Educated In Agency: A Feminist Service-Learning Pedagogy for Community Border Crossings

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Boston College

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EDUCATED IN AGENCY:
A FEMINIST SERVICE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY
FOR COMMUNITY BORDER CROSSINGS

A Dissertation by
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy
August 2010

EDUCATED IN AGENCY: A FEMINIST SERVICE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY FOR COMMUNITY BORDER CROSSINGS

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ABSTRACT

Service-learning is an experiential form of education that moves students outside of the walls of academe to meet community-identified needs through the application and renegotiation of a set of theoretical and methodological skills. It is simultaneously a teaching strategy, an epistemological framework, and an educational reform movement. This research takes the form of multi-methodological case studies of service-learning classrooms and service-learning partnerships, examining the translation of feminist pedagogy to the service-learning experience. The voices of students, faculty, pioneers, administrators, and community partners articulate the common and uncommon struggles of teaching a new generation of students to learn and serve *in agencies* while simultaneously recognizing their own capacity *for agency*. This work provides evidence that applying feminist pedagogical principles to service-learning initiatives creates more meaningful transformations for our students, faculty, and communities. The interdependent Feminist Service-Learning Process posited here is an innovative framework for moving our students across the civic borders necessary for community engagement.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

teaching about subtle sexism, was inspired and invited into the literature by Niki.

Later, as a doctoral student, I was fortunate at Boston College to discover a group of women faculty members who would help me to shape a doctoral program of my own that focused on feminist scholarship across the disciplines. Lorraine Liscio brought me into her women's studies 101 classroom as a teaching assistant where I would meet a group of eager young women, like Anne Tropeano, ready to become feminist thinkers. Feminist historican Carol Hurd Green introduced me to women writers and the concept of border crossings that is central to this work. Mary Daly inspired me to recognize the intersectionality of feminist thought and the importance of reflective writing in the presence of our feline familiars. With my advisor, Sharlene Hesse-Biber, these women built a critical space at Boston College for my feminist scholarship. It was also at BC that I took a course on qualitative research methods with David Karp. He was then, and continues to be, a pensive and encouraging mentor who challenges me to always ask "how is feminism different than any other lens?"

When my academic teaching career took me to the Women's Studies Department at Portland State University, I was lucky to have landed at an institution where my feminist activism, teaching, and scholarship became inevitably joined in the innovative pedagogy of service-learning so valued in that urban teaching environment. My students at PSU, Sally Eck, Kristen

Christophersen, and Carol Holdt were partners in designing service-learning experiences that would shape the feminist classrooms that became the basis for the ethnography that grounds the first several chapters of this dissertation. Each of these students worked with me on the analysis of hundreds of journal entries, co-wrote pieces of our narratives, and helped to imagine the STRETCH model. I always think of Sally when I speak about the model, because she described the process as wading in a rambling creek. For her, the pieces of the model that are posited later in this dissertation, were like the stepping stones that helped a student navigate themselves across the creek when the water was choppy, the creek too deep, or the current too swift. Sally, Carol, and Kristen shaped the student voices that appear in this work through their imaginative reflections on their own journeys.

The faculty insights that emerge in this work come from over ten years of facilitating service-learning workshops for colleagues at institutions across the country. I have DeVorah Leiberman, formerly at PSU, Jamie Birge, formerly at Pennsylvania Campus Compact, and Dick Kinsley, from Ohio Campus Compact to thank for setting me on the faculty development path, for each of them recognized the importance of sharing the innovations of service-learning with our colleagues. Jamie was the impetus behind the faculty interviews that ground the work in Chapter Five and has since been a champion of faculty involvement in the movement across the country.

The work on community partnership development began as a series of conversations with one of my partners in Portland, Catherine Sameh. Catherine illuminated for me the importance of community voices in service-learning as we worked together on over ten different projects and collaborated on the piece in this collection. My colleague at Campus Compact, Julie Plaut, joined me in many conversations about partnership development and together we unraveled the interdependent paradigm shifts argued for in the final chapter of this work.

My colleagues at Otterbein University have also been integral to this journey as we worked together to cultivate a culture of service on our campus. John Kengla has been a steadfast colleague in that work, innovative in his teaching and completely committed to our community partnerships.

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, my husband Bryant and my two children, Ivy and Will. We have explored many communities together, crossed numerous borders, and have always stretched to meet the challenges ahead. They have been my true partners on every step of this journey, readied with chocolate, insightful ruminations, unquestionable support, and imaginary friends to protect us around every turn.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

There was an eighth grade teacher at my middle school who claimed that the amount of chalk dust flying around the room after his English class was directly correlated with how much students learned that day. He proudly walked out of each class with chalk dust on his shoulder, clearly believing that all the ideas he shared had been successfully transferred to our eager minds through inscriptions on a large green wall. In our modern classrooms we would label that chalk a meager remnant of teacher-imparted truths and categorize this teacher's pedagogical preference to Friere's "banking method" of teaching, where students are the mere receptacles of knowledge (Friere, 1970).

My pedagogical choices have not been so readily packaged in a simple metaphor like chalkdust in the air. As a teacher, I have always struggled to find ways to move myself from beyond the limits of a chalkboard to create more interactive, experiential spaces in and outside of my classrooms to allow students to grapple with ideas, engage with each other, and co-create new knowledges. After designing a series of experiential exercises for sociology and women's studies courses in my early years of teaching, I still felt that the walls of the classroom created an artificial boundary between theoretical and lived knowledge. My shift in pedagogical thinking; however, did not happen

until I started a new teaching job in women's studies and was called across a concrete bridge at Portland State University inscribed with the words, "Let Knowledge Serve the City." For all of the faculty who walked across that bridge on our way from the parking lot to our classrooms, we knew it was our responsibility to move our students beyond the rows of desks and into the streets of a city troubled by poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, crime, poor access to healthcare, and environmental degradation. Our institution demanded that we rethink how learning takes place and adopt new metaphors for teaching, learning, and community involvement. We were asked to immerse ourselves in service-learning and take our syllabi to the city.

Over the course of the past 12 years I have taught over 20 service-learning courses, worked with hundreds of students, and partnered with dozens of non-profit agencies including women's health clinics, homeless shelters, juvenile lock-down facilities, youth-serving organizations, a feminist bookstore, K-12 schools, and community organizations. However, my service-learning pedagogical pathway has never manifested itself as a solid, concrete, stable bridge, like the one at Portland State. My praxis has always been more messy, vulnerable, and flexible, never seeming to take me or my students directly from point A to point B. Classrooms that take as their text the narratives of people's lives and their communities are risky spaces where the troubles of our society become the pages of our students' learning. As one

of my service-learning students explains, "the experience in our classroom was much more like a trapeze act, with a vulnerable student on one side, swinging out into the community to catch the grip of a community partner flying out to meet her somewhere in the middle." Her metaphor has served my pedagogical journey more authentically as she makes vivid both the vulnerability of teaching at the margins of academe and the necessity of moving beyond the shadow of the ivory tower to meet our communities somewhere in the middle where theory touches praxis. The risks and danger of learning that speaks through her metaphor begs all of us to think more critically about how we are teaching and how well our students are learning within and beyond our classrooms.

An emphasis on teaching toward civic engagement and social responsibility in higher education is now demanding that more of us take epistemological leaps off of our pedagogical platforms. There has been a renewed call throughout higher education for learning journeys that are community-based, socially responsible, and service-oriented (Boyer 1990; Nussbaum, 1997). Proponents of community-based learning argue it vitalizes academic performance, increases students' understanding of the responsibilities of living in a democratic society, and invites students to become involved in the social problems facing their communities (Eyler & Giles, 1999). The American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), one of the most important voices in higher education, has made a

core commitment to educating our students for personal and social responsibility (Huber & Hutchings, 2004). Robert Corrigan, president of San Francisco State University argues that community service-learning will "prove to be the higher education legacy of the early 21st century" and that it will have "a lifelong impact on our students" (2007, p. xi). Scholars suggest that service-learning is situated at the intersection of at least two contemporary educational reform movements: 1) a call for educating students toward a "civic purpose" and 2) a pedagogical emphasis on engagement and integrative learning (Huber & Hutchings 2004; Saltmarsh, 2004). Others are suggesting that service-learning is firmly grounded in both the histories and futures of their specific disciplines. In his presidential address to the American Sociological Association in 2004, Michael Burawoy drew a clear link between public sociology and service-learning, noting that service-learning is the "ultimate prototype" of doing the "public work" of the discipline (cited in Kouri, 2007).

While we have traversed a new century and are adopting a new vision for higher education, we are often still teaching our students old ways to solve old problems. However, our students are growing up in K-12 classrooms where the oil crisis, endangered species, habitat loss, and global climate change are part of their common language and a common global experience. To welcome these students to our colleges and universities higher education needs to embrace a paradigm shift in how knowledge is created through

communities of practice that are willing to rethink the role of higher education in educating a new species of citizens readied for a global community. Our students are the new shape-shifters of society urging us to recycle the ways we teach by reusing the knowledge of the past to rethink the experiential landscape of the modern university. We are now at a critical crossroads in a necessary conversation that asks us to shift our metaphors for teaching, recycle some of our most cherished history, and critically examine how we will educate a new generation for agency.

Under most trapezes stretches a large net. The future of service-learning holds the promise of creating multiple, complex global nets that serve as communities of practice for both education and social change. Sometimes our nets stretch only as far as one faculty member in one classroom working with one agency. More often we throw the net a bit wider and engage an entire university in the work of educating citizens within the geography of multiple communities. Several of the contemporary conversations in the scholarship of service-learning are now helping us to reconfigure our nets and situate our classrooms at the tightly strung hyphen between service and learning.

CONVERSATIONS AT THE HYPHEN

Service-learning is an experiential form of education that moves students outside of the walls of academe to meet a community-identified need

through the application and renegotiation of a set of theoretical and methodological skills. It is simultaneously a teaching strategy, an epistemological framework, and an educational reform movement. Grounded in John Dewey's model of education and informed by David Kolb's experiential learning process, service-learning moves students through a "cycle of action and reflection where knowing and doing are inextricably linked" (Eyler and Giles, 1999, p.7).   Those of us who find our academic homes in the discipline of sociology may recognize this call to public work as rooted in the Hull House community of Jane Addams (1910) and her transcendence of "noblesse oblige" to compel citizens toward neighborhood stewardship, community reform and social advancement.   Or we may find our disciplinary roots in the urgings of C. Wright Mills (1959) to liberal educators to use their sociological imaginations to "act with consequence for the structure of their society and their periods" and "translate personal troubles into public issues" (p.187).

Theoretical discussions in the service-learning scholarship have focused considerable attention on the relationship between charity and social activism (Morton, 1995), educational insights into situated and experiential learning (Wolfson & Willinsky, 1999); idealism (Coles, 1993), citizenship and democracy (Barber &Battistoni, 1994), and community renewal (Parsons and Lisman, 1996). Most of this work is a direct response from institutions of higher education to national concerns over a perceived weakening of civil

society and disengagement from democracy (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont & Stephens, 2003). Institutions are questioning their role in working toward the "common good" and engaging both the professorate and their students in community-building and community-strengthening efforts (Bringle, Games & Malloy, 1996; Jacoby, 1996; Kezar, Chambers & Burkhardt, 2005; Langseth & Plater, 2004; Percy, Zimpher, and Burkhart, 2006).

The primary emphasis in the literature is on student learning outcomes, both the personal and cognitive development of students who have completed a service-learning course. Most scholars agree that service-learning has a profound, significant, and positive affect on student learning because, as Eyler and Giles (1999) suggest:

> A real person facing real difficulties in an authentic context forces students to a level of understanding that is sometimes not obtained when they read and glibly summarize what they have read about a complex social issue (9).

Contemporary studies of learning outcomes articulate significant gains in affective domains that include: an appreciation for diversity, civic competencies, cross-cultural skills, empathy, social responsibility, and humanism (Howard, 2001). In cognitive areas, scholars argue that service-learning students outlearn students in traditional classrooms in the areas of: critical thinking, problem-solving, and oral and written communication (Eyler & Giles, 1999). In addition, service-learning proponents posit that the pedagogy creates environments where these two learning domains are

conscientiously connected -- where personal development and the cultivation of critical cognitive skill sets occur simultaneously (McEwen,1996).

A smattering of the literature emerging from the movement provides specific and detailed pedagogical strategies for the service-learning instructor.   The most commonly discussed teaching tools for community-based learning are reflection and the development of clearly identified learning outcomes (Eyler & Giles, 1996; Silcox, 1993). While these accounts offer important discussions of the ways in which seasoned service-learning faculty have revisioned the academic classroom, they rarely examine students' direct responses or resistance to these pedagogies (see Mabry, 1998 for one example of research that assesses the impact of specific pedagogies). In addition, these studies only occasionally situate the teaching strategies within any critical discourse. Until very recently the scholarship has had little to do with a new generation of students who are beginning to frame their community service as both civic engagement and political activism. More importantly, it has been usually void of any complex understanding of the ways in which the social locations of race, class, gender and sexuality ground students' civic, social, and political participation.

The new scholarship on service-learning focuses almost entirely on either the necessity, need and scope of service, or on specific and quantified learning outcomes of the students (Eyler and Giles, 1999). However, this scholarship fails to explore the transformative process that occurs between

the service experience and the learning, the social construction of new identities and knowledges, and the making of community connections. Eyler and Giles (1999), in their landmark study of the learning outcomes gained by service-learning students, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning*, conclude that while we have done the work of collecting evidence of the academic value of service-learning, we have far less evidence about the "kinds of practices" that lead to the effects we desire.

My work questions the pedagogical practices that most effectively lead to both student and community transformation. I argue that the application of a feminist pedagogical framework to service-learning praxis has the potential to radically shift the field to ensure that it is inclusive, collaborative, and focused more intentionally on social change. For the most part, prior research on service-learning lacks this kind of feminist analysis, ignores gender, does not situate itself as critical pedagogy, is primarily focused on only quantitative outcomes assessment, and creatively denies the politics of the pedagogy.

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY:

THE ACADEMIC ARM OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

While advocates of service-learning argue that service promotes deeper, more engaged learning, many contemporary feminists suggest that our teaching also needs to move our students toward social transformation and political activism (hooks, 1989; Jackson, 1997; Kenway & Modra, 1992;

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Maher & Tetreault, 1994; Romney, Tatum and Jones, 1992; Schneidewind, 1983; Weiler, 1988). As teachers and researchers we are now called upon to be "educational activists" directing our pedagogy toward an understanding of power, politics, and social change (Briskin and Coulter, 1992; Ellsworth,1992; Pharr, 2007). Feminist scholars Maralee Mayberry and Ellen Cronan Rose argue that for the feminist educator choosing a pedagogy is in and of itself a political act (1999, p. 2). However, the politics of teaching does not stop with the professor's choice of classroom strategy. In 1982, Marilyn Boxer referred to women's studies as the "academic arm" of the women's movement (p. 678). Much in the same way, service-learning has become situated as both the experiential and civic arm of higher education. The term "feminist pedagogy" is both a philosophy of and a set of practices for "classroom-based teaching that is informed by feminist theory and grounded in the principles of feminism" (Crabtree, Sapp & Licona, 2009, p. 1). Intellectual influences on feminist pedagogy include both the liberatory pedagogies of Paulo Friere that emerged from the socialist movement and liberation theology movements in Latin America and the progressive education reform movement in the U.S. led by John Dewey in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Fisher, 2001). Friere illuminates "assumptions about power and consciousness raising, acknowledges the existence of oppression as well as the possibility of ending it, and foregrounds the desire for and primary goal of social transformation" (Crabtree, et. al, 2009, p. 3). From Dewey (1916),

often celebrated as the "father of service-learning," feminist scholars have borrowed an emphasis on experiential learning and a goal to teach toward social and civic responsibility – concepts that have also been declared the cornerstones of service-learning. Within the feminist classroom there has always been an expectation that a radical pedagogy would not only help students understand the complexities of gender oppression, but that a certain style of teaching that suppresses hegemonic educational practices could also mobilize students toward civic and social change. Feminist teacher Carolyn Shrewsbury suggests that the women's studies classroom can create a community of learners that is "empowered to act responsibly toward one another" and to apply that learning to social action (Shrewsbury, 1983).

Contemporary scholarship on the ways in which students experience this activist-oriented feminist pedagogy, specifically in the community-based classroom is very limited and sparse, and for understandable reasons: these classrooms are still very rare. As women's studies has become more institutionalized, many programs have lost that critical bridge to the discipline's activist roots. Community-based experiences have been marginalized to the borders of our academic programs -- to pass/nonpass practicum and internship opportunities that are highly individualized and lack connection between the volunteer services provided and the theory behind the work. Whereas women's studies was one of the first disciplines to call for service-learning opportunities in higher education (see NWSA and

FIPSE, *Women's Studies Service-Learning Handbook*, 1982), we have almost abandoned that part of our mission in order to legitimate our discipline as a rational, intellectual, and textually-based discourse. Women's studies has only recently returned to those service-learning goals and a long-term commitment to experiential learning as higher education has not only come to recognize and value the importance of community learning, but is also encouraging the institutionalization of a service-learning curriculum (Naples & Bojar, 2002).

Due to the recent re-emergence of academic feminist community-based experiences, there is little scholarship that specifically addresses the relatedness of feminist pedagogy and community-based learning. To date, there is only one published ethnography of the feminist classroom and it focuses entirely on traditional classroom settings (Maher & Tetreault, 1995). The feminist ethnographers who conducted that study noted the lack of community-based applications, and called for a "return to those earlier community ties because of their importance to theory building, the rendering of services to the community, and their potential for transforming the university" (Maher & Tetreault, 1995, p. 51). There are only two contemporary collections by feminist scholars, *Teaching Feminist Activism* (Naples & Bojar, 2002) and *The Practice of Change* (Balliet & Heffernan, 2000) that have begun to significantly shape a discourse situated somewhere

at the crossroads of feminist pedagogy and service-learning. Two of the essays offered in this work were previously published in these collections.

While the feminist pedagogy scholarship lacks applications to community-based learning, it does offer important, yet contested insights into many of the strategies and outcomes of liberatory teaching in women's studies. The current feminist pedagogical research provides a wide array of teaching techniques, case studies, as well as applications to other disciplines, the "hard" sciences, computer-assisted learning, distance learning, law, medicine, and the corporate sector. These studies suggest that there are innovative ways in which important elements of feminist course design can be "deliberately structured to embed feminist values" (Chick & Hassel, 2009, p. 197).

Contemporary feminists are now debating the usefulness and applications of strategies that have traditionally been an integral part of the feminist teacher's "classroom tools". Within the current scholarship on feminist pedagogy these classroom strategies usually fall under one of five tenets I have identified as being unique to the feminist classroom:

(1) Examining how knowledge is constructed
(2) Rethinking positionality and identity
(3) Renegotiating responsibility and authority
(4) Debunking current systems of gender, race, and class oppression
(5) Encouraging a social change agenda

Examining How Knowledge is Constructed

Feminist scholars suggest that feminist classrooms need to be sites where knowledge is co-constructed by a community of learners. Students need to question traditional sources of knowledge and be inquisitive and open to knowledges that have been devalued, silenced or entirely erased. Feminists have borrowed from Paulo Friere's liberation pedagogy that calls for "knowledge [that] emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (1970, p. 53). One of the most recent and innovative feminist analyses of how students construct knowledge was conducted by Elaine Norris in one of the few examples of feminist service-learning research. Norris' research with a group of service-learning students who worked with seniors to redefine the key concepts of feminist theory, unveils what she calls an "epistemological story" (2006, p. 80). Her students became to understand "truth" as it is socially constructed not only by age, but by class, gender, race, and geography. Her students and the seniors became interwoven in service as both "subjects and knowers" (Norris, 2006, p. 81). The feminist classroom acknowledges the "epistemological validity of personal experience," centers womens' experiences within the discourse, and "values personal, communal, and subjective ways of knowing as valid forms of inquiry and knowledge production" (Crabtree et. al., 2009, p. 4). Ann Oberhauser (2002) concluded in

her feminist case study of her community-based geography classroom that these same strategies for feminist teaching were a key component "to understanding and implementing the critical production and consumption of knowledge" (p. 22). Centering student voice in the classroom decenters authoritative knowledge and recognizes a polyphony of voices that share the power to "destabilize hegemonic representations of community" within the social world (McDowell, 1994).

