is not mutually exclusive, and there can certainly be overlap, as I have shown with the importance some service-learners place on collaboration and co-writing by studying service-learning in writing-intensive courses. But these high-impact practices are distinct from one another, and the goal of this study is to help refine what we know the “impact” of service-learning to be as well as how and when service-learning can be beneficial to students.

Therefore, my study of the effects of service-learning on students’ writing and rhetorical development by design runs counter to the current conversations surrounding community engagement. I’ve narrowed my focus on student gains in classroom-based service-learning courses here not to diminish the importance of researching the effects of service-learning partnerships or non-classroom-based community/university partnerships on communities and community organizations. Rather, I aim to determine what we as instructors and/or writing program administrators can reasonably promise as learning outcomes of service-learning courses as well as how we can rethink our approach to the pedagogy to simultaneously best serve our students and avoid the kinds of failed community-university partnerships that Mathieu names in
This study differs from previous inquiries into service-learning insofar as I used retrospective interviews with current and former service-learners as well as students who took more “traditional” writing courses, a method that Deans did on a smaller scale in “Course Evaluations, Years Later.” But this study differs from Deans’ not only in the extent of my inquiry into each participant—Deans relied on online surveys, as did I, but I also conducted the retrospective interviews—but also insofar as I included both current UConn students and alumni as well as students who had taken non-service-learning writing courses as a means of comparison. Furthermore, I analyzed the raw data from those interviews using both a case study approach and a coded linguistic analysis.

And therefore, the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 work together to suggest that service-learning partnerships are valuable educational experiences for college students because they educate undergraduates about the complexity and power of public writing as well as how to navigate the demands of community organizations that they may find unfamiliar or uncomfortable. In short, they teach students how to be active in communities outside of their educational ones. Chapter 5 suggests that students tend to seek out some sort of community involvement with or without the inspiration or influence of a service-learning course early in their college careers. Without an early education in community engagement, however, they will likely not venture much further than the college community itself or know how to take the initiative to establish relationships outside of institutionally-arranged relationships such as student organizations or internships.

This education is not immediately apparent, either, and study participants found that their knowledge about community action did not present itself until it was necessary in some cases. For example, Skai found herself engaging in community action not because she set out to—
indeed, she recalled that her community activities were not always “on purpose”—but because she had the kairotic understanding to recognize the opportunities when they presented themselves. Similarly, when it came time to make choices about graduate school, Juneau made those choices informed by his knowledge of charity, projects, and social change as Morton describes them and their potential for effecting change. In fact, though the non-service-learners in this study tended to become socially active over the course of their college careers, they did so through university channels, two taking on leadership roles in their sororities and one taking a service-learning course in another discipline. Taking the findings from Chapters 4 and 5 together allows me to make this claim: college students often try to become active in communities other than their classroom communities, and a mixture of service-learning and writing instruction early in their college careers can give them the practical and rhetorical knowledge to do so.

Summary of Salient Findings

It is difficult to make recommendations for writing studies people across university and local contexts, but this study has had findings valuable to service-learning practitioners as well as service-learners. For starters, my data suggests that service-learning courses are an excellent way to introduce students to their own potential as public writers/rhetors. The experience gives them the know-how to make change and the ability to plan that change in informed ways. Service-learners in this study also show an attitude towards collaborative writing that, while not always positive, is informed by the realities of collaboration. Many reflected on their collaborative writing experiences positively, but Juneau, for example, thought that social changes could be more effectively made with public writing to a public audience, and that individual voices mattered in that writing; he seemed more in favor of public writing than service-learning. Their knowledge of public writing informed their professional choices as well, and some, like Skai,
found that they had opportunities for social action in unexpected places. And compared to those who took more traditional first-year writing classes, service-learners were more inclined towards graduate study, though I conducted these interviews while the undergraduate seniors were still only considering graduate study, with the exception of Skai, who was already taking graduate classes and was accepted into the graduate program of her choice several months after we spoke. In short, service-learning experiences early on inform students who are already inclined towards community action and, in concert with their other college experiences, can prepare them for academic success.