Rethinking Positionality and Identity

When students begin to examine the narratives of oppression offered by their textbooks, they often search to identify with the real people whose lives become their homework. Feminist teacher and adult learning scholar, Elizabeth Tisdell, suggests that these students are continuously examining the "connection between who they are as individuals and the structural systems of privilege and oppression" that inform how they think, learn, and live (1998, p. 139). Students come to understand the intersectionality of their personal positionality within social structures. Tisdell argues that our feminist classrooms are filled with students who are just coming to understand that their "constantly shifting identities" are impacted by social structures that dismantle their values and beliefs, disrupt our everyday discourse, and therefore "increase their capacity for agency" (1998, p. 142). Our feminist classrooms are sites to "resist dominant notions about

identities" and to begin a journey to shift both power and powerlessness (Crabtree et. al., 2009, p. 5).

Renegotiating responsibility and authority

Feminist classrooms are often marked by their non-traditional use of space and deliberate attention to the learning environment. Their doors are shut to preserve confidentiality while a lively discussion is usually ensuing across a room of seats circled together like a fishbowl. The deconstruction of the lectern is symbolic of the importance of power in these classrooms being shared and the responsibility for learning moving from the individual to a community. The political act of sitting in a circle "visually and kinesthetically decentralizes authority" while it simultaneously makes a commitment to a communal configuration (Mayberry & Rees, 2009, p. 98). Feminist teachers argue that an authentic feminist pedagogy "produces a classroom environment of mutual respect where both teacher and students take active, responsible, and shared roles in the learning process" (Chick & Hassel, 2009, p. 196).   Mayberry and Rees also contend that the syllabus, an organizational tool that symbolizes teacher-imparted power, needs to be democratic and co-constructed with the students so that knowledge in the classroom is "(un)enclosed" (2009, p. 97).

These contemporary arguments about responsibility are grounded in Adrienne Rich's influential speech from 1977, "*Claiming an Education*," where she insisted that students, "demand to be taken seriously . . . assuming

[their] share of responsibility for what happens in classrooms. . . it means that the student sees herself engaged with her teachers in an active, ongoing struggle for a real education" (cited in Kesselman, 2002, p. 21). However, Rich also argued that students will not be able to share the responsibility for their learning unless their teachers are simultaneously "committed to the belief that women's minds and experiences are intrinsically valuable and indispensable to any civilization worthy of the name" (citied in Kesselman, 2002, p. 21). Carolyn Shrewsbury clarifies the role of the feminist teacher, suggesting "empowering pedagogy does not dissolve the authority or power of the instructor," but moves from "power as domination to power as creative energy" (1983, p. 11). These classrooms are marked by egalitarian, non-hierarchical and reflexive relationships between students and teacher that are defined by respect, collaboration, and empowerment (Friedman, 1985; Ludlow, 2004). In the feminist classroom, authority and power are often replaced with an "ethic of care" that is embodied in the concern teachers display for their students as both people and learners (Crabtree, et. al. 2009, p. 4).

Debunking current systems of gender, race, and class oppression

Students in feminist classrooms are asked to critically analyze systemic oppression and examine the ways in which oppression is manifested, sustained, and institutionalized. Berenice Fisher (2001), in *No Angel in the Classroom*, argues that consciousness-raising should form the

basis for uncovering gender injustices in the classroom. She suggests that consciousness-raising is a process that "assumes that problems flowing from women's oppression are serious political issues and that women are capable of understanding, addressing, and responding to those issues" (39). Her work helps us to understand how Carol Harrisch's (1978) maxim of the women's movement, "the personal is political" can play a significant role in helping students understand the interesectionality of systems of oppression as they are experienced both at an individual and societal level (see Fisher, 2001, p.41 for the Harrisch citation). In service-learning classrooms this understanding often emerges when students are asked to investigate the social injustices that have necessitated their service in the first place. While they may only meet one woman on welfare, one student labeled at-risk by a school district, or one homeless person at a soup kitchen, a feminist lens would ask them to situate that individual's personal experience within a systemic public and political discourse. We do not want our students to argue for the proliferation of soup kitchens in our future, we ask them to grapple with why our society currently needs soup kitchens and to theorize how we might go about dismantling the systems that create poverty.

Encouraging a social change agenda

Feminist teachers Bricker-Jenkins and Hooyman argue, "As consciousness-raising is at the core of feminist theory and method, it is an essential part of an evolving, often implicit, theory of social change which

underpins feminist practice" (1987, p. 39). When our classrooms take consciousness-raising as their first step toward understanding that the personal is political, we will inevitably end up on a pathway toward social change. It is a feminist imperative that students are asked not only to grapple with oppression, but to also learn how they may be part of a movement to dismantle it, transforming thought into action. Briskin and Coulter remind us: "Feminism recognizes education both as a site for struggle and as a tool for change making" (1992, p. 249). Classrooms that seize the potential to raise consciousness, but fail to "engage people to act collectively upon the world" are not taking the praxis component of feminist pedagogy seriously enough (Mayberry & Rees, 2009, p. 108).

Feminist teacher Sheila Ruth argues: "Today's young scholars must be encouraged to anchor their work in the world outside the classroom" (2001, p. xiii). Service-learning is one possibility for moving our students outside of the academy. If their epistemological anchor is tied to a feminist pedagogical journey it will help them pay attention to inclusiveness, power, voice, collaboration, and positionality, while they debunk, dismantle, and demystify systems of oppression and relearn, rethink, and revision their common humanity.

EDUCATED IN AGENCY

Feminist teacher Veda Wade (2007) argues, "feminist pedagogy challenges community service-learning to maintain a social justice focus" (p.

110). Her words remind us that the contemporary service-learning movement does not intentionally or adequately take seriously the tenets of feminist teaching. At best, service-learning courses now provide an evolving landscape to cultivate feminist pedagogical practices that hold the promise of transforming both student and community.

In this work I examine the effectiveness of applying feminist pedagogical principles to the service-learning environment and ask some of the following questions:

- How do students specifically respond to a variety of feminist strategies used in and outside of the classroom?

- How do students make meaning out of their community experiences? How do they speak about the unfolding of a new feminist and community consciousness?   In what ways do they talk about the new community connections they are making and their role in social change?

- How do these meanings differ: (1) for students who come into the classroom with diverse identities, ideological positions, and community connections and (2) between the different social and political contexts of the community work.

- How and why do faculty members teaching service-learning classes apply feminist pedagogical strategies?

- How are feminist principles applicable to the cultivation of community partnerships that provide the landscape for service-learning.

- What is the role of interdependence in the creation of community partnerships that lead to social change?

My research illuminates a process of student transformation I have defined as being "*educated in agency*" whereas students increase their capacity *for* agency while simultaneously serving *in* a non-profit, governmental, or educational agency. Because "learning is in and of itself a social phenomenon", necessarily "bound to a context and inseparable from the world", Harris argues that agency becomes a necessary part of the learning process (cited in McMillan, 2002, p.67). According to the educational psychologist, personal agency refers to "one's capability to originate and direct action for given purposes . . . It is influenced by the belief in one's effectiveness in performing specific tasks, which is called self-efficacy" (Zimmerman and Cleary 2006, p. 45). In my work, a sense of agency results when students interact with the community and realize their own self-efficacy, are empowered to "make a difference", and develop a set of competencies that ready them to become part of a universal "*we*" working toward social change. This student transformation is continually negotiated through a series of five different domains in each student's personal learning journey: (1) identity, (2) collective work, (3) feminist consciousness, (4) social

change, and (5) community connection. Simultaneously, community agencies, our partners in this journey, transform as a result of the students who have come to learn and serve under their stewardship.

This research sheds new light on a phenomenology of feminist service-learning within and beyond the higher education environment. The work rests on the premise, articulated best by Kathleen Gallagher: "Curriculum is not neutral. It begins from a particular point of view" (2000, p. 75). I begin with feminist theory and build an argument for a service-learning curriculum that has no choice but to adopt feminist pedagogical strategies if the authentic goal is social justice education and student transformation. This research helps us to understand not only how feminist education can move students toward community connections, but also cultivates new knowledge about how feminist education has the potential to move communities toward social change.

FROM STRUGGLES, VOICES RISE: A METHODOLOGICAL JOURNEY

The body of research presented here is a series of essays on *teaching toward agency* written over the course of my pedagogical and professional journey in the service-learning movement. The work is grounded in both qualitative and quantitative case studies of transformations taking place in our classrooms and within communities. Each essay examines the effect of a paradigm shift in either the way we teach or in the way we partner on our

ability to effectively transform students and communities in chorus. The voices of students, faculty, pioneers, administrators, and community partners articulate the common and uncommon struggles of teaching a new generation of students to learn and serve *in agencies* while simultaneously recognizing their own capacity *for agency*.

Feminist methodologist Dorothy Smith suggests that our research should make the "everyday world our problematic" and instructs us to examine the "inner organization" that generates the ordinary features of our world (1987, p. 99). When Kathleen Gallagher turned Smith's methodological lens on her own drama class in "The Everyday Classroom as Problematic," she concluded that a feminist frame for analyzing curricular change can expose the "inner organization of a classroom" (2000, p. 73). Gallagher's ethnography calls for an alternative way to think about curriculum that is careful to not deny the student's interaction with curricular design and demands that the researcher situates oneself "vis-à-vis the subjects of analysis" (2000, p. 78). My own ethnographic research on the impact of feminist pedagogical strategies on student transformation began in 1992 when I studied the application of feminist pedagogy to a computer-assisted classroom where I served as a teaching assistant (Hesse-Biber & Gilbert, 1994). In that work, we analyzed student perceptions of their own learning after they had been introduced to computer-assisted data analysis in a Women and Work course grounded in feminist pedagogical principles. Our

research highlighted the intersectionality of pedagogy and student voice and placed both professor and student within the frame of analysis.   The application of a feminist case study approach for that study focused my methodological lens on the importance of the positionality of teacher and student as well as the necessity of both quantitative methods and phenomenological approaches to understanding the meaning students make out of their lived learning experiences.

My current research takes the form of multi-methodological case studies of service-learning classrooms and service-learning partnerships. Table One illustrates the scope and depth of this work, situating each chapter in the anthology by site, methodologies applied, and constituencies participating.   Each methodological choice is grounded in the framing of a series of research questions posed during both my pedagogical journey and my work as an evaluation consultant for service-learning programs across the nation.

The entire work is strongly situated in ethnographic methods and grounded theory (Charmaz, 2005; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).   Collectively, I have used qualitative narrative analysis strategies to develop theoretical concepts from over 1300 student journal entries, 40 interview transcripts, 20 progress reports, six focus group transcripts, and qualitative responses by over 250 students on a service-learning survey (see Appendices A-J for methodological instruments used in this research).   Narrative analysis

Table 1. Overview of Case Studies by Site, Constituency, and Methods

CASE STUDY	Location/Type of Institution	Methods	Constituencies
CH 2: Women & Work Course	East coast/mid-sized suburban private college	• Ethnography of one course • Narrative analysis of journal entries • Participant observation	24 Students 1 Faculty member
CH 3: Politics of Women's Health Course	Pacific Northwest/ Large public urban institution	• Ethnography of one course • Narrative analysis of journal entries • Participant observation	25 Students 1 Faculty member 2 Student mentors
CH 4: Feminist Service-Learning Capstone Courses	Pacific Northwest/ Large public urban institution	• Ethnography of ten courses • Narrative analysis of 1300 journal entries • Participant observation • Narrative analysis of teaching journal and other artifacts	120 Students 1 Faculty member 16 Student mentors
CH 5: Service-Learning Faculty	Midwest/ large and small public and private institutions in urban, rural, and suburban settings	• Surveys (37 faculty) • Telephone Interviews • Focus groups (18 faculty)	55 faculty members
CH 6: In Other Words Feminist Bookstore	Pacific Northwest/ Large public urban institution & a community bookstore	• Email correspondence • Narrative analysis of journal entries	1 Faculty member 1 Community partner 120 students
CH 7: Great Cities ~ Great Service Consortium	Midwest/18 large and small private and public institutions	• Narrative analysis of progress reports • Narrative analysis of email correspondence • Surveys	18 Faculty members 18 Community Partners

uncovered patterns in the ways in which students, faculty members, and community partners perceived their roles in service-learning and made sense of their participation. I used extensive memoing throughout this research to document emergent theories on student and community transformation (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). I also developed grounded theory to explain the impact of feminist pedagogical principles on service-learning through cycles of in-vivo, open, and focused coding of narrative to confirm and disconfirm emerging themes (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Overall, this research includes the voices of 169 service-learning students, 73 faculty members, and 19 community partners. The case studies represent 35 institutions of higher education and over 40 different community agencies engaged in service-learning projects.

The service-learning programs explored in this research took a variety of forms, indicative of the myriad ways faculty members incorporate service into their classrooms. Some of the projects ask students to apply specific methodological skills from their disciplines to solve real social, economic, educational, or health problems in their communities. Other courses situate students in teaching, mentoring, nursing, or assisting roles where they form one-on-one relationships with youth, elders, mothers on welfare, patients with AIDS, teenage mothers, or other disenfranchised community members. Courses use models that range from individual service-placements for students in multiple agencies to collaborative learning teams who work

collectively on different aspects of a project for one agency. The projects vary

considerably by type of community partner, service project, hours of student

service, training provided, and reflection techniques applied.   However, each

project in this research fits into one of six types of service-learning clearly

defined by Kerrissa Heffernan (2001) in her study of syllabi collected by

Campus Compact, the most influential service-learning association in higher

education. The six forms of service-learning are: (1) "pure" service-learning,

(2) discipline-based, (3) problem-based, (4) capstone courses, (5), service

internships, and (6) community-based action research. While there are

several examples in this research of each form, my work does not draw on the

differences between these forms. For the purpose of analysis, all models are

grouped together as distinct in that they meet the definition of a *"service-*

learning course," clearly differentiating them from courses taught using more

traditional teaching methods. Each course falls within the following

definition of service-learning, offered by Eyler and Giles in 1999:

> Service-learning includes a balance between service to the community
> and academic learning and the hyphen in the phrase symbolizes the
> central role of *reflection* in the process of learning through community
> experience (4).

While definitions of service-learning vary considerably in the field, I believe

that Eyler and Giles' emphasis on both balance and reflection make this

definition most indicative of the essential elements of courses designed for

both student and community transformation. This definition is also applied

to the research on faculty roles and community partnerships that appears in this collection.

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

This research is offered as an edited collection of essays, written over the past ten years, but punctuated here with new prefaces that situate the writing within temporal and theoretical frames. The essays narrate feminist pedagogy in action, thick with detail, portraits, anecdotes, and description, but equally generative of theory. The findings of this research are presented largely through the voices of the participants themselves, disrupted and elucidated by my own voice as both teacher and researcher to engender immediacy and strengthen the credibility of the research act (Holliday, 2002).

The work begins with students who are positioned at the intersection of feminist thought and pedagogical transformation. In the first three essays we listen to the student voices that emerge within a series of courses where the traditional landscape of learning has shifted dramatically to encourage students to rethink their roles as learners and community members.

The next essay in the collection illuminates faculty perspectives on the power of service-learning pedagogy. Service-learning faculty across the globe are creating distinctive classrooms where students are instructed in the public arts of community building, social responsibility, and civic engagement. Faculty members are building on their familiarity with traditional pedagogy, but are taking up the call to transform the ways in

which we teach in modern higher education. This essay illuminates the critical choices faculty members make as they renegotiate their classrooms to embrace specific feminist pedagogical frameworks.

The next series of essays in this work turn to the voices of community members who have participated in the service-learning movement. Community organizer and scholar Randy Stoecker argues that community members are often the "unheard voices" in the service-learning movement (Stoecker, 2009). He demands that we begin to listen more carefully to the needs of our partners in this work and bring to the center their voices and their own capacities for social change (Stoecker, 2009). In the two essays in this section, I examine important principles of community partnerships as they have been both applied and forgotten in the process of developing service-learning programs.

The pedagogical journey that unfolds in this work moves tenuously between classrooms and communities.   The voices of urban youth, single mothers, school-teachers, non-profit administrators, faculty members, and adventurous students who have opened up doors to their own efficacy speak throughout the narrative. This collection of essays takes us well within what one faculty member calls a "circle of learning". This circle begins with a student in a classroom, moves her in and out of a community, and returns her in a matter of time to the classroom again, having been both negotiated by experience and *educated in agency*.   This journey examines the translation of

feminist pedagogy to the service-learning experience and argues that our

communities now demand a paradigm shift in the ways in which we

reimagine teaching, learning, and serving in the academy.

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CHAPTER TWO
Preface

Chapter two, "*Transforming the Classroom*" asks us to consider how we can use experiential role-playing in our classrooms to help students unmask subtle sexisms and heighten their own awareness of the roles they play in "creating, maintaining, and reproducing sexism." Drawn from an ethnography of three of my own Women and Work courses, I examine how classroom space can be disrupted, student identities can be examined, and differences between women can be renegotiated. This essay takes us into three different classrooms that have been transformed into a SuperMom Contest on a television game show, the kitchen of a middle-class white woman where she is in conversation with her black domestic worker, and a slumber party where girls clad in pajamas chat about the culture of romance. The ethnography for this essay was also informed by a qualitative analysis of sixty reflection papers written by students in these classes. This study was my methodological "first step" toward a series of classroom ethnographies that would come to form the basis of my theoretical work on the service-learning movement. When it was published in 1997 it was one of only a handful of articles that articulated and tested specific pedagogical strategies and their effects on student identity, learning, and awareness.

Transforming the Classroom
Teaching Subtle Sexism Through Experiential Role-Playing

When I walked into my classroom last Spring, a group of five women in their pajamas was sitting on the floor in a circle listening to an Indigo Girls song while eating popcorn, red licorice ropes, and pretzels. One of my students handed me a soft drink and a flyer printed in big, bold print: "You are invited to a slumber party." This was a scene from a student group presentation in my gender roles course where the traditional classroom was transformed into a women's dorm room for the purpose of teaching about the subtle forms of sexism that limit women's educational aspirations.

Teaching about sexism has always been the world of the feminist teacher. Since the early 1970s, we have been using feminist pedagogy in our courses to educate our students about the subordination of women by creating student-centered, nonhierarchical, and cooperative classroom communities (Shackelford, 1992). But unmasking even the blatant forms of sexism in our classrooms has been a difficult challenge given that many of our students are convinced that "sex discrimination is no longer a problem" (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995, p.3). To teach about the more subtle types of sexism that are less visible and more informal, we need new and innovative teaching strategies that demystify sexist practices and heighten our students' awareness of both the roles they and others play in creating, maintaining, and reproducing sexism.

In my courses, students were responsible for teaching others about sexism by forming small collaborative learning groups and organizing their own student presentations. Through experiential role-playing, they came to know themselves as objects of sexism and began to understand how others experience sexism in myriad ways. The three following examples of student presentations from both a gender roles course and a women and work course illustrate how my students and I have transformed the landscape of the traditional classroom, making it a space where all of us can begin the process of exposing the subtle sexisms of our everyday lives. From a Supermom Contest, a Slumber Party, and Kitchen Talk, we see how students examined the self through role-playing and began to understand the diversity of women's everyday experiences with sexism. Throughout this chapter, I have incorporated the voices of students who have stepped out of their roles to write reflections on their teaching experiences.

SHARING THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEARNING

During the second week of my courses, students read three articles that address the issue of student responsibility in the learning process: Adrienne Rich's (1977/1995, 1985) "Claiming an Education" and "Taking Women Seriously" and Jane Kenway and Helen Modra's (1992) "Feminist Pedagogy and Emancipator Possibilities." Together we discussed the

importance of negotiating authority in the classroom and sharing the responsibility for learning.

At first, students were usually apprehensive about their own abilities to teach the material. They resisted, arguing that they barely had a grasp on the scholarship to being with and needed me to guide and interpret it for them. When Rich (1977/1995) suggested that "responsibility to yourself means refusing to let others do your thinking, talking, and naming for you" (p.17), the students responded that they though that learning from "experts" was what going to college was all about.