There were also, however, unexpected findings that I, as someone who has taught and researched service-learning, found important for my own teaching and this study. For example, service-learners and non-service-learners alike tended to be reserved when I asked if they would recommend service-learning for first-year writing courses. Many agreed that service-learning should not be mandatory, and that courses should be clearly marked as such in course catalogs because those who are not inclined to such social action would not make the most of it. This stance is supported by Shah’s 2018 study, which indicated that community members work better with service-learners genuinely invested in their projects. Even some who seemed truly grateful for their service-learning course felt this way, such as Juneau and Tucker. I was particularly surprised by Juneau’s suggestion that service-learning courses be optional since he made considerable professional choices based on the knowledge he gained from the course.

Another surprise was that participants did not seem to learn a sense of social responsibility or to be socially active from service-learning courses. Tucker-Loner’s study of a mandatory service-learning program found that students learned community awareness, both an inclination to community action and an inquisitive nature to learn what kinds of social action are
needed in a community (130; see also Eyler and Giles). But my findings tend to disagree slightly.

As noted above, every student in my study was involved or interested in getting involved in community action, but the service-leaners showed that they knew how to do this work and how to learn what needs to be done in a community. So, while my study agrees with Tucker-Loner that service-leaners tend to learn both knowledge of how to act and the questions to ask themselves or others to act mindfully, I also find that at least four students at the University of Connecticut developed that impulse without a first-year service-learning course in composition.

This Study as a Contribution to the Field.

As a groundbreaking case study of undergraduate student Dave, Lucille McCarthy’s “A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing across the Curriculum” situated the case study model into the canon of Writing Studies, taking the perspective—even in the title—of the students we study and serve. Though McCarthy tracked Dave’s writing and attitudes towards writing over the course of only 21 months (350), “Stranger in Strange Lands” inspired more long-term studies such as those from Beaufort and Sternglass that have exposed plenty about how we learn about writing, and it did so through the radical move of assuming the stance of the undergraduate student. For example, there can very well be disconnects to how students view writing assignments and how instructors plan for them. In short, the social factors that influence and sometimes govern discourse communities do not operate the same way for students and instructors because of the different prior knowledge and agency of teachers and students. McCarthy cites Geertz in her study, noting that “small facts speak to larger issues” (cited from McCarthy 379) and that one case study alone cannot describe the landscapes of the

53 See Durst’s Collision Course: Conflict, Negotiation, Collision for an account of how students and instructors value writing in different ways and how that difference in values can stand in the way of both sets of stakeholders sharing a common exigency for the writing classroom (2,3)
many perceived strange lands students visit every day across the country. For such narratives to tell us anything about our field and the students we serve, there must be multiple longitudinal case studies like McCarthy’s working in concert to make up a larger body of student-based narratives so that writing studies scholars can find commonalities between them. Scholars such as Beaufort and Sternglass, among others, have since done this work to help shape a working body of knowledge about writing across curricula, and Tucker-Loner has begun to give that attention to service-learning, though not specifically keyed to writing studies.

I hope that this study follows in McCarthy, Beaufort, Sternglass, and Tucker-Loner’s tradition and becomes one of a number of studies that can, in concert with each other, provide the field with an overarching, though malleable, philosophy of or set of heuristics for how to plan, teach, and tend to community-engaged courses. Naturally, this all depends on the work of others in the field to create that body of work, and it will be necessary for these thick and focused studies to happen at different schools and with different populations. Service-Learning in composition at the UConn Storrs campus is situated; Storrs is a large, flagship campus of a public research university, and though the campus itself is growing, the surrounding area remains rural or suburban with sparse and unreliable mass transit options in comparison to more urban campuses. On a rural campus, exposure to community organizations unaffiliated with the university is limited, and transportation to such organizations or communities can prove difficult for first-year students who likely live on campus and my not have personal transportation. Therefore, it is likely that a service-learning course early in their college careers would prove a rare opportunity to visit off-campus sites, and the partnerships that service-learning practitioners establish with community organizations would create an environment in which students have access, however limited, to community groups.
In my own experience teaching service-learning courses in downtown Brooklyn, New York and Stamford, Connecticut, there was no question of transportation, as community partners were either within walking distance of campus or there was ample mass transit available. Note that one participant in this study, Maya, was in my service-learning section at Stamford, and while our class’ community partners were within walking distance from campus, Maya’s experience cannot provide an overarching picture of service-learning experiences for students at urban campuses, as Maya is also an international student who reflected in large part on how her community partnership allowed her to feel more connected in a new country and at a new school. I would hypothesize that students’ service-learning experiences at urban campuses would stress the ability to meet people off of campus less than those at suburban or rural campuses, but that is only a hypothesis that requires further study.