The first step in giving away some of our power and authority as teachers (Shackelford, 1992; Thorne, 1989) includes emphasizing that students can learn from one another, rather than just passively receiving "teacher-imparted truths," and allowing students to shape the "rules of talk" in the classroom. Early in the semester, encouraging dialogue between students about their personal experiences was an important way to convince students that they are capable of teaching one another. Engaging students in dynamic interactive dialogue about their personal campus experiences of sexism (e.g., tokenism in science classes, the silencing of women in political debates, the double standards of dating rituals, and advising students to downscale their academic choices) helped them to recognize that they are "both (and often simultaneously) subject and object of knowledge generated and transmitted" (Klein, 1995, p.38). Students began to recognize the

inequities of their own experiences within the educational system, compared them to each other's experiences, and came to see the centrality of their collective insights in relation to the scholarship (Brunner, 1992; Kenway & Modra, 1992; Rutenberg, 1983/1995). When students are encouraged to grasp their autonomy and independence in the learning process and to see both the teacher and the other students as actors who are negotiating the process of decoding sexisms, the classroom becomes a space where most participants feel present, respected, and ready to speak (Hesse-Biber & Gilbert, 1994; Thorne, 1989).

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING: THE GROUP PROCESS

"The peer interaction was very positive. We became friends. We cried together," said one student of the group process. Once students felt comfortable with one another and began to respect each other's knowledge and positions, they began working on their group presentations. I encouraged students to start where they were in their own lives and to choose a topic from the syllabus that they felt personally interested in and wanted to explore. Based on their interests, students formed collaborative learning groups. Each group was assigned an ethnography that they worked with as the basis of their presentation. They met their group for the first time in class early in the semester to exchange phone numbers and decided on meeting times outside of class.

Because students had already come to recognize the importance of learning from one another, they often began the group work by "getting to know each other": "Our first meeting was marked by a lot of social interaction outside of the project. We learned each other's names, where we were from, and some other personal aspects of each other." Students often went on their own field trips. For example, a group of students studying sex work met on a Friday night and visited a strip club. Another group working on discrimination in women's sports went to several women's basketball games, took a tour of the locker rooms, and talked to the women athletes. These experiences gave the students the opportunity to socialize with one another outside of the classroom and to "work and become more intimate with people in the course."

Part of the assignment for the group presentation was to decide how they wanted the other members of the class to participate. Although I provided a bibliography for the group, it was up to them to choose readings for the class that directly pertained to their presentations. They could also select outside readings that they felt were important (e.g., reviews of the books, related research, and studies that contradict the findings of the author). The groups prepared discussion questions in advance and assigned homework for their classmates. Often, part of the homework was to write a personal reflection on an experience that related to a concept from the text or to discuss an issue from the readings with a friend or a partner at home. The

students usually demanded a great deal from their classmates; they often started their presentations with such hopeful remarks as, "We assume you have done the readings and have thought about the questions for discussion."

Students were also asked to address the biases of the research. This process often led the group to try to broaden the scope of the study they were presenting. For example, some students interviewed women of color who were ignored by the author's original sample. Others interviewed students on their own campus to provide a sample of experiences for their age group. One student described how much she learned from doing additional research with her roommates on the effects of media stereotyping in television programs from the late 1970s: "We sat around discussing programs we watched as children and the group benefited from the input of my roommates and my friends. Their experiences gave us more current data to discuss with the class." In other instances, students' own interactions with their group provided concrete examples of the topic they were teaching. In this example, one student reflected on her group's communication prior to teaching Deborah Tannen's (1990) *You Just Don't Understand:*

> There was an equal number of each sex in the group….Our topic dealt with the inability of men and women to communicate with each other clearly….At times I found myself thinking whether or not I was communicating my point clearly to Bill and Rob and wondering where Jill and I tended to agree on many things….I believe that all of us have a better understanding of why people miscommunication and how each sex can communicate better with each other because we have read the book and we also experienced it.

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On the day of their group projects, students presented their own findings along with those of the author. They brought in videotaped interviews and charts summarizing the responses from student surveys.

Providing collaborative experiences for students in our courses helps to eliminate more competitive notions of learning. It also provides a sense of community characterized by mutual respect, collective inquiry, trust, and caring (Ayers-Nachamkin, 1992; Billson, 1986; Fisher, 1987; Rosser, 1989; Schniedewind, 1983; Thompson & Disch, 1992). Collaborative learning creates a comfortable classroom that enhances the personal relationships between students (Ruth, 1995). As one student noted, "This was an excellent way to not only engage in the material, but to engage with the class as a whole. I was much more comfortable with the class after the first presentation."

THE SUPERMOM CONTEST:

TRANSFORMING THE CLASSROOM LANDSCAPE

Scene One

On the doors to the room there are bright yellow signs that announce a supermom contest. A woman in a dark navy suit, her hair tied up in a

bun, is waving a microphone and hands out ballots to each person as they enter. In the center of the room are three stations: (1) a laundry station covered with towels, laundry baskets, and jugs of detergent; (2) a window washing station with paper towels and window cleaners; and (3) a nursery station with teddy bears, children's books, and diapers. Around the periphery of the room, chairs are arranged like a television audience where students are encouraged to take a seat and review their ballots. After an introduction by the contest hostess, the contestants enter and are introduced one by one. First, we meet Nancy Holt, a small women dressed in slacks and a blazer, a social worker and mother. We are told that she has an egalitarian gender ideology and that her life with her husband, Evan, is unusually happy expect for her son Joey's "problem." Next we are introduced to Nina Tanagawa, who came directly to the contest from her position in a personnel office. She is dressed in a white skirt and a jacket and we are told that both she and her husband are "transitionals." The final contestant is Carmen Delacorte, a spirited woman who walks into the room pregnant and full of sarcasm. She tells us she wanted to be a "milk and cookies mom," but had to take up some day care work, leaving her grateful for whatever her husband Frank does around the house. As the contest unfolds, the women engage in short humorous competitions, racing to fold clothes, to wash windows, and to read to

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their children. In between each contest they are interviewed by the show's hostess and the audience members about gender ideologies, family myths, their personal second shift, and their relationships with their husbands. The audience takes breaks to watch prerecorded commercials about the joys of housework on a monitor in front of the room. As the contest comes to a close, the audience is asked to rank each woman on her ability to be a supermom. The audience comes to the consensus that there is no winner.

The student presentation above was based on Arlie Hochschild's (1989) *The Second Shift*, an ethnography grounded in interviews with families and observations of mothers, husbands, and children interacting with one another. In these families, women performed a second shift of housework and childcare in addition to the work they did outside of the home. The students chose to transform the class into a contest to address the supermom strategies that Hochschild argues lead working mothers to do all the work at home. Hochschild suggests that the supermom image appealed to many women because it offered a "cultural cover-up" to accompany the family myths that couples construct to cope with family conflict. The supermom image is a form of "liberated sexism," a type of subtle sexism where society "appears to be treating women and men equally but that, in practice,

increases men's freedom while placing greater burdens on women"
(Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995, p.103).

Turning the classroom into a television contest worked in a number of important ways to teach about liberated sexism. The contest format transformed the physical space of the classroom by placing the lives of the women from the book at center stage and the teacher and the other students at the periphery. Gray (1989) suggests that we should take down the lecterns in the front of the classroom and regroup the isolated desks. Such chances dispel the notions that the teacher is the dispenser of knowledge and that education is a solitary, isolated experience. In our newly designed gender roles classroom, the central location of women's work and family lives drew attention to the legitimacy and importance of women's everyday problems and the knowledge women gain from personal experience.

The students also moved the action around the room, making each work station into a space where women competed with one another. The competitive, isolated nature of the women struggling to win mirrored the individual approaches the women in Hochschild's study used to cover-up or resolve family issues. For example, as Carmen was folding her towels in the contest she acted like she became ill, dragging an unsuspecting male from the class up to center stage to play her husband Frank. The student created this scene to illustrate that many women use illness to get help around the house while maintaining the myth of traditional separate spheres for husband and

wife. The student playing Nancy provided another explanation for the division of household labor in her home. After she finished cleaning the classroom windows, the contest hostess asked her if her husband ever did chores like window-cleaning around the house. Nancy responded, "Sure he does, but only if you mean the windows in the basement or the car windows. You see, I do the upstairs, Evan does the downstairs, the garage, the car, and the dog." This student's scene illustrated how the Holts created a family myth that appeared to divide the chores equally between them, whereas in reality they left Nancy with the majority of work. By struggling alone in front of the class to outdo one another and by pretending that things are equitable at home, the students effectively acted out the tensions women face everyday to be supermoms who can handle it all.

Regrouping the other students into a studio audience created a collective space where students were expected not only to listen to the experiences of the women, but to rank them on their ability to live up to the cultural expectations of being a supermom. Students were asked to judge a woman on her individual ability to fulfill both her traditional role as mother and her modern role as careerwoman. For example, could she balance her work and family responsibilities effectively? Did she keep her boss, her husband, and her children happy?

Scene Two

When none of the women are chosen as the contest winner, the presenters turn to the audience and ask them what societal institutions can do to support the new roles women are taking on. A discussion of day care initiatives, family leave policies, job sharing, and gender role socialization follows. Students describe growing up with parents who struggled with the same issues. A presenter steps out of her role and discusses how it felt to "play" a traditional pregnant woman with career and family aspirations very different from her own.

In the Superwoman contest example, the physical boundaries of the classroom became fluid and dynamic. Once the classroom space was disrupted, students felt free to continue to jump in and out of the spaces they occupied. Students who described their experiences at home moved from the periphery of the room to the center of the discussion. Presenters shed their roles and took seats in the audience. They commented on the life of the character they played and critiqued the lack of societal solutions to the second shift.

Transforming the classroom into an alternative space that reflects a landscape where sexism is lived and reproduced served other important purposes as well. It provided students with the opportunity to leave college

behind by stepping out of their everyday lives and moving thought other institutional settings that they may or may not have experienced before. One student wrote: "While participating…I almost forgot that I was in a classroom, watching people role-playing. It was realistic and it really touched me. It was just like being there. It brought the material to life, into my life." Changing the classroom setting also shifted the role of the instructor. I have shown up in class not only to find myself casting a ballot for the best supermom but also to be asked to play a jury member in a courtroom, a customer in a diner, a potential employee at a stewardess training workshop, a working-class cannery operative at a union meeting, and a victim of date rape at a support group counseling session.

THE SLUMBER PARTY: RENEGOTIATING THE SELF

Scene One

Students dressed in pajamas, sweats, and bunny slippers are sitting on the classroom floor in a circle. They are listening to music, snacking on pretzels and soda, and talking endlessly. Around them is another circle of students listening intently to the discussion among the five women. Those of us in the outer circle are reading the Slumber Party flyer we were handed as we walked in the door: "Five middle class junior and

senior females get together for an overnight of food and fun. While this gives them a chance to get away from the guys, they'll learn more about one another and what each is up to as S.U." we listen as Andie, an accounting major, tells her roommates that she has to do "everything possible" to get good internships. This includes sleeping with guys on campus to learn about internship opportunities. Jessica, an Art History major, hugs Andie and says she knows how she feels. Jessica reveals that she does everything to please her football player boyfriend because "her status at school depends on him." She does his laundry, types his papers, and goes to all his home games. Christy jumps up out of the circle and says that she just can't keep her secret any longer! She shows everybody the diamond ring on her finger. When Andie asks her if she is still going to graduate, Christy explains that she and her boyfriend decided it would be best if she did, but she changed her major from English to education to accommodate the "big family plan" that she and Ron have made. Kathy mutters that she "doesn't want to hear any more of this garbage." Andie glares at her and says, "Well, you dated the Big Man on Campus. Whatever happened to the two of you, anyways?" Kathy reveals to the group that she fell in love with a woman on campus. Since then, her new lesbian lifestyle has forced her to be much quieter and reserved. But, she remarks, "The two of us are much more serious about school – I'm back

in the pre-med program again." Melinda gives Kathy a hug and says

how proud she is of Kathy. Melinda isn't looking for a serious

relationship on campus. She doesn't have time for romance. She tells

everyone she has a boyfriend at another school. It helps her

concentrate on her biology degree without having to constantly answer

to the "culture of romance."

The five students in this inner circle were playing out dialogue from

Holland and Eisenhart's (1990) *Education in Romance.* These group members

chose to blend their own college experiences with those of the women from

the ethnography. Their objective was to teach the class about the culture of

romance that exists at the university level. This culture, according to Holland

and Eisenhart (1990), reproduces "traditional gender roles and a system of

male privilege" (p.5).

The women in Holland and Eisenhart's study downscaled their

academic aspirations because of multiple forms of subtle sexism: a peer-

imposed system of gender reactions where sexual attractiveness mattered

most, a sexual auction block on campus that ranked women's status by their

attractiveness (symbolic capital), and peer-enforced ranking that reflected the

degree of physical intimacy between dating partners. This culture of romance

represents a dangerous form of subtle sexism that Benokraitis and Feagin

(1995) describe as "supportive discouragement" where "women receive mixed messages about their abilities, intelligence, or accomplishments" (p.86).

The students chose to replicate an intimate setting where they could openly discuss these mixed messages. According to Benokraitis and Feagin, many women are often discouraged from pursuing their academic objectives because they are believed to be less serious about their education than men ("She's only in college to find a husband"). As a result, advisers, mentors, and peers often accept and even encourage women who lower their academic ambitions. The students in this group were able to illustrate effectively the contradictory messages that both the women in the ethnography and they themselves were receiving about their schooling. During the presentation, each of the presenters and many others in the classroom reevaluated each woman's personal position about her educational goals. Many of the students also reexamined their own academic aspirations and began a process of renegotiating the self.

Gerda Lerner (1995) suggests that we all live on a stage where we act out our assigned roles. Feminists, she argues, are now consciously pointing to that stage, its sets, its props, its director, and its scriptwriter. Lerner challenges all of us to tear down the stage and reconstruct the roles we play. By role-playing in the classroom, students did just that, and they began to see their own parts in the play more clearly. As one student noted:

> It was very easy to role-play because it was my life. We are in the midst of being educated in romance, but it was difficult emotionally to see your life fit so easily into a role—so clearly to be a product of constraints based on gender.

Role-playing was a form of self-examination where students were raising their own level of consciousness and heightening their awareness of "the feelings, behaviors, and experiences surrounding sex roles" (Ruth, 1995, p.14).

By integrating the self into the roles they played, the students perceived how their personal experiences fit within an academic framework. The students went through an identification process where they recognized their own feelings of oppression and learned to trust the knowledge that emerged from personal experiences (Rutenberg, 1983/1995). Students described the role-playing as helping them voice their own feelings about their everyday experiences:

> The experience was amazing. I feel as if it had a lot of therapeutic value for me. The presentation helped me to vocalize a lot of my feelings by role-playing. I made Elaine's feelings my own and found out that it was all right to have a spectrum of emotions about my life.

> My character reflected my views to some extent, mainly that she was doing the same things I am—getting married and majoring in education. We are both going though the same stuff. I spoke for both of us.

And it helped students to see that they were not alone in their experience of being the object of sexism:

> I felt comfortable with the character I role-played because she was not that far from who I am….I grew up watching sexist television shows and listening to sexism in music all my life. The reality is that I had no idea how stereotypical and oppressive the media is toward women, toward me.

By making the consequences of sexism explicit in the classroom, students also began to internalize the importance of change. They inevitably began to tear down the stage: "All of us learned how close to the characters we were and the consequences of our decisions." They parted the process of change by first finding support for their views in their groups and in the class as a whole. One student noted, "I absolutely loved interacting with the members of my group as characters. I feel we all supported each other. "Out of a new comfort with each other came an ability to name the dimensions of sexism that they can change:

> The group dynamic worked so well for several reasons. One, we are so different. Two, we chose to play roles similar to our own experiences. Three, we were all comfortable with each other. This comfort allowed some real emotions to surface about what some of our real regrets are and our justifications about our decisions for our own lives. We helped each other think of new directions for our lives. The class did that, too. We are going to demand more from life now, I think.

Scene Two

After the women discuss their own college experiences through the lives of their characters, they take a break to dance the twist (a

slumber party favorite) with their classmates. Then they take a seat on

the floor in the wider circle, step out of character, and ask their peers

to talk about their own experiences on campus. After numerous women

share their stories about friends bugging them to go out instead of

studying, doing their boyfriend's laundry, and skipping classes to go

shop for clothes, the discussion turns to ways to counteract the culture

of romance on their own campus.

Rich (1977/1995) reminds students that the "contract on the student's

part involves that you demand to be taken seriously so that you can go on

taking yourself seriously" (p.17). When the students in this class decided that

they had to demand an education and refuse to take their position on the

sexual auction block on campus, they rejected the attitudes Rich names as

"take it easy," "way be so serious," and "why-worry-you'll-probably-get-

married-anyway." Through self-examination the students renegotiated a self

that was going to "get the education I came to college to get."

KITCHEN TALK: RENEGOTIATING DIFFERENCE AMONG WOMEN

Scene One

We find ourselves in the kitchen of an upper-middle-class white

woman who is giving her black domestic worker a paper bag full of

used clothing and a pair of worn-out shoes. The maid graciously take

the hand-me-downs from her mistress, looks down to the floor with deference and says quietly, "Thank you Ma'am." The domestic is dressed in an old brown skirt, a sweatshirt, an apron, and a kerchief tied around her hair. As she polishes an old pair of shoes she found in the bag, she turns to all of us in the classroom and says, in an aside, "My mother always said that no matter what they give you, you take it because one day they're going to give you something worth having. Usually, I just thank her like I just did, then I walk out of her, go around the corner and the first trash can I get to, I throw it in there. You have to take it. It's part of the job, makes them feel like they're being so kind to you. You have to appear grateful. That makes them feel good, too." A voice from an offstage observer describes the scene we have just witnessed. The observer is a student playing Judith Rollins, the sociologist who wrote the book from which this dialogue comes. The character Judith tells the audience that the domestic is putting up with the materialism of her mistress, even though she recognized that the one-way gift exchange reinforces the inequality of the relationship. In scene after scene, we witness interactions between the domestic and the mistress. We also continue to hear from Judith, who provides the sociological explanations for the experiences of both the white mistress and the black domestic.

In *Between Women: Domestics and Their Employers*, Judith Rollins (1985) examines the dehumanization of black women within the domestic mistress relationship. The students in this presentation vividly depicted their subtle, negative, and controlling images of black women that reinforce their subordinate role in our society. Patricia Collins (1990) argues that these "controlling images are designed to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life" (p.68). as a form of subtle sexism and racism, this "subjective objectification" of black women includes being categorized as nonpersons, classified by their ascribed characteristics, "devalued as an individual, seen as decoration, or depersonalized as a sexual acquisition" (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995, p.99). In this presentation, by enacting their character's standpoint, students challenged their own understanding of other women's situations.

Barrie Thorne (1989) suggests providing learning experiences for students so they can "discover that one's own experience is not the measure of all things…come to see white, middle-class, male, and heterosexual assumptions as limited and not the universal, and…explore the experience of other groups" (p.316). One part of this learning process is the initial discovery by students that they are experiencing their education through the lenses of their race, class, or gender (Annas & Maher, 1992). One student noted the importance of switching our positions in the classroom: "Role-playing forced all of us to look at our topic thought the eyes of other people"

Students came to realize that the generic woman actually "obscures the heterogeneity of women" (Ruth, 1995, p.3). They had to figure out not only where they fit in this heterogeneous category of woman, but they also went a step further by trying to understand the situations of women who fit in differently than they do: "I felt this role-playing experience was a positive one. In playing a transitional woman, I felt that I could thoroughly understand her position, once I actually had to be her. OK, well, almost." Whereas role-playing did heighten an awareness of the self, it also seemed to raise student consciousness about the roles others play on a daily basis. Students used their imaginations: "I put myself in other people's situations. I tried to imagine myself being in the shoes of these women. Sometimes I liked my situation. Other times I hated it." Another student wrote: "playing the role of a pregnant woman was interesting. It felt strange, too, because I can't imagine being (a) pregnant or (b) a woman who wants to stay home. At least I didn't think I could imagine it until I actually tried to."

To make sense of the realities of other women and to see the effects of the controlling stereotypes that function in many women's lives, students had to become engaged in discussions of difference. Sometimes these discussions were very painful. Students felt guilty for participating in a system that oppresses others. Other times they discovered that their own privileged position had protected them from sexism that others have encountered:

Role-playing allowed us to truly evaluate and understand the profound pain that victims of racism go through. It was a very painful experience trying to be someone else, especially because I felt at times somewhat guilty because I couldn't possibly completely understand the experience.

Getting into her role was quite emotional for me. It was one thing for me to just read about what she went through, but after practicing and practicing her role, I was physically drained because it was so traumatic just thinking about all she went through and surviving….We all realized how lucky we were that it was *just a role* for us.

We need to work closely with students during this process to help them understand their feelings about difference. We can do this by helping them create a comfortable classroom where everyone's voice is valid and legitimate. Most of the time my students tried to create safe spaces for emotional talk themselves, but sometimes there were risks involved in taking center stage in the classroom.

STUDENT-IDENTIFIED RISKS IN ROLE-PLAYING

"This kind of presentation is not for everyone"

For some students, speaking in front of a classroom was a challenging assignment. One student wrote, "I have a difficult time speaking in front of people so I found the experience unnerving, but fun." Although students are often asked to present material in their courses, the presentations are often factual, such as a review of the literature or a summary of readings. My students indicated that having to put themselves "out there" in front of

others in the context of emotional, painful, and controversial ideas was sometimes very risky.

Thorne (1989) suggests that students may fear the judgments of others and use their own silence as a way to avoid taking risks in the classroom. My students were no exception. They were apprehensive about playing parts similar to themselves because they thought their own voices would be recognized. A group of women athletes who played the roles of college athletes from Bissinger's (1990) *Friday Night Lights* noted, "It was risky because everyone knew we weren't just playing parts….It was exactly how we felt and maybe they disagreed with us."

Other students who played a role entirely different from their own were afraid of losing their own identity: "I did feel some discomfort in my role. Not that I was uncomfortable with the thought of playing a lesbian, but I felt labeled. I tried to imagine myself as a lesbian and how people would treat and react to me. What I imagined—it scared me." Another student was very upset with a classroom debate: "I felt uncomfortable being in front of the class getting yelled at….People didn't seem to realize that we were just role-playing and attacked us. Now I think before I speak." Other students not only hesitated before saying anything to the class but were silent: "I felt that I might offend someone. I was intimidated and felt it was difficult to share my opinion for fear of offending."

COMING TO GRIPS WITH SUBTLE SEXISM

Ellsworth (1992) argues that we "need to come to grips with issues of trust, risk, and the operations of fear and desire around issues of identity and politics in the classroom" (p.105). Bringing our students together in small collaborative groups where they are able to create more comfortable relationships with their classmates is an important first step in this process of coming to grips with controversial issues. Teaching our students that they can be the teachers of their own personal knowledge and the scholarship of others is another important characteristic of the learning process. By changing the classroom landscape and providing spaces for open and reflective dialogue, we can begin to explore our students' understanding of the subtle-ties of sexism that exist in our society. My students recognized the value of bringing their knowledge to their peers:

> We were worried that when we gave the presentation we wouldn't be able to go through with it, but we managed because we knew how important it was to get this information out to our fellow students who would greatly benefit from it.

Although the fear, guilt, and discomfort that accompanies role-playing in the classroom can be a negative experience for some students, it can also enhance the process of knowing ourselves better and understanding others' positions in society. Activist and scholar Robin Morgan suggests that any kind of change that involves bringing together people with different experiences and positions "involves respect, courtesy, risk, curiosity, and patience. It means doing one's homework in advance, being willing to be vulnerable, and

attentively listening to one another" (cited in Ruth, 1995, p.4). Students need
more of this kind of homework in our classrooms to unmask sexist myths and
uncover new strategies for change.

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CHAPTER THREE

Preface

Moving from experiential role-playing *in* the classroom to creating community partnerships that would allow my students to apply their academic skills *outside* of the classroom was a giant leap from my feminist training to the emerging discourse in the service-learning movement. I relied heavily on feminist practitioners who understood the intersection of activism and academia to guide my pedagogical decisions and my ethnographic research.

Chapter Three, "*Letting Knowledge Serve the City*," is an ethnography of a service-learning course that examines the effects of feminist pedagogical practices on student learning. This essay offers an analysis of the use of reflective journals, an examination of collaborative learning groups, and an articulation of the importance of building effective community relationships. In this unique "Politics of Motherhood" course students conducted, analyzed, and summarized in-depth interviews with local policy-makers at the request of a local non-profit agency that served new mothers living below the poverty line. I wrote this essay with two of my undergraduate students who served as peer mentors in this course. They had both previously taken a service-learning course with me where they worked with the same agency, but conducted phone interviews for a needs assessment of clients of the organization -- new mothers who were struggling as parents both socially and

economically. Given the emphasis on student voice in feminist pedagogical

scholarship, our co-creation of a piece examining student perceptions of

service-learning was essential.   We also served as a qualitative research

team, coding over 100 journal entries written by students in the course over a

ten-week period.

Letting Feminist Knowledge Serve the City

A Capstone is a chance to actually do something that has use in our academic career. It is a chance to get off our butts that are firmly planted in classrooms in academia and contribute something bigger than our own ruminations and contribute to something that will make it beyond our professor's recycling box. It is an opportunity (in our PUBLIC university) to give some much needed help to groups in our communities that need it.

There is a long-standing relationship between women's studies and community activism. When women's studies emerged in the early 1970s, it was as the academic arm of the Women's Liberation Movement. Yet as a discipline women's studies has become increasingly integrated into academia. In response, feminist scholars are calling for a "return to those earlier community ties because of their importance to theory building, the rendering of services to the community, and their potential for transforming the university" (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, p. 51).

In the pages that follow we describe how we have taken up the challenge to bring our scholarship into the community by designing community-based courses for our women's studies program. We, the authors of this essay, have worked together as instructor and mentors to revise traditional feminist pedagogy for application to community-based experiences for our undergraduates. Our analysis is informed by dialogues with each other about our teaching practices and reflective journal entries contributed by students enrolled in our course.

The following is an account of the process we use in our course to not only serve a community of women in our city but also to encourage the future social responsibility and activism of our students. We examine our use of reflective journals as a space for students to question their individual personal location in relation to the feminist scholarship they are reading and the communities in which they function. We explore the different ways in which we build a supportive microcosm of a community within the classroom where students can learn from one another and begin to negotiate issues of diversity and inequality. We describe the connections we create for our students with community activists that help them to discover their potential part in the work of social change.

We begin this pedagogical narrative with background on the development of community-based learning on our campus, the important role our women's studies program has played in organizing a network of community partnerships to sustain our coursework, and our specific project with a family-based social service agency that assists women with newborns.

LETTING KNOWLEDGE SERVE THE CITY

In 1994 our institution established a new university studies program that requires students in their final year of study to complete a senior capstone course. The hope was that students in these interdisciplinary community-based learning courses would take the knowledge and expertise they had

learned within the academy and apply it out in the city to solve problems,

address issues of concern to the regional community, and enhance urban life:

> The metropolitan region becomes an extended living laboratory and the classroom where faculty, students, and the community combine their knowledge, skills, and talents in collaborative efforts. In this sense, the boundaries between teacher and students, university and community, learning and doing, become blurred. (Ramaley, 1997, p. 1)

Departments across campus were encouraged to develop new partnerships

with community businesses, nonprofits, and social service agencies that

would put our university motto, "Let Knowledge Serve the City" to work.

WOMEN'S STUDIES:

BUILDING WOMEN'S COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In spring 1996 our women's studies program began to organize a

network of women's community partnerships that would encourage multiple

capstone courses serving local women's agencies for years to come. The

network grew out of the needs of women in our community, our faculty's

teaching and research interests, and our students' learning goals. To develop

our partnerships and capstone courses, we relied on a long history of

interdisciplinary scholarship and networking by affiliated faculty already

involved in feminist teaching and community-based service and the

numerous internships and community-service practica already in place

within our program.

Our current network of community partnerships consists of a range of nonprofit public agencies that provide social, educational, literary, and health services to the city's women. The agencies address a myriad of women's needs in the community, including women's health, domestic violence, reproductive issues, welfare of women, women's history, cross-cultural relations, heterosexism, women's technological education, and the family. Together, our partnerships have reached out to a community of women that is diverse in race, age, ethnicity, social class, and sexuality.

OUR PROJECT: THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD

Our community-based project was the second in a series of capstone courses working with one of our local partners, a family-based social-service agency. This series of capstones was designed to collect information about the clients, staff, policy makers, and local partners associated with our community partner. In the first course, students conducted client-satisfaction interviews with mothers served by the agency in order to determine why some clients were dropping out of the program.

In our course, the Politics of Motherhood, the focus shifted from the women served by the agency to the policy makers that were responsible for fiscally and politically supporting the efforts of the community partner. The agency was concerned with the lack of support they received from local

officials and wanted to determine why women and children in the area were being overlooked by county-level policy.

Our students worked closely with the director of the agency to design an interview project that applied their feminist knowledge to questions posed by our community partner. The final goal of the project was to write a report to the agency that summarized city policy makers' views on family issues, the work of the agency, and future directions for their communities.

Each student began by choosing one of the major cities served by the county agency. These individual choices were based on the student's own social and political location, e.g., political affiliation, the neighborhood in which she lived, an interest in homeless families, teen pregnancy, or single motherhood. In order to prepare for their interviews, students researched the family-based demographics of the city on the Internet, in census reports, city budgets and action plans, and on other demographic databases. In small collaborative learning groups they constructed interview guides to encourage the policy makers to discuss their perceptions of local families, the agency, and the future of family policy. Each student then conducted two face-to-face interviews with a mayor and a city council member from the city they chose, transcribed the interviews, and authored a section of a report for the agency. In the final report students summarized their findings and wrote recommendations to assist the agency in their efforts to build collations with local policy makers.

On paper, the outcome of the project was a professionally crafted report that helped our community partner understand how the agency might raise awareness among policy makers about the problems faced by women and children in their community. In the life of our city, however, this project helped to create a new group of socially responsible students, many of whom plan on moving on to community activist work of their own.

The first step in making the transition from classroom student to community activist was for students to identify their own personal connections to the multiple social communities within which they operate.

IDENTIFIYING PERSONAL AND POLITICAL CONNECTIONS

Early on in the course, students were asked to identify their personal perspectives on motherhood and the family and to describe their roles as members of their neighborhoods. They were encouraged to explore the relationships between their personal standpoints, their positions in their communities, the feminist scholarship they were reading, and family problems women face within our city.

Each week students read one chapter from each of the assigned texts: *Mothering: Ideology, Experience, and Agency*, edited by Evelyn Nakano Glenn, Grace Chang (1994), and Linda Rennie Forcey and *Mothers in Law: Feminist Theory and the Legal Regulation of Motherhood,* edited by Martha Albertson Fineman and Isabel Karpin (1995). These texts were chosen

because they provided students with scholarship on the relationships among social location, policy, and ideology. We hoped the readings would enable students to make "links between one's individual actions and thoughts and the social, historical and cultural contexts within which one lives" (Goodman, in Scering, 1997, p. 66).

Students submitted weekly journal reflections on the feminist scholarship they were reading. The inclusion of journaling as a course requirement was intended not only to provide students an opportunity to dialogue with and about the feminist scholarship they were reading each week but also to establish a place to negotiate the relationships between theory and personal experience (Parry, 1996, p. 48). We hoped that the readings and weekly journal would encourage students to see themselves as part of the community and aid in the "development of students" responsibilities to themselves, their peers, children, and adults" (Scering, 1997, p. 64). The first step in this process was to get students thinking about their location and their standpoint.

Making Connections: I Have True Life Experience

Students relied heavily on their own life experiences and experiences with their families and their communities as a context in which to consider the assigned readings. They were able to "use their own personal experiences and see them as valid elements in the learning process" (Parry, 1996, p. 47). Explained one student, "In order to fully comprehend the argument the

author was attempting to prove, I had to reflect on my own upbringing." Most of the students made connections with the readings. They found themselves, their families, their "true life experience" represented in the authors' words. Students' journals were filled with detailed accounts of how their lives were similar to their experiences they were reading about. One student wrote, "Within my own life, I can see how these kin-scripts have been in place. In caring for my elderly parents, I have taken on the role of the care provider." Another student noted, "My family responds to one another similarly to those mentioned in the article."

These connections made with the readings not only functioned as acknowledgement of the student's lived experiences but also they gave the students a voice of authority (Henkin, 1993; Maher & Tetreault, 1994; Parry). They had subjective knowledge of what they were reading about. One student wrote, "This is something I understand clearly." The journals provided students the initial forum in which they could assert this knowledge: "having been single, non-married mother, students, worker, healthcare professional, wife and mother, there are many small pieces that I can offer. Life experiences, understanding, empathy." Wrote another students, "I do feel after reading the articles for this week that I will be able to contribute my experience of having been a single/unwed mother."

Some of the students not only located themselves within the readings but also rediscovered these same lived experiences from a new or differing

standpoint. Writing about this rediscovery in their journals, they were able to do what Roxanne Henkin refers to as "revis[ing] life stories and/or reinvent[ing] themselves in powerful, supportive, alternative ways" (1993, p. 27). These students spoke about the new knowledge they had about their lived experiences. One student wrote, "I have realized that I have led a very sheltered upper-middle class life." Another wrote, "It opened my eyes to how my own family has organized itself." The journals also revealed that students had mixed emotions about their new knowledge. For some of the students this new way of knowing was exciting and "eye-opening." Others wrote about anger or frustration: "I felt the article was very well written and contained a lot of data to support the theme. I will say thought it made me very angry. I am a woman, who has been a single parent."

Not all the students responded to the assigned readings and made journal entries with confidence. For a few students the push to think about their location and the context in which they lived their lives was very difficult. One student wrote, "I find that I feel so uncertain at times with myself, and where I fit into the whole picture. I try to reflect and ask myself, what do I want, and why am I doing this (being back in school that is)."

New Discoveries: I Am Vastly Different

The journals also revealed that students had different levels of awareness about their personal and political location. Some of the students

not only recognized and renegotiated their life experiences within the context

of the readings but also, further, they came to be aware of how their location,

their experiences, were different from others (Gilbert, 1997, pp. 258-59).

Many of the students' journals revealed thoughts similar to the following:

> I had never really thought about mothering being defined from white, heterosexual, middle class woman. This is exactly what I am and I can see that my experiences and resources are far different from woman of color and woman of poverty.

Another wrote, "for sure I am vastly different than other races and classes. I

would not want someone to understand me by using a perspective that did

not have anything to do with what my life was like."

Students had strong emotional responses to these discoveries of

difference. In their journals, students reported feeling "overwhelmed,"

"angered," "outraged," and "frustrated." A student wrote, "I could not believe

my eyes. […] some of the things I read were appalling." As Janet Lee has

noted, anger can motivate student learning, "fueling an interest to

comprehend certain issues and encouraging them to work for personal and

social changes" (1993, p. 15).

Guilt was another emotion revealed in students' journals, often

expressed about their own participation in systems of oppression (Gilbert

1997, p. 259). One wrote, "Both the articles that I chose for this week had to

do with black women, I was almost embarrassed to be a white woman."

Some students reported being surprised by the emotions that the

reading evoked while others acknowledged the familiar emotional response

associated with women's studies courses and feminist scholarship. Yet, one student went on to explain, even with this familiarly, "It's always good to remind myself that not all women are in the same situation as me."

A few students, however, found the negotiation of difference to be very difficult. For some of these students, these feelings were very complicated to navigate. In the end, the introduction of difference left them grappling with what they thought and felt about their own location. One journal entry revealed:

> When I go through my readings and respond, I am responding with how I feel. I hate segregation. Many of the writings are race specific. I try to look at how it applies to everyone. I feel that I do see the racial boundaries in these readings, and the differentiation for black women. But in these readings how can you be race specific when the issues may cover all nationalities. I am trying not to be specific to the white middle class, but trying to equate some fairness for all. Maybe what I am analyzing is my own point of view.

Following this process of introspection, we shifted the focus outward. Our task was to create a community within the classroom, where students could negotiate their perspectives in relation to one another.

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE CLASSROOM

In the process of building a classroom community we encouraged students to start thinking about diversity and their own potential roles in relation to their classmates. First, we asked students to reflect on their own life experiences, knowledge, and skills. Through this process, they were able to gain a sense of what they had to contribute to the class project. Second,

through class discussions and working in small collaborative learning groups, they began understanding and appreciated what their classmates had to contribute; they began to recognize a diverse community within the classroom. Finally, we structured the project so that each student had access to support persons. We watched additional support networks emerge among various groups of students. This section describes in more detail the strategies we employed to immerse students in experience and dialogue about their location within the classroom community.

Locating Selves: Finding Myself in a Classroom Community

One of the first steps in participating in a community is understanding the various roles to be filled and finding one that fits us, based on our needs as well as what we have to offer. We gave students their first written assignment to aid in this process. The multiple purposes of the assignment were to assess their skills and make a plan to both share their expertise and to gain additional skills in the process of the course project.

Students were asked to consider all courses they had completed to this point, along with each course's objectives and skills they had acquired as a result of each course. They assembled portfolios of completed papers and projects and analyzed their strengths and weaknesses. Based on the published objectives of their major disciplines, they measured their progress in attaining desired skills of their discipline. Based on the university's major

education goals, they determined any experiences missing from their academic work.

Next, students summarized in writing what they could give as well as what they could gain from the course. They listed the skills they possess which might benefit the course project and identified the tools of their disciplines that they were willing to teach their classmates to use. Finally, they created an action plan for building and improving upon their skills in the process of the course.

As a result of the portfolio assignment, several students gained confidence in their value to the classroom community.

> I felt very overwhelm[ed] initially. However, after I took everything home to read and took time to breathe, I felt excitement. I began to look at myself, and what I might have to contribute to the project. I don't think I came up with anything that I felt was earth-shattering. I did, however, decide my interest and ideas in this project would probably being to bloom [with] the project itself. I am excited to get a chance to participate and learn.

The portfolio work made for an interesting way for students to learn something about their classmates. As follow-up to the written assignment, an entire class period was devoted to discussing what they had learned about themselves, what they hoped to give to the project, and what they hoped to walk away with. After all verbal introductions were completed, students began to look forward to the chance to work together as a collaborative group. "I am a little overwhelmed by the strength of our group. Each individual in

our group has so much to offer. […] I am looking forward [to] participating in the complexity of this group."

Students grew increasingly confident that the project work would provide the opportunities they needed to meet the goals outlined in their plans. "I really feel that many of the areas that I have felt the least comfortable in will get some attention."

Two Heads are Better than One: Learning from Each Other

Students now had a better sense of their location within the classroom community. The next step was what Scering calls "the development of a community of engaged learners who respect differences" (1997, p. 65). Using the readings in feminist scholarship as a building block, students began making connections between their own perspective and the experiences of their classmates. In collaborative learning groups they came to depend on and care for each other in ways not possible in individual efforts. They negotiated the diversity within their small groups as well as in the larger classroom community and gained a new respect for their differences. As Scering suggests, when students form caring and cooperative relationships, they move beyond negative attention to differences and develop a collective identity (1997, pp. 66-67).

Interdisciplinary courses in which students from a variety of disciplines enroll can present some challenges. With students from a broad

range of analytic orientations, we needed a shared foundation in order to communicate effectively. Discussing the knowledge students gained from the readings in feminist scholarship made this possible. It provided a common language with which students could discuss the issues affecting women in their communities. By midterm students were casually using feminist terms like "heterosexism," "kin-scripts," and "social construction of motherhood" in discussion and in the journals.