Similarly, as times and technologies change, communities change, be they academic ones or otherwise. Much like the public turn provided scholars with critical vocabulary and perspectives to support the Bakhtinian notion that rhetoric is intrinsically social (Warner; Farmer), recent scholarship such as Minnix’s (Rhetoric and the Global Turn in Higher Education), Rice and St. Amant’s (Thinking Globally, Composing Locally), and Görkemli’s (Grassroots Literacies) are recognizing that the communities in and with which we compose expand as communication becomes far less local and who we can begin to name as members of our community are more often people we’ve not physically met. With the change in what it means to be a community, community-engagement can also change, as can service-learning, and the question of student access to community sites becomes simultaneously more complicated and simpler. In the past, service-learning and community engagement were without question social, in-person, and on-site activities, but given the digital turn in composition and community, the
question of transportation diminishes as the question of whether or not to make service-learning partnership in person grows in importance.

Indeed, at the time of this writing, I am teaching a course for UConn juniors and seniors with what I call a “soft service-learning” component. Students in my class interact weekly via email with students at a local high school to support the high school writers, but for reasons of security and privacy, students do not work face-to-face. I consider it “soft service-learning” because it is an Advanced Expository Writing course that satisfies the requirements for entrance into UConn’s Master’s in Education program, and the focus is more on introducing the students to the history and theory of writing instruction. The readings and work of the class only in part prepare students for this partnership; service-learning is not the theme or subject of the class, and therefore, I do not consider it a service-learning course on the scale of Deans’ writing for, with, or about the community courses. Regardless of whether an online service-learning or community-engaged course would be considered “soft” service-learning or not, case study analysis could help writing studies further compile a body of work that includes digital or otherwise transnational learning partnerships and shows how the nature of such a program affects the reasonable outcomes.

Since, as I write this, the trend in community-engaged scholarship is to explore the effects of community engaged projects on community organizations and members, it would also add to a working, thick body of knowledge to conduct similar research in cooperation with community partners. Shah’s 2018 study, “The Courage of Community Members: Community Perspectives of Engaged Pedagogies” begins this work, contributing not only information about how one community responded to a community-engaged project and advice for how to approach such a partnership equitably, but she also makes the very important distinction between
community organizations and community members more visible. This relates with Phelps-Hillen’s 2017 study, “Inception to Implementation; Feminist Community Engagement via Service-Learning,” in which Phelps-Hillen reports on the extent her class’ community partner’s interest in the partnership; the community organization’s administrator, Allison, did not wish to co-author the study because an academic publication was of little value to her and her organization’s aims. This in and of itself is a valuable finding, but not one that can alone inform assumptions about community partners’ aims.

Furthermore, my study has not dedicated particular attention to intersections of identity and power that inform service-learning partnerships, especially on the side of community partners. There exists a body of research that does explicitly address these concerns (Artz; Keller, Nelson, and Wick; Bocci; Lee, Curtis, and Curran; Song, Furco, Lopez, and Maruyama) and more, student-focused research with these dynamics in mind are necessary for service-learning (or even the values associated with it) to continue to grow ethically and responsibly.

While some of my study participants commented on equity in access to composition education (Skai) or their political beliefs and actions being influenced by their service-learning experiences (Michael and Juneau), I did not inquire with participants about how they felt their own identities influenced their experiences. And while Wurr’s 2001 dissertation explores the effects of service-learning on native and non-native English speakers, this kind of inquiry ought to be continuous as international students continue to choose American universities and in greater numbers.

Of particular, though not singular, importance would be the implications of service-learning pedagogy for students, instructors, and community members with disabilities. Scholarship exists at the intersection of disability and writing studies (Lewiecki-Wilson and Brueggemann) and service-learning (Doromal; Gent and Gurecka), but little to no research exists
into service-learning, disability, and writing studies\textsuperscript{54}. Such research would help service-learning practitioners design programs that do not reify the ideology of ability (Siebers) in its design or implementation. In other words, such research could help us design service-learning programs to be intrinsically accessible, rather than reworking inaccessible programs. This is important because attention to participants’ ability could shape the way transportation, timelines, and writing tasks are planned, and it would certainly represent additional locally-situated questions that one study alone could not answer. In future study, knowing what I’ve learned about how service-learning provided students with the access to knowledge necessary for action, I will be sure to examine access to the experiences themselves.

**My Taxonomy as a Tool for Further Research**

To introduce some of the values and potential outcomes that guide community-engaged scholarship, be it inquiry into teaching or otherwise, I created the taxonomy I included in Chapter 1, which puts those values in relation to the kinds of programs that achieve or hope to achieve them. This taxonomy pulls back from taxonomies presented by Deans and Long to map out the approaches to service-learning to include other kinds of community-engaged work, and so I envision Deans and Long’s heuristics as falling within the “Service-Learning” circle of my diagram. See Figure 19 below.

\textsuperscript{54} Furthermore, much of the research into service-learning and disability assumes either that able-bodied students serve people with disabilities or students with disabilities engage in service-learning apart from able-bodied students. There is little research into service-learning programs that are designed with so that people can serve in any role in a service-learning partnership regardless of their ability status.
As we have seen from the study participants’ responses, service-learners are capable of speaking, directly or indirectly, about the **social change** (Juneau, Skai) and **citizen-writing** (Juneau, Skai, Tess) which indicates that they have a sense that they have agency through their writing, and that they can use that agency to effect social change. Some even have a sense of how to gauge when and what kinds of social change they can effect depending on the situation and their action.
Participants generally did not consider the **sustainability** of their service-learning partnerships with the exception of Tess, who remained involved with UConnPIRG and wanted to see the work of the organization done on UConn’s campus, and this concern was for the work of the organization, not particularly the longevity of the service-learning partnership. This concern, however, should not be the service-learners’. Considering, as we learn from Jon as well as Nathan’s 2005 social experiment, that service-learners have little time to forge lasting relationships of any kind during a three-month semester, taking on the responsibility of creating a long-term community partnership—a high-stakes partnership at that—should be the responsibility of instructors or administrators in the planning of a service-learning program. It is because these stakeholders have a hand in planning and pursuing these partnerships before they even begin that they have the opportunity to communicate their sustainability concerns to potential community partners, who can decide on whether or not to pursue that partnership further (Lindenman).

Ultimately, though, service-learners in this study learned how to insert themselves into community organizations (though they were not responsible for forging those relationships entirely) and what to do when they got there. This allowed them later in their college careers to make choices based on the kinds of **social change** they wanted to effect and plan their community actions accordingly. It is important to note again that participants who had not taken service-learning classes also pursued or planned to pursue community action of some sort; my data does not suggest—like the work of Eyler and Giles as well as Tucker-Loner does—that service-learning *teaches* an impulse towards civic/community action, but rather the service-learners pursued that impulse with more knowledge of how to make connections off of campus and how to work community action into their day-to-day activities/internships/working lives.
The non-service-learners, though they planned to or did engage with communities outside of the classroom, sought to do that community action through university channels and did not have the benefit of knowing where and how community action is appropriate.

As writers, the service-learners in my study showed knowledge of genres and how they are used as well as an understanding of the realities of collaborative writing. For example, Tess learned how to do the prewriting required for her project when she learned how to cold call University administrators and got comfortable doing so. And Skai, during her description of redesigning a web page for the UConn Women’s Center, acknowledged that such work was academic writing and explained how. I asked her no leading questions or intentionally led her to make this claim and back it up; she contributed this explanation on her own. While non-service-learners spoke intelligently about the traditional genres of academic writing they had encountered, former service-learners spoke the same way about writing for a homeless shelter, a state nonprofit dedicated to expanding awareness of solar power, creating web pages, as well as more traditional academic writing.