Throughout the term, students completed the course readings in the order of their interest; however, the first few readings were assigned by chapter. Students wrote synopses of their assigned chapters and distributed copies to the group. They then presented their synopses to the rest of the class, generating discussions of the issues raised in the readings. During the discussion of lesbian mothering one student disclosed her own lesbian identity, prompting another student to write in her journal:

> Personally, I don't know a lot about this topic so it was helpful to get a point of view [...] in order for me to see another side, a human face to this controversy. Then, I can process what I read, my own knowledge, and a personal response from an individual. I can come up with my own idea and refine my own perspective on this issue.

Shirley Parry has described the importance of encouraging multiple perspectives in increasing students' "Understanding of the dynamics of 'difference' and of self/other" (1996, p. 47). An exercise conducted by the university capstone coordinators aided us in this effort. Students were asked to pair up with one another and designate a speaker and a listener. They

then chose a controversial topic of interest to them. After thinking about how they felt about the chosen topic, the speakers were instructed to argue the other side of the issue. In doing so, students explored and gained a better understanding of views much different than their own.

This exercise left students better prepared to join efforts with a very diverse group of classmates. They were well aware of the difficulties we all have at times, listening to "opinions that don't fit my own personal belief," as one student put it. Another student reflected in her journal, "This is a hard thing to do; it seems we all want to say what we have on our own minds and forget that to understand another person's perspective we must listen to them. "

It was a relief for students to discover that with an interdisciplinary group there is a better chance that the diverse talents of other students can compensate for what they fear are their own shortcomings. One student wrote, "Developing questions is not an easy task and it's always helpful to work with others because they might know how to better articulate what you want to say."

The diversity of knowledge helped students to make connections they might otherwise have missed: "I am in awe when I listen to everyone. Sometimes I think we give ourselves so little credit for what we have to offer and yet in that little piece we can contribute, we may link many pieces together."

Students were able to broaden their horizons through the sharing of others' experiences, skills and knowledge. They were showered with new insights, encouraged to process this new information and incorporate it into their own perspectives. Their learning ranged from very personal, real-life experiences to practical skills and gave students cause to think about issues they may face in their own futures. One student wrote in her journal, "I am amazed how many mothers we have in our class. I am not a mother. I don't think I will be anytime soon. […] I hope the mothers can give me insight [into] what it is to be a mother."

Students also showed great respect for each others' backgrounds and opinions. One student expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with a classmate who held very different political and social views from her own:

> While we are not bound to become life-long friends, I have enjoyed her input. I also have respect for her sticking it out with this class when she felt that her political and personal perspectives were much more conservative than my own. Through the process of working on this [project], she and I were able to have a fairly lengthy discussion around critical analysis of personal perspective. I believe it was productive for both of us, as we both know politically we are worlds apart.

Another student expressed her confidence in the class as a whole to respect one another's "biases and opinions." She wrote in her journal, "we may begin to feel friction in the final stages, but judging from the level of respect in the classroom, it should be more educational and interesting than hostile."

Near the end of the term, one student expressed her appreciation for all the contributions from her classmates: "I am excited about the project coming together. I am beginning to see it all fall into place. We have had such a terrific group of people to work with. There are so diverse talents and skills."

Creating Supportive Networks: "We are a Team"

Building community means creating a network of support. We created two forms of support networks in the classroom. We assigned each student to a mentor with whom they could work through theoretically problematic issues in a one-on-one setting. Second, we created collaborative learning groups as a setting in which students could share the workload, communicate their accomplishments and frustrations, and critique each other's work. We also ensured that each student had access to the support of the entire class by giving them a list of phone numbers and e-mail addresses of all students, mentors, and the instructor.

Students had the opportunity, via e-mail with their mentor, to reflect on the week's events, both inside and outside the classroom. Together they worked at understanding and applying theory, writing skills, and process in the class in general.

Most students developed a supportive relationship with their mentor. One student wrote, "I appreciate your comments to me and do so appreciate all that I have learned from you and the members of our class. It has been a

treat to work with you and I have gained more from you than you know."

Similarly, another student wrote, "I feel that with the [mentors] that we have, it makes a big difference. The support and advice that we are gaining will be a big asset to all of us."

In collaborative groups, classrooms are less individualistic and competitive, and students feel less intimidated and alienated (Parry, 1996, p. 26). We organized collaborative learning groups of two or three students facilitated by mentors. A significant portion of class time was spent in these groups, discussing their assigned portion of the larger project. Students learned with and from each other at the same time. One student said of her group, "I really want to learn from this project. Working with others on a combined effort is making it much easier."

Each group was given responsibility for a portion of the project. It was up to them to define their piece of work and determine how they would address it. In this way, students were able to "gain power and control over knowledge and, as a consequence, to have authority in the classroom" (Parry, 1996, p. 46; also see Brown, 1992, p. 54). The mentors facilitated status meetings with the groups and each group presented regular updates to the rest of the class, stimulating discussions about their progress, any roadblocks they came across, and their solutions. Sometimes students were put at ease by these discussions through mere commiserating: "I was really glad to hear that I wasn't the only one that was frustrated with this project."

The group meetings were also a place for mentors to offer constructive criticism of students' project work. Most students found this input invaluable. Any criticism of their work was seen as a benefit to the entire group:

> I will make up samples for your critique, and please know that it does not offend me, or bother me, to make changes. We are a team, and the input to this project is a reflection of all of us. I only want to do the best I can to help support the group.

> Being part of a team, I want to be able to support the other members and do my part.

A sense of mutual support within the collaborative groups was shared by most students, who came to depend upon each other a great deal. As in traditional classrooms, students also gravitated towards others outside groups who were similar in age and interests. Several nontraditional, returning women students started sitting together; a couple of students who shared political interests began gathering in the hall before and after class.

The students' journals revealed that many did indeed come to feel a great sense of community at various points in the course. This came sooner and more easily for some students than for others. Very early in the term, one student wrote in her journal, "We are all women, expect for one, and that alone brings us together." After participating in a focus-group evaluation of the capstone courses, another student commented, "I like these people and it was good to hear their thoughts. One of the thoughts was that we had 'bonded' really well as a group." The sense of community gained by the

students "makes the experience of college a far more positive, less isolating one" (Parry, 1996, p. 46).

In their final journal entries, students wrote about their sense of loss at seeing the community they had built and come to depend upon disbanding. One student said simple, "I will miss everyone, I think that we have a great team." Other students reflected on the course in relation to others they had taken. They knew that, somehow, this had been a new experience for them:

> There haven't been many classes I've been in that, when they're over, I feel a sense of loss at having to have it end. I think after the resonation I will be happy but also a bit wistful. I will miss the class and the people because I think as a group, we have worked out very well.

MOVING BEYOND THE COMFORT ZONE:
OPENING DOORS TO THE COMMUNITY

> One thing I like about this research project is it is making me think about my own perspective on things and what I know about my own community. I realize I don't really know anything outside my own comfort zone and look forward to finding out more about my community and the families in it. I have also realized that it is a very complex issue – making policies for a community – and that some people are served more than others.

Our students were already living in neighborhoods, many were negotiating family, work, and academics, and some were rolling up their sleeves for important political causes in their communities. Yet for the most part, they described the political work in this capstone as something new and groundbreaking, a form of "hands-on knowledge" that would take them beyond the comfort of their own experiences and into a community that they

described as more "real" than what they had come to know as college, "I am looking forward to working in a real life atmosphere. […] this is not, after all, a little rinky-dink group presentation to my classmates, this is a real document that an agency will use, and a real presentation to a real agency."

The pedagogy of making feminist activism real for our students took many forms during the course of the quarter. From the onset, we were trying to teach toward a personal and political connection to the community for each student. Opening the doors to the "real" life community started by bringing community people into the classroom. We tried to provide students with personal connections to nonprofit activists and policymakers who could serve as their alliances to the surrounding city. Through these newly forged relationships students made unexpected kinds of connections that helped them to move between their roles in our classroom work and the ones they were playing in their own community. By the end of the term, our students were questioning the new roles they had taken on as activists and were thinking about a future where they might work for change in their own communities.

Helping Our Community Partner

One of the most important connections that was formed early on in the class was the link to our community partner and, more importantly, to the individual woman who ran the program. We began by inviting the director of

the family-based service agency to our regular class setting, introducing her to the students, brainstorming with her about the direction of the project, and then working closely with her in developing questions for community policy makers. Her visit during the second week of the course created a bridge to a community outside the four walls of our classroom – a community made up of children growing up in families where poverty, child abuse, and lack of access to medical care were putting them at risk. She represented to our students not only the problems facing the children and the women raising them but also the difficulties of doing her job and doing it well within a political and social climate that did not prioritize the needs of women and children. Our students' relationship with her became their first step out of the university and into a "real" community of people working for social change.

After her visit, many of our students started to recognize how the societal boundaries we had been reading about at the theoretical level might affect our partner: "thinking about how all of this would impact an organization like [the agency] is frightening. Society does not seem to have much tolerance for people who need some type of assistance unless they fall into what they have considered worthy, and as we are seeing that is a very narrow window." Other students felt more connected to the project and excited about the potential impact of our work: "I feel so much better about our project since class this morning […] after hearing [the director] speak

about her organization, I think we will be doing some interesting work in terms of our class experience and also very beneficial work for the program."

Many students felt a new sense of the responsibility attached to their upcoming role in the project and started to take more seriously their community work. They became more concerned about "doing a good job" during their interviews, "asking the right questions,: and not "spoiling the report" by making mistakes in their interpretations.

The most overwhelming response to the director's visit, however, was a strong connection to the individual woman whom they came to respect and, to a somewhat lesser extent, to the agency and community problems she represented. The students wanted to help *her* in any way that they could and in many cases put themselves on the line, going beyond what was expected of them during their interviews, to do so. Some students asked additional questions during the interview to gather more information for the director, or they used the interview setting to pave a way for her to speak at council meetings or meet with city mayors.

> She [a city mayor] was also very willing to learn more about [the agency] and I feel [the director] would find an open minded reception with at least two members of the city council if she presented [agency materials] to them. I tried to open the door for her after both of the interviews.

Another student wrote:

> After the interview was over he [a council member] asked me to tell him about [the agency]. I explained a little about it and told him about [the director]. [...] He was very receptive to hearing from her and I think it could be a positive experience. I hope I wasn't out of line to

explain to him about [the agency]. But I felt that if she went soon to one of the meetings, it would be fresh on this council member's mind and she may make a stronger impression. I asked as many questions as were pertinent from our interview guide, but […] I also asked questions hoping to find information for [the agency director] that might help her in marketing her program.

When students returned to the classroom with interview transcripts in hand they brought with them new concerns about the best way to help the director. While they wanted to "get the stories straight" and provide "useful information," they also wanted to be sure they were meeting the director's needs:

> When I suggested that we be totally honest in our final report I did not mean that we should be argumentative or try and suggest that some cities or council people are on the wrong track – not at all […] my point was that if accurate information is something that [the director] is interested in receiving that we need to be totally honest for her, because that is who this project is really designed for [sic].

As we reached the point where we were about to present the information to the director, it was clear that the relationship our students had to her was a primary connection for them to the community. She was our students' first contact with the community and by working with her, our students felt that they were working with the community she served. They hoped that their work would help her to create new relationships that in turn would benefit the women and children in the community: "I hope that the information will be helpful for [the director] and that she can use her creative skills to form some alliances with other organizations or churches that serve the population that they are trying to target."

I know that each community could benefit from [the agency] and I would love to see us come up with recommendations that help [the agency] have more visibility and impact on the communities. […] something is missing in the connection between [the director] and the policy makers. Hopefully, our report will be able to address some of this.

People Who Have Personal Faces to Me: This is My Neighborhood

All of the other research I have had the opportunity to do in my academic career has been around subjects that are of interest to me, but also so very disconnected from my immediate life. This [project] is especially interesting because it is my neighborhood and people who have personal faces to me (both the subjects of the research and the people being interviewed).

Midway through the quarter our students conducted interviews with the mayors and city council members of the cities that our community partner serves. Many of our students connected on a very personal level to the individuals that they interviewed, describing them not as interview subjects but as neighbors and kin. Students did not always agree with what the policy makers said and many times found their perspectives on the family to be outdated and filled with stereotypes. However, these policy makers became another important way of connecting to the community. Some of our students were searching for answers and others were looking for a kind of personal connection:

I'm looking forward to hearing what these officials think about the very questions that we're wondering about: what is family, mom, community, child. I hope that they can give us some coherent answers, however, I'm afraid that these are things that the officials may have never really thought about.

I conducted my first interview with the Major of [the city]. It was an interesting experience for me. He is effectively my neighbor-we only

live a block apart. […] One thing that struck me was how much I wanted to like him. Since I live in his district, I wanted to feel some sort of understanding.

It was not unusual for a student to be excited about the new connections they had made. For some students it was the first time they realized they had something in common with an authority in their community. Others had unexpectedly found a like-thinker in a city hall office. They came back to class ready to share their transcripts and to encourage other students to "get to know" the policy maker. When classmates began to criticize the comments of the policy makers or question their perspectives, some of the students became "protective" of their new community liaison:

> I noticed something funny today. Actually, I detected it in myself a while ago and then felt vindicated when I saw it in [another student] today. You see, I really like the two people I interviewed. I thought they were very friendly and very nice and they were both Political Science majors (which I am) so they were obviously great! And even though they said some things that made my eyebrows raise, I still like them. And so, I was feeling a little possessive, or maybe protective is a better word, when people criticized or commented in a not totally positive way to the things they said. I thought I was just overly possessive/protective, until I noticed [another student] doing the same thing today when we were looking over her transcript. She tried to explain why he might have said certain things, almost making excuses, and so I felt better. I'm not the only one who wants to defend "their" interviewees.

Our students described their desire to defend the policy makers' words as trying to ensure that the appropriate meaning of the comments would be represented in the report. However, it was clear in the classroom that our students were not only protecting the voices of their interviewees but also they were protecting the relationship they had formed. They were looking out

for their neighbor and being protective of a bond that felt, for some, like kin: "It's kinda like me and my little brother. I can be mean to him all I want, but if someone else tries to pick on him, they had best look out for big sister because I will GET them."

This feeling of possessiveness went beyond the policy makers themselves. Several of the students described the cities that the policy makers served not as subjects of their project but as their own neighborhood – "the place where I live." While some students did live down the street from the people they interviewed, others broadened their sense of their neighborhood beyond city and county boundaries. Students were concerned about their community if the policy makers' remarks were prejudiced or showed a lack of responsibility for the problems facing women and children:

> I was surprised at his description of families. He didn't really have one. I realized that [the city] does a lot for seniors, but for families, in general, not much is done. I was disappointed because I am a resident of [this city] and was hoping we did more for needy families.

Some students looked back to the director of the project and the agency to provide help for a community that now felt like "their own": "I really think if [the director] returned once again, soon, she may have a good chance of influencing my community. I would like to see [the agency] be a part of [the city]."

For some students the conversations with policy makers helped them to realize that they might be able to pay some part in changing the community themselves:

I hope that when this class is over my perspective will have broadened enough so as to be able to help my community encircle all the different types of families that exist there. I now know, after talking to the mayor and city council member, that there is still a lot of work to be done, but that it can be done. That is refreshing!

CONCLUSION

ON MY OWN –BECOMING AN ACTIVIST

I know that I have a long way to go. But each day as I learn more, through my education, I find such a need to help fight against some of the inadequacies that face women in general.

Our community project helped to move our students' knowledge of the inequities of society from inside the boundaries of our feminist classroom outside to a community where they lived, worked, and went to school. As teachers and mentors, we asked them to question their personal location within the scholarship they were reading. We encouraged them to work through tough issues about diversity and injustice within our microcosm of a community in the classroom. And we introduced them to community people who could help them to uncover different paths to and perspectives on community work. By the end of the term, some students were going back to questioning their own perspectives: "In light of the questions that we formulated on the policy makers' definition of a family, I started to wonder what my definition is." Many of our students were trying to find ways to move beyond the comfort of their own experience, and out of the classroom limitations, to make a difference of their own.

In order to find their own activist voice they grappled with their role in the community project. When they first became involved in the capstone they questioned their new role in relationship to the agency and the policy makers. They wanted to be taken "seriously" and hoped that they would be more than "some kids doing a school project." They questioned how they really could do anything "new" or "important" for the agency given what others with years of experience had already done. But some of them worked out roles that felt comfortable, for example, as an outsider looking in: "I do know that when you are standing in the middle of something you really do not have clear picture, maybe that is our role."

As the project continued some of the students felt a need to disassociate themselves with the classroom project and the agency in order to find their own voice. One student explained that when the interview questions made her policy maker "twitch," she felt "it was as if I needed to separate myself from the formation of the questions so she would not think I was an utter moron while I was trapped in her home." Other students wanted to go beyond the interview setting and continue to talk with the policy makers on their own time:

> I was speaking with a classmate the other day about how we wished we could go back and just talk with our interviewees. Ask them whatever we wanted, what interested us in what they said before, and see if they really were as narrow in their thoughts as they might appear. As [my policy maker] said, he's glad I brought this up cuz [sic] it's something they'll need to think about.

This student recognized after the interview that she had made a difference by asking a question that raised the policy maker's awareness of an issue in the community, and she decided that she could further educate others by asking more questions and having similar conversations with others. Another student decided that her next step was taking her new knowledge about a particular policy maker in her community to the polls, "when I drive home sometimes I see him in his garage. Not too exciting for me—I don't think I like him. Next local election I am going to check out his opposition."

Our students worked through many ways in which they could incorporate this new hands-on knowledge into their lives. Whether it was through traditional political means like voting, or by volunteering at social agencies, or doing grassroots activist work, they proposed numerous ways to bring their feminism out into their community. At the same time, they still felt that they needed more help and were not unrealistic about the challenges to social change: "There needs to be a social revolution but again I don't know how it would start. I think the frustrating part is knowing that the contempt exists but not having any answers on how to change things."

Despite their realizations of the difficulties they would face, students continued to push for change and came to see their role as more of an activist. One of our students had clearly come full circle:

> It's important to look at mothering for many reasons. Personally, it is something that I think about a lot because I plant to be doing it eventually, within five years maybe. But it is always a struggle because as I sit in my classes, trying to develop my mind to go out and

change the world, I also am considered taking years out of my life, to spend at home and be with and raise my children. So, which is more important? Can I even make that call? It's tough. And, being who I am, I think that we need to make decisions less difficult. Try to change society's opinions about how we work this parent thing. And of course in this culture we have set up the personal is political. And as much as I don't like that, I need to understand it so that maybe I can fight it. Or use it to my advantage.

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CHAPTER FOUR
Preface

The ethnography of the Politics of Motherhood course formed the basis for a qualitative coding schemata I would continue to use to examine the effects of specific feminist service-learning strategies on student learning and transformation. I went on to teach ten more service-learning courses, collecting and analyzing student journal entries written over a three year time period. Chapter Four, *Educated in Agency*, from which the title of this work is taken, offers an ethnographic analysis of personal and political student transformation. The primary source of students' voices emerges from their field reflection journals. Throughout ten interdisciplinary capstones, students submitted weekly reflection journals via email. In each journal they were asked to address several issues: connections between the scholarship and everyday life and/or our research, community involvement, group dynamics, what they were learning, and suggestions for improvement (see Appendix A: Journal Guidelines). Most of the students wrote analytical prose while others have creatively interwoven their own fiction, poetry, or 'zine pages into journal entries (Gilbert, 2000).

This essay is grounded in the content analysis of 1300 emailed journal entries from 120 students (ten entries per student over each ten week course, plus additional non-solicited correspondence). Students were asked to write for approximately 45 minutes to an hour for each entry. Some wrote for less time, others wrote for several hours; therefore, for each student I had

approximately eight to fifteen hours of writing. The entries themselves range in length from one typed, single-spaced page to four pages each. While each set of ten journal entries provides an individual portrait of the student and her own unique story, together they convey patterned changes in students' perceptions of their learning, multiple identities and community ties. The version that appears in this work is the unedited manuscript that was later published in its edited form in the AAHE discipline series in service-learning.

At the time of its publication, this essay offered one of the very first in-depth analyses of journal entries from service-learning courses tied directly to specific pedagogical strategies.   Using grounded theory, this ethnography began to define student transformational shifts in identity, identification with others, collective consciousness, efficacy, and connectedness.