**Opportunities for Further Research**

This study shows that the learning in service-learning happens over time, and some of that learning becomes apparent years after the partnership has ended. Building on the take-aways from this study, I plan to conduct a truly longitudinal study of students who have taken service-learning FYW courses across institutions and institutional types, checking in with them regularly throughout their college careers to better determine how that learning emerges and makes itself apparent to students at different points in their education. The existing study shows that different participants at different stages of their education report on that learning differently, but the ability to work with the same group of study participants at different times could more accurately
show how that learning can manifest itself over time. This study would also give me the opportunity to learn more about the participants and truly replicate Seidman’s three-interview approach without the constraints of time and resources intrinsic to this dissertation study. Similarly, the study would give me the chance to do a larger and more thoroughly segmented and coded analysis of interviews over the course of years. This particular study is not over, and I will take it to Dartmouth College’s Summer Seminar on Composition Research during summer 2019 to expand my knowledge and ability to more thoroughly examine the raw data I have already collected. I hope that the work I continue to do with this data will serve as a foundation for the larger study I mentioned above, and that I will enter that study with expanded hypotheses to test and assumptions challenge.

**Conclusion**

I recommend that service-learning in composition still be considered one among the high-impact practices that can prepare students to act collaboratively and reflectively on the socially-inclined habits of mind they develop in college. While some universities develop mandatory service-learning for all students, such programs are not tied to writing instruction, and that is as it should stay. Willing service-learners in writing classes develop the knowledge to decide what kind of community action they would need to achieve the social change they deem necessary as well as the tools and texts to achieve their ends. Juneau points to public writing courses and the type of writing Welch proposes teaching in *Living Room: Teaching Public Writing in a Privatized World* as another tool to accomplish this\(^{55}\), but as Medeiros notes, those are not always effective. So, it might fall to writing teachers and scholars to develop new approaches to

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\(^{55}\) See also Greis in 2019
community action that work for students who will not or cannot participate in service-learning courses in order to achieve the ends that this study finds possible with service learning.

Deans ends his 1998 dissertation on service-learning and writing studies on a note of optimism and respect for rhetorical traditions going back to Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian. While referencing the “good man speaking well” goals of classical rhetorical instruction, he also remarks that there are scholars at the time of his writing engaged in similar work as they research and experiment with writing courses and hopes that studies similar to his will follow that add to the then small but growing body of research into community-engagement and writing instruction (210). Mathieu ends her dissertation in 2001 by speculating on the preparation of graduate students to take on community-engaged writing and publishing projects, which indicates an optimism that upcoming scholars will continue the trend of community-engaged scholarship that was beginning in composition studies at the turn of the 21st century (201). And Wurr’s 2001 dissertation ends by suggesting that engaging older, more academically prepared students in service-learning partnerships will encourage community organizations to partner with universities, and that this change will decrease the demands on community organizations and both make the notion of a community/university partnership more attractive and allow community partners more voice in such partnerships, as they need not worry about accommodating large numbers of first-year students (230).

This 2019 dissertation does not end with a look towards the future of service-learning in composition specifically as much as an appreciation of what has come before and what can possibly follow for service-learning and community-engaged pedagogy. The work of McCarthy, Beaufort, Sternglass, and others has brought to light the educational benefits for students when faculty acknowledge student perspectives on writing across curriculums. Given what the field
has already learned from the combination of writing instruction and community partnerships and the research into the effects of service-learning on communities, I hope that continued critical attention to the perspectives of students in service-learning partnerships will add to this growing body of knowledge and reflect on the teaching of writing in a sense broader than testing the value of service-learning in composition. It might seem uncool to research service-learning in composition roughly twenty years after the first monographs and articles on the topic were published and writing studies’ attention has turned to community partnerships’ effects on communities, and maybe it is, for the moment. But the potential for learning more about our students’ approaches to school and professional writing as well as the social, civic, and political education they receive as college students is decidedly not.
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