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Educated in Agency: Thoughts on Student Reflections from the
Feminist Service-Learning Classroom

> I feel I will take with me a better understanding of feminist
> methodology and how it assists in making women's voices heard. I
> want to do more work like this, it will be useful for my history major. I
> am glad I went into the clinic and did an interview. I've not given
> much thought to what Women's healthcare is and how it relates to my
> life. I feel I can now identify good healthcare and empower myself
> taking a small role in activism. I feel strongly, about women's
> reproductive rights and I do not want to see the right to an abortion
> taken away or women intimidated into not seeking an abortion. I
> respect these health workers because they are in the trenches. I never
> thought about these people before, but now they have become living
> human beings. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

The feminist service-learning experience is one that students often

describe as meaningful and "life-changing". It can be a very personal and

political journey that takes students through a process much like the one

illustrated above where a student, feminist ideology, knowledge, community,

a collective, and a clinic come together.

In recent years, there has been a renewed call not only in women's

studies, but throughout higher education for learning that is community-

based, socially responsible, and service-oriented.   At our university we have

taken up this call to activism and responded tangibly to our university

mission, "Let Knowledge Serve the City". Five years ago, we implemented

the requirement of a senior capstone course in which undergraduates would

have the opportunity to work with an interdisciplinary team of students and

community partners addressing a local problem or need in our city. Our women's studies department now offers twelve capstone courses each year serving the needs of our local women's health activists and practitioners, family service agencies, teen girls, the city's feminist bookstore, a lesbian community project, women on welfare, incarcerated women, domestic violence survivors, and local women's history groups.

This essay is grounded in my own feminist ethnography as an instructor of ten of these capstone courses taught over the past three years. Students in these classes worked with a family-based social service agency, a feminist women's health clinic, our local non-profit feminist bookstore, and a variety of teen agencies and local high schools. In each class, we have combined the application of social movement strategies, feminist pedagogical practices, and feminist community-building processes to the service-learning experience. This work is situated as a dialog between these feminist processes and students' shifts in multiple identities. I explore the relationship between feminist pedagogy, community-based experiences, and the symbolic meanings the students attach to their participation in these social change experiences.

The project experiences took a variety of forms, but all of them included a series of personal conversations with women and girls in the community. For example, over the past three years, the students have conducted formal interviews with policymakers and clients of a family-based

social service agency. They have organized rap sessions with local teen girls,

zine workshops, girl radio talk shows, city murals, leadership summits,

theater workshops, and educational seminars. They have volunteered at the

local feminist bookstore and abortion clinic, and have planned celebrations,

art shows, and music festivals for women in the city. And they have also

edited collections of oral history narratives, quote books, and zines and have

written formal reports and informal chatbooks.

One of the primary objectives of feminist service-learning is to

motivate students to apply feminist knowledge to social change in the

community. Throughout student journals, many students do speak of a new

feminist consciousness, a renewed or clarified desire to become "active", and

some even start to make plans to take part in a more global women's

movement. However, what is more illuminating is an insistent theme that

emerges in students' journals about the hopeful connections they now feel to

their community and the women and girls who live there.

Our urban women's community is really serving our students by

providing an epistemological site for a series of transformational shifts in the

ways in which students know themselves, identify with their neighbors, see

themselves as part of a collective, understand the role of an activist, and feel

socially connected to the community in which they live. For some students

this is a process of finding a new "place in the world" where they "fit in"; a

place that differs significantly from a community in which they previously

felt alienated or marginalized. For others, the experiences in the course build

on social relationships already existing in their everyday lives. One student

describes this shift toward connection as a metaphor of opening doors:

> I had not expected to feel more connected to community through this
> course. I felt pretty connected already and comfortable moving
> through some different forums that way. But, . . . in less than two
> weeks, I feel bound to the world I live in a slightly different way. It's
> as if there has been a shift in how I think about what forums I have
> access to. . . A shift is the best way I can describe it right now, like
> doors opening enough that it isn't so difficult to go on in to new rooms.
> [Girltalk, student journal]

In this essay, I weave together the voices of students, my own

interpretive voice, as well as excerpts from my teaching journals. This piece

takes us in and out of many rooms; however, much of what I discuss are

students' reflections about moments that take occur within the walls of the

feminist classroom.   While experiential community-based experiences are an

integral part of service-learning, the students consistently prioritize in their

journals the interactive reflection, construction of knowledge, and mediation

of multiple identities that takes place back in their university "comfort zone".

PERSONAL IDENTITIES OF SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE

May 1997. The students have given the zine a title and created a cover with

the word TRIX handwritten in bold black ink across the front. There is new

subtitle too: "sex, drugs, and other pesky things." Each student then wrote

across the white page words that she felt were used to define both her and the teens she talked to: cheerleader, slut, druggie, hip, strong, outcast, feminist, bitch, girlfriend, whore, etc. They explained the title to me something like this -- it is about who the girls say they are, but also about the contradictions they face everyday about who they are supposed to be. The world plays tricks on them by setting up unrealistic contradictory expectations for women. But they perform tricks as well, like putting on make-up, having sex, lying to parents and teachers, and acting dumb. They say they are TRIXSTERS in order to get boyfriends, drugs, straight A's, and cheerleading positions. They are TRIXSTERS in order to be taken seriously, sexually, or to the prom. And they are TRIXSTERS in order to be popular enough, smart enough, and thin enough and NOT to be cheated on, talked about, or beaten up. The students have chosen a picture of a sorceress as a unifying image for the zine because she can perform magic and change herself at will. [Girltalk Teaching Journal]

During the first several weeks of the capstone course, student journals are usually filled with explorations about personal identity and situatedness in the world. Like the teen girls who participated in the Girltalk capstone, most of the students are currently exploring the many contradictions they are facing in their lives and are trying to figure out not only where they "fit in", but who the "new me" is that they may become:

Thanks for everything you have both given me. A dab of confidence. A lot of self-esteem. Discovery of a new me, even I had never met. A great respect and openness to others and their ideas. And, of course, a new-found thrill of interacting with a demographic [teen girls] that I rarely explored, even when I was one. [Girltalk, student journal]

Most of the students describe experiencing some kind of "new awareness" about their identity through interacting with others. This young woman recognizes that they she may be about to embark on a somewhat painful process as she interacts both within and outside of the classroom:

Finding and being yourself is not as easy as it may seem to be. Listening to what happened at these sessions made me realize that not only is this experience a way for the teens to find and be themselves, but also the facilitator. . . I know that I have yet to find myself in all the chaos of this world, but the journey can be exciting, yet sometimes painful. [Girltalk, student journal]

For some students negotiating their own identities may mean feeling more connected and comfortable, for others it may lead to renewed feelings of pain, fear, marginalization, and discomfort.

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Some of these students' questions about personal identity may be motivated by specific feminist pedagogies that are designed to help students situate their learning and the project within the context of their everyday lives.

Consciousness-Raising. For example, students participate in consciousness-raising groups where they search for patterns between their personal experiences related to an aspect of our community work, e.g.,

motherhood, health care, and teenage life. They also put together "Personal Project Portfolios" in which they address who they are as students and how they will contribute their ideas and skills to the project.

Personal Identity Narratives. Another series of classroom exercises take the student through a process of rethinking identities of sameness and difference. They begin by writing a "Personal Identity Narrative" in which they explore some aspect of their identity that simultaneously positions them as "the same as" members in one group and as "different from" members of another group. In each capstone the identity narratives are directly related to the community project, for example, in the Narratives of Choice capstone students write about some aspect of their body identity. In the Politics of Motherhood capstone they write about their family identity, and in the Girltalk Capstone they focus on a part of their teen identity.

The Identity Circle. We follow the writing of the narratives with an "Identity Circle" activity and a discussion about the contradictory messages we receive and generate about others like us and others different from ourselves. We end the conversation by listing on the board all of the stereotypes that we have heard or hold about the women and girls we will be working with, (e.g., feminists, women who perform abortions, women who have abortions, and teenage girls).

Field Reflection Journal. The process of keeping a "Field Reflection Journal" throughout the course also necessitates that the student consciously

and continually question and write about the relationship between herself, the scholarship and the project. These are due at the end of each week and are sent via email to both a peer mentor and myself.

Gages of the Self

These classroom activities, as well as both informal interactions between students and more formal interactions with community partners begin a process of self-exploration that will continue for most students throughout the project. Students describe their classmates, community partners and the women whose lives are told within their texts as new "gages" for understanding their own selves and their previous experiences.

What differentiates this experience of self-awareness from what occurs in more traditional classrooms is the immediate necessity for finding commonalities and mediating differences in preparation for community work. Understanding, appreciation, and "tolerance" of diversity are often highly sought after outcomes in classrooms where students are interacting with texts and teachers. But when the student is about to move beyond her own "comfort zone" and into a series of relationships with "outsiders" in an urban community, she usually feels an unnerving need to both search for what she has in common with other people as well as what it is about her that may stand in the way of making a comfortable and meaningful connection.   The "new me" that many students claim walks out of the feminist community-

based classroom is one that has had to seriously reconsider how her own identity affects her being, thinking, and interacting in the world.

Digging up Common Ground

October 1999: Today the class did the Identity Circle exercise in the Girltalk capstone. We formed the usual circle, I explained the process and then one of the mentors started the game with "when I was in high school I smoked in the bathroom." All of us who had been smokers as teens walked into the center of the circle, forming a smaller circle within the bigger one. We looked around at all the women who had a similar identity, recognized something that we had in common, and then stepped back into the full circle. The women shared a range of identities and experiences today: had a father who left, couldn't afford new clothes, was suspended, was a cheerleader, tried drugs and alcohol, was into sports.   After about ten minutes we always run out of identities. Or maybe we have just found enough in common. [Girltalk Teaching Journal]

I am IN this Project. For some students, exploring their identity means coming to a new awareness about what they unexpectedly have in common with others. The similarities they find between themselves and others may provide an immediate connection to the project and a comfort for future interactions and personal growth. At the beginning of the term,

students quickly identify themselves in similar ways to women they are reading about or working with. They have had similar experiences in their family, academic, romantic, social, or work lives or they have made similar choices about abortion, health care, marriage, parenting, or politics. They, too, are women, mothers, teen rebels, patients, artists, homegirls, feminists, pageant winners, or boyfriends of women, like this student: "I'm a heterosexual, sexually active male. This fact, in and of itself, implies relevancy to the topic." They often make choices about who to work with based on these common identities. Some students choose stay as close to the familiar as possible, to work in their own neighborhoods, interview women with similar political beliefs, or do rap sessions at their old high school.

Emotional Work. Finding commonalities between oneself and the project can often mean that there is emotional work ahead. For one woman who had an abortion when she was a teenager and who found herself in a capstone serving an abortion clinic the potential for self-discovery is positive because of the collective presence of other women who have been "in the same place".

> I think this class will be good for me to challenge issues that I have buried deep down inside. It is good for me to be around other women that have been in the same place that I've been in. It will be a course that will open a window to more self-discovery. [Narrative of Choice, student journal]

Another woman in the class clearly feels that her prior experience with abortion would help inform the project, but is scared of what bringing up her

past might mean for her personally. For students, like her, similar experiences, commonalities, and like histories means taking an emotional and sometimes painful walk down a "memory lane" that they have tried very hard to forget:

> This project kind of makes me nervous because I am afraid of some of the hidden feelings I have from my past experiences. Not just the experience of abortion, but with other women's health issues as well. I'm sure my experiences will be a help in this project, but it scares the hell out of me! [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Least Expected Commonalities. For some students commonalities between themselves and others came where they least expected them. For one young man who was initially "afraid" of the impact his gender would have on an all girl rap session, finding out that he shared with a teen girl the experience of racism helped him overcome his fears. By finding some familiarity within the intimate stories of girls' lives, he felt that he might now be able to envision himself in the teen's position.

> Many of these stories made me examine my own childhood and experiences and how I felt in certain circumstances. A good example was the story about Asian stereotypes because I could relate in a very similar way, but through a guy's perspective. Many of these intimate stories are very important because when I head out into the field, it will be important for me to keep an open mind and envision myself in their positions by understanding their experiences. [Girltalk, student journal]

Uncovering similar life histories, for this student, means realizing the necessity of being open to new understandings, experiences, and ideas. For most students, uncovering a shared marginalized or privileged identity

within a text or a partnership meant having to examine the social

construction of the self. While this woman can relate to a definition that fits

her, she has now become acutely aware that she is part of a society that

unfairly boxes others in:

> I can see clearly that society's definition of mother is very
> heterosexual, white, female. Since I am that, I can relate to the
> definitions, though I may not agree with them all. But what troubles
> me is the diverse population we have, and the cultures that others
> share, and we are putting our standards and expectations on them.
> [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

Finding common ground with someone that they perceive to be so different

from themselves means having to re-evaluate their perspectives and face the

stereotypes they had constructed. One woman in the Girltalk project was

angry that her expectation toward difference had unnecessarily alienated her

from her group of teen girls:

> I feel like I had all these pre-existing stereotypes of how these girls
> behaved and they didn't fit into the stereotypes I had laid out for them.
> I had the feeling before I went that we would be bombarded with
> stories about violence that they've committed and that's been
> committed to them. I also thought that we would be hearing personal
> stories and that the girls would be disclosing major issues in their
> lives. What I learned was that their major issues have to do with boys,
> make-up, and hair styles, *just like me*! I had a false sense of what it
> was like to be a teen girl growing up on the east side as opposed to the
> west side suburbia. I thought that every day they would be assaulted
> with guns from rival gangs and that they were all having sex all the
> time. I wish that I could say that I was joking, but I realized that's
> what stereotypes mean. Having a stereotype about someone means
> that you think that's all they do and are capable of.   I had a really
> hard time finding questions that would fit what they were interested
> in because I wanted them to be telling me something different. It turns
> out that what they had to say is *what I was saying* in high school. I
> had more freedom than a lot of these girls because my family had more

assets and we could afford vacations, but that was *really the only difference* that I noticed. The other thing that I felt was that everyone else must have had some idea that these girls weren't abnormal. I say this mostly because of my reaction to [the other facilitator] in the group. She asked a lot of questions that got the girls talking and they were very general questions. I was jealous and shocked that she could gain such a rapport with them only by asking them what kind of music they like to listen to. I couldn't believe that's all they wanted to hear. I'm still kind of confused about the whole issue and why I couldn't figure out how to relate to them. [Girltalk, student journal]

Mediating Great Divides

April 1998: Sometimes they sit there and look at one another like they will never budge from their seats, let alone get out of the classroom and into the community. And sometimes the silence can be even more painful to the ears than the chalk screeching across the blackboard. At least when they are writing on the board there is movement, progress, and connecting going on. Differences always seem to stop the chalk. [Girltalk Teaching Journal]

The students are nervous, anxious, and afraid to make preliminary phone calls, to set up meetings, and to do an initial site visit. They have already felt the differences between them seep into classroom discussions about ethics, cultural messages, and stereotyping and they are convinced that similar differences will be even more uncomfortable out in the community. But the stakes seem higher: They might actually insult or hurt someone outside of the comfort of the classroom. Or they might get hurt themselves,

in a way very similar to what they have experienced within the discomfort of the classroom.

I am NOT IN the Project. For some students searching for a way to connect personally to our projects seems very difficult. For example, while some disabled students did find a connection with the readings on eating disorders, medicalization of women's bodies, or obsessive-compulsive disorders, several other students with disabilities in the Girltalk capstone noted the lack of material in the readings that was relevant to their everyday lives and how this reinforced their earlier feelings of being different from others:

> There is one thing that is really frustrating & that is the lack of material about teen girls with disabilities. We have read about just about every other group of teen girls. For me as a young women with a disability I would have liked to read about that. Also if we are studying teens then we need to read about all the groups of teens. [Girltalk, student journal]

Alienated from the Team. Many of the students described a marginalized identity that made them feel misunderstood in their own community or by their classmates. They had been alienated in some way from other communities in the past or now felt that this part of their identity made them feel disconnected from the "team":

> I guess what I'm trying to say is that sometimes in class I feel uncomfortable because I can feel that some people in the class are uncomfortable with my disability. [Girltalk, student journal]

> Heterosexuals don't really understand about same sex couples. We deal with most of the same issues straight couples do--money, sex, who

gets the channel changer, who does more work around the house, kids, etc. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

From grade school up through high school I found myself being the only Jew in the classroom -- nine times out of ten -- and designated as the representative of my religion. [Politics of Reproduction, student journal]

Most of the men in these capstones (which have been 95% women overall) do feel somewhat alienated, or decentered in the beginning. However, most of them also find some kind of connection with women in the class or with community partners early on and continue to build lasting alliances with women during the project. For a very few, however, the feelings of alienation persist. For example, one man notes that the readings "made me feel like a minority" because of what he feels was an author's derogatory usage of the word man. He perceives his role in the capstone as one that requires giving up some of his power and privilege:

I expect I will be discriminated against for being a man that is working on a feminist project. Discrimination is very subtle. . From the reading material I have often felt like I was the bad guy. That there is little room for men to be involved with women's issues. . . . I am real nervous about working on this project for a couple of reasons. One, some of the material I've read makes me believe that men have relatively no importance to the women's movement (other then relinquishing power). Another concern of mine is, I have a natural tendency to become a leader of projects. I know that I must take on a more subordinate role to protect the integrity and to empower the women of this project. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Project Choices. As is the case with students who find themselves "fitting in" with project identities, students who feel less connected often base

the choices they make about who to interview, what groups of girls to do rap

sessions with, and what agencies they might like to work with on an aspect of

their identity that has marginalized them from others. For some students a

marginalized identity of difference became the basis for important project

choices. For example, Throughout all the capstones, each of the students

with life-long disabilities (e.g. childhood diabetes, deformed hand, paralysis,

depression) noted their disability to be the piece of their identity that made

them most different from others, but also had provided them with rich

communities and volunteer experiences of their own. These women all noted

prior community experience working with others living with disabilities.

Other women had experienced a disabling illness later in life (e.g., chronic

fatigue, crone's disease, panic attacks, depression, immune deficiency,

environmental allergies, breast cancer) and several of them were currently

receiving treatment or were going through diagnosis. Oftentimes, for these

women, the classroom became a space where they were renegotiating the role

this disability would play in their personal identity and they wanted to "use

the community project to reach out to others like myself." For these students,

what made them different from others became the basis for many of the

choices they made about their role in the community project:

> I really am interested in finding a group of disabled teen girls and
> doing something with them. I think that sometimes they tend to mask
> their true feelings about how they really are feeling -- at least that was
> the way it was for me. Since more than likely they know very few
> other disabled people in their age range, they do not know if they are
> the only one going through the same situations and/or feelings.

Anyway, I would really like to do something with a disabled group of girls. [Girltalk, student journal]

Educating Others. Most of the women and men of color in these capstones identify their race/ethnicity as part of their primary identity and sometimes associate their feelings, attitudes, experiences, and learning with their racial situatedness. One woman in the Politics of Motherhood capstone locates her need to educate others about the diversity in her own upbringing:

I had to reflect on my own upbringing. . . I grew up in a family with two different cultures and it was important to my mother to find a balance between Chinese and American cultures to instill in me. In her country, communal mothering is an old concept. . . I by no means was raised in what our society considers to be the nuclear family. If someone was observing my family they probably would have considered it to be dysfunctional just by the mere fact that my parents were divorced. This is where most of my concern lies within the framework of motherhood. I would like for people to know it is possible to be raised in a single parent family, with different cultural backgrounds and still come out as good as children who are raised in the traditional family. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

Another woman felt that her disability made her responsible for educating others in the group:

When I was old enough to truly understand what it was like and means to be disabled I told myself that it is my job to educate the people who are around me about being disabled. I feel like I am not doing a very good job of that this term. . . when you are disabled you look at things so differently. [Girltalk, student journal]

Community Presentation of the Self

Many of the students' fears about negotiating diversity go beyond the classroom and into the community. Almost every student has some

apprehension about the effect being different has on their community work. For one woman about to do a rap session with girls who had been labeled "at-risk" by an alternative school, she feels her own race and class might "show through" in her facilitation:

> I'm most nervous about presenting myself as a white, middle-class woman to a group of teenage girls who may be coming from very diverse experiences. What I feel most uncomfortable about is reflecting the same, institutionalized, class and race bias that I've been working a long time to combat. [Girltalk, student journal]

For a young woman about to interview a local feminist leader, both age and experience are making her nervous:

> Again the differences between me and [the narrator] seem like many. . . she is very active in the movement even today. She is accomplished and is intimidating to many of us, and she is older and more experienced. These are issues I should be aware of when I interview her, but I should not let them scare me away. [Pages Turning, student journal]

Different Worlds

Most students are negotiating many complex identities both in their personal lives and within the context of our work. But for some women mediating between drastically different communities is nothing new, it is part of their everyday life. These two women's narratives reveal how the process of living with multiple identities has both cemented the idea that people's worlds are vastly different:

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Their [Girltalk students'] stories are informative and they take me into a world that I have never been to. . . when I say world I mean that every group has its own little world where only the people who are like them can understand what their life is really like. For me I feel like I live in two worlds -- the Able-Bodied White Female American World and the Disabled World. [Girltalk, student journal]

And that by continually crossing boundaries, some have the ability to

understand the language of both worlds:

Another place that I keep going back to is the issue of race. I am not talking about it because I am upset about it, but it is a reality from all indication. It is a source of struggle. I think I have a distinct perspective I can bring to my work. I think that like some, but not all I have the ability to be able to understand both sides. (For lack of better words). Being able to understand language of minority women and language from Caucasian women. I grew up around "white" people and as someone mentioned in class sometimes got identified in my younger years by others with the association. I have grown a lot and in my efforts to understand the complexities of race, and how we interact, I feel confident that it will no doubt, be more of a help to me in my work. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Cliques

It is not uncommon for what one Girltalk student describes as "cliques"

to form in the classroom based on both commonalities and differences. In all

the capstones, students quickly form groups based on identity.   In one

Girltalk classroom, differences in group identity are clearly marked around

the circle of seats. After several weeks of talking about high school identities

and of trying to work out the stereotypes we all had about teen girls in our

city, the students fall gracefully back into groups that they had previously

identified with: "pretty, smart girls", disabled girls, "minority" girls, the

boys, the "freaks", and the "hoodlums" (who all turned out to be the women's

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studies students). Almost always, women in the Narratives of Choice

capstones who are able to find the other pro-life women sit beside each other

all term. If there is more than one token man in the room, the men also

cluster in one corner of the classroom. This segregation does not usually stop

within the walls of the classroom either.

Usually, students who connected based on a marginalized identity

move on to form a collaborative group to work on one aspect of the project.

For example, in a Girltalk capstone two women with disabilities and a young

mother with a disabled child quickly found one another and formed a

collaborative group to produce a resource notebook for teens with disabilities.

In another capstone, a small group of "returning women students" who felt

alienated (but equally more "experienced") from their more traditional-aged

classmates formed a sub-committee to write the recommendation section of

the collective report.

Grounding service-learning in a persistent, integrated exploration of

an individual's identity helps student to renegotiate their own personal as

well as collective experiences.

COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES

"Fort Feminist" has a completely new feel to it. Now we feel more
comfortable. I am proud of what I see happen inside me everyday. I
have noticed a leap in people's attitudes in the work they are doing.
Women working together to teach other women empowerment, while
at the same time empowering themselves. [Narratives of Choice, final

product excerpt: a biomythology that combines the voice of a student and the voice of an abortion clinic]

Given the multiple identities that are constantly being negotiated between student and student (as well as student and community), "coming home" to the classroom can often mean a whole new series of negotiations, decisions, and what often feel like "family arguments" to the students. Forming a feminist collective takes time, and not everyone is ready and willing to participate. But most students recognize the importance of creating a space back at the university, their own "fort feminist" where they can reflect on the work they are doing in the city, "work out the frustrations", and co-construct new knowledge about women's lives. Creating a community within the classroom becomes almost as important to them as working in the community outside. Midway through the term the students have usually formed a cohesive group identity: they begin to speak of themselves as a "collective" and a "team" instead of a just another university "class". As one Girltalk students puts it, "because of this project, I began to think of these people as teammates."

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Forming a collective, or what we call a "feminist advocacy team", usually takes an entire term to accomplish, but is facilitated along by a number of feminist pedagogical activities.

Creating a common language. For example, we begin the capstone course by centering women's voices and experiences within a body of interdisciplinary feminist scholarship.   The interdisciplinary nature of the scholarship helps to create a common language for us to use in the capstone, but leaves enough room for the student's own discipline-based analysis. We also do a series of readings which focus on feminist community-building, feminist institution-building, and case studies of feminist collectives that specifically relate to our work.

A Collective of Our Own. During the second week of the course, we do an activity together called, "A Collective of Our Own" in which students begin thinking about the ways in which they have worked in groups before. Students usually note that they have been either leaders or followers. They describe situations where they have taken on too much work, not enough work, or have slacked off entirely. Over and over again women say that they often feel silenced in groups and "choose to sit back and let others make the decisions." Some say they just like to do the nitty-gritty tasks, while others hate to do them and only want to do the thinking and writing. Integrated into this discussion is usually a feminist analysis of gender differences in group interaction and a brief look at occupational segregation. Students begin to see the gendered aspects of their prior group work and decide that they want to do something different in this capstone. We end the activity by taking out a long piece of paper, taping it to the blackboard and writing out

our own "Groundrules for the Collective". These usually include rules like "respect the experiences of others", "trust other women", "keep secrets", "don't silence yourself", "share all tasks equally", "take responsibility for your actions", and "negotiate authority".

Boundaries to Commitment. After we have exhausted our list, each student writes down all the barriers that she thinks might stand in the way of her being able to stay committed to the group (e.g., other coursework, children's unplanned upon needs, etc.). Together, we work out strategies for filling in for one another, shifting responsibility, and supporting each other through unplanned crises. We revisit the groundrules periodically over the term during rap sessions with teenagers, as part of guidelines for doing oral narrative interviews, and later in the course as students are compiling final products. And we often rely on our phone trees, email lists, carpools, and classroom space for personal discussion when crises occur in students' lives.

Out of It

> When I sat down in that room on the first day of class I thought, 'Man oh man, somebody in here is bound to find out that I don't belong. I'm gonna be so busted. [Girltalk, student journal]

This returning woman from a Girltalk capstone notes a sentiment that many students feel as they join the capstone class; a feeling that they do not belong. As addressed earlier in this essay, many men and women feel alienated from the group because of the marginalized identities they bring to the classroom. For others, it is often that they feel like they are "not up to

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the challenge," "don't know enough to do this," or as this woman notes, do not

feel like they are as up to date or as informed as they should be:

> I just came from class today, I guess I really have to restate that I am a
> little overwhelmed by the strength of our group. I feel kind of out of it,
> I guess. I am not current with the legalities of things. Everybody
> seems to be more informed, more analytical about things. I suppose
> that is a weakness that I need to work on. [Politics of Motherhood,
> student journal]

For others they feel "out of it" because they perceive that they have an

opinion or belief that separates them from others. They feel like they are the

only pro-life student in a capstone working with an abortion clinic. Or they

feel like they are the only conservative in a room full of liberals, or "worse",

radical feminists. Usually, about a third of the students in the class find

themselves feeling like an outcast at the beginning and it takes a lot of group

work to make them feel comfortable. This young woman feels very

uncomfortable and let down by her classmates, after voicing her opinion

about a set of readings that discussed explicit lesbian sex:

> I know that this class will be a big impact on my life, and I hope I can
> add to the impact on others. I will not try to press my beliefs on others,
> but I do hope that I can have a voice. In class yesterday I felt like I was
> the only one being honest out of a group of six. Six others were feeling
> as uncomfortable as I am. I hope that the comfort levels will grow.
> [Girltalk, student journal]

Unlike this woman who realizes that she is not the only one who feels

uncomfortable with the readings, most students assume that they are the

only people in the class that has a different opinion or point of view:

Yes--I am one of those "antis," an anti-abortionist, a Pro-human Lifer. .
.I hope I have not given cause for you to worry, Melissa. From my own
mouth: I respect you and our other team members, as I do all
prospective team community partners we will be working with this
term. I respect their (and your) opinions, their lives, THEM, as my
fellow human beings. My plan? I'd like to be a silent witness in the
sense that I see and feel no need to argue, or defend, my position. Yet,
on the other hand, as an active participant in this class, I am willing to
do this if you so desire, at any time. Again, let me introduce myself. I
am [name], and it's nice to be here :). . . Please know, Melissa, that I
am aware that I must be in the minority in our class. [Narratives of
Choice, student journal]

A Community of Individuals

Most community collectives gain strength and solidarity through the

recognition of the importance of the individuals who make up the group.

Within the capstone, it has been extremely important to find ways to help

those who feel like outsiders find a voice, a community partner to connect

with, and in many cases their own "secondary project" to work on. Many of

the students, even those who feel alienated at first from the "team", usually

come to find that there is room for individuality in the collective:

The structure of this class was very different than anything I had ever
been a part of in my academic career. I was afraid that I would have
no practical use of my artistic skill or any other scholastic talents that
I possessed. Somehow, our class was able to utilize the personal
capabilities of all the students in one form or another. [Pages Turning,
student journal]

For some students seeing the importance of having different individuals all

working toward the same goal was a new "understanding":

I could see how important we all were to the project on both the individual and the group level. It was a new understanding for me, so forgive me if this sounds a little dramatic, but I was just like,"WOW!". [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Students are able to apply this knowledge about collective work to their own community work. They use this knowledge to help them better understand the roles of women working at collective bookstores, clinics, and family-based social services. It helps them to envision a place for themselves within groups of bookstore and clinic volunteers as well as Girltalk sessions.

For many students, moving from outsider to insider within a feminist collective also gives them firsthand knowledge that informs a more global perspective on community-building:

I think all successful collectives focus on the individual and I am sure that women's communities have been doing this all along. The failure is when too much power falls in the hands of certain individuals. A collective is a balanced unit of individuals who share and empower one another. Overall when I look at different communities I see the women's communities to be the most successful. I don't know for certain, but from the knowledge that I do have it seems that women's communities are more inclusive and strive to change through outreach to all or those who are interested. [Mentor, Conceptual Memo]

The Classroom "Comfort Zone"

We need to feel comfortable with each other first before we will feel comfortable facilitating teen girls. They will see right through us. [Girltalk, student journal]

In order for students to process everything that is happening to them out in the community they want a classroom space that feels safe,

comfortable, and respectful.   They need a place where the "real" issues of

everyday life, learning, and community can come together. For example,

after an in- and after-class discussion about how many of us have coped with

feelings of isolation, depression, and panic, a woman wrote the following in

an email message:

> I wanted to check in and say thank you to you for making space for all
> of that reality to seep into our work in class. We can never fully
> extract the rest of our lives from school work, and having room to let
> that happen sometimes is more valuable than anything else. [Girltalk,
> student journal]

While this kind of comfort in the classroom may be in part due to a

combination of student's enthusiasm and feminist pedagogy, another young

woman from a Girltalk capstone, has her own theory about the process of

creating comfort in the classroom:

> Establishing a Comfort Zone.   Since we are beginning the term and
> many of us do not know one another, we are working to establish
> norms and bonds which will create a comfortable setting for the group.
> To a certain degree, some of this was laid out for us. Sitting in a circle
> and using namecards helped to develop an initial cohesiveness among
> group members. . . Part of what seems to be important in establishing
> a level of comfort is creating an awareness of what makes individuals
> uncomfortable. [Girltalk, student journal]

In the remainder of her journal she relates the theme of comfort not only to

the classroom, but to the rap sessions with teens, comfortable spaces at the

bookstore, and her own personal goals about feeling comfortable enough in

class to speak up and voice her opinions.

Providing students with peer mentors is another way to help students feel more comfortable together. One other person in the room that they can make an initial connection to, trust, and depend on provides an enormous amount of support. The student has someone available to them both inside the classroom and via email conversations from outside the classroom almost all the way through the project. While some have argued that technology like distance learning, class discussion lists, and listserves create discomfort for students, many of the students felt that the emailed journals and other conversations between student, mentor, and instructor provided a comfortable connection for the class. One of the mentors in the class felt that the technology created a "comfortable distance" that was an important step toward getting students to open up.

> We communicated via e-mail, in class, or over the phone.   I think by interacting predominately via e-mail the students and I were in a position of comfort from the very beginning, even though electronic mail is not very intimate it still provided a dialogue that was at a comfortable distance. I feel that this way of communication allowed for further thought and personal reflection. I see that it didn't discourage them from speaking their mind and taking time to analyze and respond. In our society we are more comfortable at a distance, at least initially. I recognize now that students were more susceptible to open up to me in class with questions and concerns *after* they had been contacting me through the e-mail. [Girltalk, mentor journal]

For some women in all women classes, just being in a space for the first time that was made up of all women brought with it feelings of comfort, safety, and belonging in the classroom and community:

I really enjoyed the environment of our class, all women, very open and relaxed yet productive and intellectually and emotionally stimulating. I really felt like I could be myself and that made me feel comfortable. [Girltalk, student journal]

Trusting others, making room for others, and having a "room to come back to" was what made the collective comfortable for this returning woman student:

I am so excited about the group of people that compose this team. In talking about group guidelines yesterday I realized that I feel very safe in this room. I am seeing some knee jerk reactions to the material in myself and wanting to temper some of that to make room for other folks, but unlike how I usually react to a team environment, I feel a sense of trust that we are all going to come together well on this. . . I have a little nervousness about working in the field right now that I think lies in uncertainty about the "how to" aspect, but I feel so confident about having this room to come back to for resources that I feel more excitement than trepidation about just getting in and doing this work. What a nice thing! [Girltalk, student journal]

While there is no doubt that the community is an extremely important part of the learning part of service-learning, this student reminds us how crucial it is to be able to return to a university room that feels familiar, intellectual, and for the most part, comfortable.

Rethinking Authority and Co-Constructing Knowledge

Another important aspect of moving toward a collective identity, is taking the time to renegotiate authority, responsibility, and learning within the classroom. As an instructor, I have worked carefully ahead of time to plan out a specific community-based project with our community partner. I come to class the first day; however, with all of the project materials marked DRAFT. This is the first step toward letting the students know that nothing

is written in stone; that they will be as responsible as I am for making this partnership work. We will all rely on each other and our partners in the community to make social change happen.

For many of the students having a voice in the creation of a project, the planning and the curriculum is perceived as rare:

> It is rare that a relationship is created where the student and teacher are working together to create the best possible learning environment. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

For many, co-directing the project is the first step toward a feeling of efficacy that will follow the student out into the community:

> I really feel like we all are given the chance to teach each other and to feel free to determine what direction each of us can go in. [Narrative of Choice, student journal]

While encouraging students to take chances, direct the work, and create a team that replicates what community collective work might feel like, I am also honest about the actual university structure of which we are all a part. I explain what the limits are to negotiation and tell them that I will "take back the chalk" and exercise my university authority on a few rare occasions: (1) I will not allow them to go into the community until they have carefully critiqued appropriate methodological readings, (2) I will require that they uphold the ethical, social, and university responsibilities laid out to them, but NOT before debating them, and (3) after getting feedback from them and their mentors about the quality of their work, working out make-up

projects and alternative assignments, and checking in with community partners, I will be the one darkening in the circles next to an appropriate letter on the grade roster.

With all that said, most of the students move beyond me very quickly and look to each other and community partners for new insights, learning opportunities, and knowledge. When there is a perspective they don't understand they usually ask each other, listen to the answers, and as one mentor puts it, have a "mutual exchange" of ideas:

> I am amazed how many mothers we have in our class. I am not a mother. I don't think I will be anytime soon. It's really funny all the practicums I have done, the therapists don't have children, yet they work with them all day. I hope the mothers can give me an insight of what it is to be a mother. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

> It was rewarding to hear the voices of other students who were older with more experience, or just had more experience than I. I feel it was a mutual exchange and that in no way was I a dominant force. They learned for themselves, I was just there in case they needed support, guidance or encouragement.[Girltalk, student mentor journal]

Students are encouraged to bring to class articles that they have read in their own disciplines to help inform our work. In many cases they also teach short in-class sessions when they have expertise specifically related to our project, e.g., graphic layout techniques, interruption skills, how to handle flashbacks, focus group strategies, etc. They are also asked to bring literature from the agencies they work with to class for others to read so that the knowledge from our community partners becomes a part of the learning

experience as well. As this student suggests, the co-construction of knowledge

requires the wearing of many different hats:

> As we continue our work in-progress I am learning from the girls in
> the rap sessions, the other students in our class, my community
> partners (including my partners for my secondary project), the mentors
> and from Melissa . . . Thinking well of others and of themselves seems
> to come so effortlessly for these girls. It is a wonderful example for me
> to learn from. The language that they use may not be scholarly or
> academic, but it is definitely both respectful and profound. . . They
> talked about how wonderful it is to remember to act your age and not
> try to speed things up and act older. Wow, if only I had thought of that
> when I was that age. These ideas are pretty incredible. I'm learning a
> lot from the other students in my class, as well. This learning
> experience, I must admit is more pragmatic in nature than the
> philosophic life-lesson style learned from the teens. In a sense, it is
> just as important. It is interesting to go through the process of trying
> on the hats of facilitator, listener, diplomat and more in this type of
> setting. [Girltalk, student journal]

In several of the capstones, as the students move into the community, put on

another hat, and author their own collective monograph, they choose to

integrate their voices with the voices of community members. The resulting

collections become metaphors for the unfolding of knowledge, voice, and

collective work. One of the students writes about this collective process in

her preface to a collection of stories about local feminist activists:

> We, the authors, have been both listeners and tellers of the tale as it
> exists thus far, and we all have expressed how we too are interwoven
> in these pages. This book was thoughtfully and intentionally planned
> out to represent a design of the spirit of collective energy. [Preface of
> Pages Turning]

Some students describe this kind of learning community as a source of

empowerment:

> I love being around women who are empowered and in the process of
> becoming more so. I love being around women who are learning new
> things and working through various obstacles in their lives. [Narrative
> of Choice, student journal]
>
> Women working together to teach other women empowerment, while
> at the same time empowering themselves. [Narratives of Choice,
> student journal]

For others, the collective is a place where both work and "emotional troubles"

are shared among "friends".

Friends and Sisters

Forming close-knit relationships within the classroom has been one of

the primary means of creating a community of both learners and activists.

Much like many of the most successful women's collectives, the formation of

lasting friendships is one of the most important outcomes of the capstone

experience. Prioritizing life over learning always seems to promote more

learning.

For example, while we have a great deal of work to get through when

we are together, we always begin the class sorting out frustrations and

working through crises. We take the time to listen to stories about contacts

that fell through, rap sessions that were painful, or in some cases personal

issues that have surfaced as part of the project work. The students also make

room in the classroom to get updates about pregnancies, illnessnes, and

athletic games. I have walked in to class to find them setting up for baby

showers, engagement parties, and birthday celebrations and I have signed

numerous cards for young women who have lost their mothers,

grandmothers, partners, and friends. One woman who lost her mother

during the term, sums up the feeling this way:

> My personal life has had its ups and downs in the past few weeks.
> When I think about the theme of working together, I think about . . .
> how they have been so sincere in their concern for my welfare and
> helping me make it through this term that I could never express it in
> words. If they would not have worked with me I never could have
> completed any part of this term with a feeling of completeness. I could
> never have had this feeling without their openness in working with me
> to fulfill my needs. [Girltalk, student journal]

When smaller sub-committees begin to form, I encourage the students

to try to think of themselves as a "work and personal sharing group" -- a

group that recognizes the importance of making time to take care of each

other. Students describe meeting after meeting where they felt personal

issues were allowed to be a priority over the political work, but that making

that allowance felt "important" and "right". By mid-term, they are often

bringing home-made food to class, emailing each other back and forth about

personal issues, talking on the phone all night, sharing personal information

about healthcare, going out "clubbing" together, and babysitting each other's

children. By term's end the students have formed what they describe as

lasting friendships, bonds of sisterhood, and unforgettable memories. A

couple of journal entries express these sentiments:

The friendships you make are so meaningful. Everyone shares such a common bond of sisterhood. The memories that I will take with me after this class has ended, I will hold onto and treasure forever. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

And, this is an entry from one of the young pro-life women who felt like an outsider at the beginning of the term:

I got to read and discover some important and personal aspects to the lives of my 'friends' sitting next to me in class. I can't tell you how PRIVILEDGED I felt to be reading them. I wouldn't have believed anyone if they were to predict how I feel now, which is: I will never forget you, or anybody from our class. It has all become engrained in me to stay. I will always remember, and, I will SMILE [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Consensus & Conflict

Even friends, families, and sisterhoods have to deal with conflicts and tough decisions. One of the criticisms of many leaderless feminist collectives has been the lack of ability to come to a decision, as well as the enormous amounts of time wasted in dialog about minute details. The same sentiments are expressed by students in many of the capstones. Students feel that our sometimes endless, but egalitarian discussions are a "waste of time", that certainly "everyone can't be pleased", and as this woman carefully notes on her watch, are far too time consuming.

Our group here is very cohesive and everyone seems to be able to voice their opinions. We are now at the point in which no decisions can be made because everyone wants to be heard. Another frustration. I did not feel like we got anywhere yesterday during class when we were trying to make decisions. (Note it took 35 minutes to make that decision.) [Girltalk, student journal]

For the capstone collectives, passing the authority around the room means having to come up with more innovative ways to make decisions. The students can't rely on the instructor to tell them what to do next: they have to figure it out for themselves. And, they do not always agree on what they should do. Each collective has to come up with its own way to handle conflicts and make group decisions. Sometimes, usually out of frustration, a student might call for a vote. Other times, a consensus is just felt in the room and we move on. For example, in this Girltalk class, both votes and consensus emerge as ways to come to a decision about the cover of a zine they are editing:

> From the start of the class, every member has wanted a kind of diplomacy about our meetings. Even simple decisions were done diplomatically, such as the colors we should make the cover of the zine. We all like different colors and somehow came to an understanding that we would choose by votes. We not only did votes, but we immediately came to an understanding that five different colors would be the amount we would choose. Thinking back I don't remember anyone ever saying only five colors. Yet, as a group we decided this. [Girltalk, student journal]

Some of the students felt that the consensus process was important because it allowed people to express their opinions openly and to somehow get their needs met:

> The decisions the group came to a consensus about were very difficult this week. But I was completely amazed at the way in which these decisions were made. I suppose the process was one in which we, as a group, came together and satisfied all our needs as equally as possible. [Girltalk, student journal]

What also amazed me is the way each of us in class gave every other person a chance to express their feelings and point of views. I'm not sure if the discussion swayed the final vote, but it gave each of us the opportunity to heavily weigh the pro's and con's of doing so. I found myself giving both pro's and con's. I also found others doing the same thing, and I was very impressed by all of this. Decision making can be difficult, but I think the group, our class, has a great understanding of the decision making process. If we didn't, I don't believe we would have gone about our process so easily.

Decisions have not always been as seemingly routine as the size and color of a zine. For example, the student reflecting immediately above is talking about one of the hardest decisions a capstone group has made: whether or not include in a zine an extremely erotic poem submitted by a lesbian teen girl. The issue was complicated by a couple of issues: (1) the poem was written by a lesbian girl and the students felt that they had not worked hard enough to provide the diverse voices of lesbians within the zine, and (2) each student would not necessarily be distributing the zines herself. We would be asking the feminist bookstore in town, counselors at high schools, and teen agencies in the city to distribute them as well. The discussion lasted for over an hour and the final decision was to go ahead and include the poem, unless it was illegal to do so.   The students decided that we should check in with the university and the state to see if it would be illegal to distribute the zine to minors if the poem were included. Unfortunately, the law sent to us by the Attorney General's office was pretty clear. Because the poem was extremely graphic and described a sex act which could be interpreted as violent, legally we could be breaking the law if

we, or our community partners, distributed the zine to minors. Most of the students decided that they no longer had a choice. They didn't want to jeopardize the community partners, but at the same time, many of them felt that while they carefully worked toward a consensus, their final decision was hypocritical. While they had been so amazed by their ability to come to a powerful, feminist, and respectful decision, they now felt like they were perpetuating a system that silences women and girls:

> Although we voted nearly unanimously to include the piece in the zine, provided there are no legal ramifications connected to identifying it as pornographic and distributing it to minors, this issue raises many questions that are much broader than this particular situation with [the university] publishing a teen zine. It touches on issues such as freedom of speech and censorship, expressing or repressing the sexuality of women and girls, and in general, the acceptable presentation of girls and women to society. I think whenever a chance like this arises, it's important to discuss the diversity of perspectives, but I think it's also important to remember how often women are silenced by so many structural institutions and people in our lives, that we should take this opportunity to untie the gags on as many girls as possible.

ACTIVIST (AND SOMETIMES FEMINIST) IDENTITIES

Grounding the learning and activism that takes place during the quarter within continually negotiated personal and collective identities seems to be a necessary condition for understanding one's ability to revision the politics and permanency of women's lives. One student describes the relationship between her own self-awareness and the efficacy of our project this way:

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I think it will be interesting to work with teen girls to help them think about the process of becoming aware of who they are in this life. A similar process will also unfold for me as I become more aware of the role I play in my community and in my interactions with others. Self-awareness is a never-ending process, and I think it is important to convey to teens that we share similar experiences in our enlightenment. I want to help them understand that being stuck somewhere does not have to be permanent. [Girltalk, student journal]

Another student takes this process of self-awareness one step further,

recognizing that finding the patterns of oppression in women's experiences

can lead not only to personal, but also social change:

It's great to see these girls and women writing to express themselves and it is equally as crucial to notice the similarities among them/us. For every piece that is written there are tons of girls who relate in some way. They may relate in sexuality, beliefs, disenchantment with the world, parent troubles or more. . . I am excited to be involved with this project because I think that it is so important to notice patterns and the disgruntledness we may share. This acknowledgement can lead to social change. [Girltalk, student journal]

Making the connections during the term between the project and a more

global feminist ideology moves many students toward a new activist (and

sometimes, feminist) identity. Interactions both inside and outside of the

classroom help to raise students' awareness of oppression, diversity, and

power inequities. Many students begins to question feminism more closely,

others find new sense of social responsibility toward women, or a sense of

efficacy in the world. They come to understand how communities and action

for social change work and many self-identify by the end of the term as future

volunteers and activists. For some students the process begins (and

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sometimes ends) with a new awareness, a new perspective, or at the very least a new way of seeing the world.

FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

Teaching toward activism in the service-learning classroom means continually relating the community work back to theories about inequities, social change, and personal agency. However, most of what the students will ground their learning about activism in is the experiential part of the service-learning project.

All of the projects that we have been involved in have been framed for the students, not as volunteer work, but as social change work. We ask the community partners to situate the work we are doing within the context of social, economic, and political inequities and we encourage the students to think critically about the systems of interlocking oppressions that are at work here.

Open Minds

> This experience has been incredible. It has opened my mind in a direction that I had not planned on going. I have learned a lot, but what is most important is that I have reached a conclusion to some unanswered questions through the scope of this project. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Students consistently talk about the project as an experience that has opened up their minds in some way. They write about having "new" insights, perspectives, standpoints, and ways of thinking. Often they think about the

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process as one that has also "broadened" their perspective, let them "take more in" or "widened my vision". For many of the students like the women writing below, who had little expectations for the course or felt no connection to the context of the project, they often leave the course with at least a wider lens for looking at their world:

> I became involved with this project because it fulfilled a requirement, but the experience has been very important to me. Working with [the clinic has allowed me to gain another perspective on the world. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

> I took this capstone as a completion to my program. I did not have expectations for this class, all I wanted was to complete it with a good grade. Now I am completing this class with a new insight on life. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

For others, they describe the process of grasping a new ideology as one that includes the "deconstruction of old ways of thinking", "pulling the rug out from under me", or as this student notes as the beginning of a process that is taking her forward:

> Part of the process . . . is going through and examining past work and theories, even one's own, and using the dissection or acceptance as a means of moving forward. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

A New Grasp on the Basics

Moving forward for many of the capstone students also means struggling with a basic understandings of diversity, oppression, and power.

Diversity. Many of the initial identity activities done in class as well as early readings in the course begin to help the students understand and

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appreciate the diversity of women's experiences. But, as they move out into

the field their feelings about the importance of negotiating diverse ideas and

identities becomes more intense and applicable to their lives. One woman in

the Narratives of Choice capstone suggests, "diversity of experience, diversity

of opinion, of life, my biggest lesson this term."

> I hope what I take from this course is one of greater understanding and empathy for all women and the circumstances they find themselves in. That is what I want from others in my life, and even though I try to be very understanding, I see that my perspectives can be biased. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Like the woman above, almost of all of the students we have worked

with have recognized the biases they have and leave the capstone with a goal

to try to break down the stereotypes they have lived with their entire lives.

Many students describe their own prejudices as embodied biases that are

"close to the heart" or "something that was ingrained in me". Taking

themselves into readings about others, working with diverse students as part

of a collective, and moving themselves out into the world helps them to

realize that they need to rethink the ideas that they hold near:

> This (the strong voices of teen girls in the reading) was startling to me not only because it worked against my expectations, but because it put those expectations right in my face. I realized that I needed to spend some time revisiting stereotypes, expectations, etc., that I hold close despite my efforts to set them aside.[Girltalk, student journal]

Power and Knowledge . A new understanding about the relationship between power and knowledge usually emerges through these capstone experiences as well. For example, many students discuss the girl rap sessions as a place where knowledge is shared, "voices are finally heard," and girls are "empowered". One woman's insights into body knowledge and power came directly from a conversation with her narrator in the Narratives of Choice course:

> As I spoke with Amy I asked her to describe empowerment because she talked about it frequently. She defined it as knowledge, or even knowledge from experience.   The more I think about the term the stronger it gets. Empowering a women means giving them the power of knowledge about their body and allows them to make informed decisions. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

In each course, most students make important connections between the power of the elite and the erasure of women's history, the creation of biased public policy pertaining to mothers, and the silencing of teen girl's voices.

Gender oppression. While most of the students because join the course because they believe that "something isn't right" about either women's reproductive rights, local family politics, or the way teen girls are treated, they do not identify the problem at the beginning of the class as a form of oppression.

> It's funny, but I've lived all these years without giving real thought to the fact that our society is oppressively gender-based.   I've been too accepting, unquestioning (but I was trained that way).[Narratives of Choice, student journal]

New understandings of the complexities of sexism, racism, ageism, classism, heterosexism, ableism and other forms of oppression usually emerge in students' journals after we have had debates in class about some of the inequities students are reading about or are facing in the field.

Thinking Specifically About Feminism

> Learning about feminism has been a healthy eye opener for me. While I always thought of myself as an advocate for women's rights in my profession, learning more about feminism has given me a broader perspective. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

While the capstones are offered by the women's studies program, they are interdisciplinary in terms of enrollment. Most of the students, except for the handful of women's studies majors who enroll, are surprised that they are learning about feminism in this capstone. For some students it is a great new experience, they are learning something new and are broadening their perspectives. While they may not come to identify themselves as feminists, they often identify with many of the ideas, beliefs, perspectives, and struggles of the women that they now know as feminists:

> I never have been into the struggle of women before and am not a feminist but I now feel a stronger connection to the beliefs, women who label themselves as feminists, have. I think this is important for me to appreciate because their struggle has given me freedoms I did not have at first, the same way the Civil Rights advocates helped to give my race of people freedom's that were overlooked at one time. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

But, unlike the student above, others are NOT happy about the "feminist slant."

Breaking down stereotypes about feminists. Many of the students begin the course very resistant to the use of feminist jargon, feminist scholarship, and feminist methodologies. They write about feminism as "radical", "exclusive", "biased" and "reactionary".

For the students who are new to women's studies, the road toward activism is usually rocky, especially when it means breaking down even more stereotypes about feminist organizations, partners, potential teammates, and their teacher. This man from the Narratives of Choice project discusses how important it was for him to have real "images" of feminists that would deconstruct the "clichés" running around in his head:

> It has been interesting to be exposed to issues that I have only pondered at outer layers in the past. What is most beneficial for me is the new image I have of feminist issues. I'm sure you are aware of the cliché and stereotypical images feminists and women's studies majors are given in society. Before this class I was already aware that such pictures of these groups of people were stereotypes. But this was the only images I had truly been exposed to, and while I knew that that view point was inaccurate, I had not exposed myself to a true, in depth vision of reality to replace the false picture with. I'm grateful that I now possess that reality, so that when I think of these issues the clichés are not the first thing to jump into my mind. I'll be able to take this information and not only apply it to my own areas of interest but also help me in my understanding of people in my personal relationships. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Many students recognized the importance of conversations with others who are different as a bridge toward understanding. This student, who was unclear about feminism in the beginning, broke down a common myth she

held about feminists after a series of conversations with feminist health

workers:

> A feminist to me is not a man hater she/he is an individual who
> believes in co-operation. Isolation and alienation will get us no where.
> Branching out and talking to someone who is different than you will.
> [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

I am a feminist. While it is not an explicit goal of the capstone to turn

students into feminists, many do walk away from the course not only with a

new feminist perspective on the world, but they also come to identify

themselves as feminists. Sentiments like the one expressed by this pro-life

student are not uncommon. While she did not change her view on abortion,

she found herself within a definition of feminism with which she felt

comfortable.

> It is interesting that throughout this whole class experience I have
> come to realize that I am a feminist, where originally I would not have
> thought I was one. I am glad that I was able to learn the definitions of
> feminism and my perspective of feminism has changed. [Narratives of
> Choice, student journal]

Other students come into the class with previously formed feminist

identities. For these students, the capstone provides an opportunity to clarify

their ideas, opinions, and beliefs. They write about our work as

"strengthening", "deepening", and "renewing" their commitment:

> I have been deeply impacted. . .I have grown and learned in ways I
> never thought possible. I have always been pro-choice, but my beliefs
> have been refined and have become more solid and clear. My identity
> as a pro-choice woman has been strengthened. The importance of

women supporting and listening to each other has become more vivid. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

I have always had the conviction in my Pro-Choice activism and belief, but I have never been faced with the reality of working in the field, on the front line, and been so influenced. My convictions are stronger, and my love deeper for the people who have made this their life's work, and I feel so unbelievably fortunate for being able to experience this. I was also sort of put in my place by the readings and the analysis of other womyn's work, and was humbled, and I think that I really needed that. I needed to take a step back from my world, my way of looking and interpreting things, and others' experiences, and look at them in a whole new light. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

When asked to claim an identity in the classroom, another young woman sees feminism as an integral part of a more complex identity. She notes:

I am a feminist, but it is not my identity. My identity is made up of hundreds of things; all obtained from life experience. And I feel proud that one of those things is going to help change the way women are thought of and treated. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Understanding Social Change in the Community

For most students new ideologies and feminist frameworks become the basis for a more complex understanding of feminist communities and the ways in which social change can take place.

Community Agendas. As students prepare for community work by making contacts, setting up site visits, and sending out information letters, they begin to learn "the way everything really works" out in the community. Agency contacts often take their time returning phone calls and the students are surprised that the community seems to have its own "time": that the real world is not on the academic clock nor do they plan their projects by an academic calendar.

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During the Girltalk projects, students spend a great deal of the first part of the term doing outreach; making cold contacts to schools and agencies who work with teen girls. Many contacts refuse to work with them because they claim a need to "protect" girls. They need to put the project in front of the school board, an advisory board, an executive committee, or a parent group.   Others say yes, but want the students to go through weeks of training before meeting a group of teens. Other contacts say yes too, but insist that students not talk about sex, lesbian lifestyles, drugs, or alcohol during the rap sessions. The students have to make important decisions about how to respond to what they believe are enormous barriers, "hoops", or "hypocrisy" in the community. They are surprised that communities are not ready to just "jump in" and get involved "for a good cause." Many students become disheartened by the numbers of people who say no.   Students often describe this part of the project as very frustrating and feel a loss of control over their work. As a group we have to carefully think through some of the institutional and legal barriers to community work.

Some students take a very laid back approach to this stage of the work, noting that they have to "find a balance between" a "controlling nature and the way everything really works."   They recognize that this is a "big lesson on just hanging on and letting things be the way they are."

Other students take up the challenge and try to find ways to either "build trust" with community partners, educate the community, or "side-step

the system entirely" in order to bring about social change. This Girltalk

student decided that she needed to do something and that it was her

responsibility to educate a contact who was homophobic and would not

distribute our zine because of an "emphasis on lesbians":

> i have to keep telling myself that people who are homophobic or racist
> or whatever are not bad people. they are just ignorant. my philosophy
> is that people are taught certain things as children and that can't be
> helped but, once a person becomes an adult, it is their responsibility to
> learn. maybe that is an elitist attitude because i have had the
> tremendous opportunity go to college and become educated. i feel it is
> my responsibility to teach what i have learned. now that sounds
> patronizing. and i am not without my own prejudices and bias. i know
> that, and try to educate myself. [Girltalk, student journal]

Making Social Change Happen. Students who are on their way to

thinking more constructively about activism, begin to carefully consider the

many ways in which social change can occur, and certainly education is on

the top of these college students' lists. But most students had broader

notions of what social change could be. Almost all of the students come to

believe that social advocacy and social change require a certain kind of

person, "risk-takers", people who will "put themselves on the line for

ANYONE," and in some cases people who have "blind faith and a lot of luck."

A handful of students might characterize themselves as part of this group.

Others prefer less risky and more subtle forms of advocacy.

In different capstones students connect their projects with both

individual and collective forms of social change. Students from the Narratives

of Choice and Girltalk capstones usually came to think of the process of

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making "spaces in the community" for "learning conversations" and "diverse

voices" as an important dimension of social change work:

> Stories play a very important role in lives and in history, hopefully this
> story will help others feel empowered to tell their stories. By raising
> our voices we can connect and put an end to the means of silencing and
> oppressing others. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

It is within this context of voices and empowerment that many students find

a kind of social change that seems doable:

> The type of social change that I can work on during these rap sessions
> can be empowerment through self-validations (offering these girls a
> space for their voices). [Girltalk, student journal]

Other students in these same courses contemplated more institutional forms

of social change: "we need to take on the medical establishment", and "laws

about passing on information to minors need to be changed . . . we should

form a lobby".   In Politics of Motherhood, students are working directly with

a social service agency and are shadowing and interviewing local government

policy makers. These students come to think about social change from a

more liberal feminist perspective:

> We will not change capitalism or it's implications, but we must be able
> to work within the system and use it to our best advantage. . . It is
> very important to me to find out what kind of policies on a local level
> we can effect in support of those who undertake the grueling work as
> mothers, especially those that are stay-at-home, and are investing
> themselves in their children. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

Rarely are more radical perspectives like "overturning patriarchy would be

my first step," voiced as alternatives or compliments to personal or

institutional change.

Efficacy

> I have learned a great deal from working in the community, I wouldn't
> change my experience in any way. I feel there is a certain part of me
> that has been triggered, enabling me to reach out of the comfort zone.
> [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

One of the most overwhelming, consistent outcomes that students write

about in their journals is a newfound sense of efficacy. For some students

efficacy is the realization that their "voice is important". After finishing

projects, most of the students feel like they have done something important

for their community, have "made an impact" or a "difference" in someone's

life:

> I have never felt as if my course work was so important. Not only has
> the work been important for me in helping me deal with personal
> issues, but I feel what we have done might actually make a difference
> in other peoples lives as well. I think that is what learning is all
> about. [Girltalk, student journal]

For many students the capstone helps them to "see" that they can negotiate

some of the life's barriers and that they can move beyond society's narrow

expectations. For this young woman who spent most of her teen years acting

out an alternative self on stage, the Girltalk project helped her recognize that

she has the power to widen her circle of life:

> I feel like I am not limited to what others want of me, but can expand
> the circumference to that circle and make it any shape and size I want.
> It is so easy to forget that life is more than doing the daily tasks. And
> it is so empowering to know that we have the ability to do so much
> more...and then to see it form before your very eyes. Maybe this is just
> one small insight on how to come to grips on what life really means to
> me. [Girltalk, student journal]

Finding an Activist Identity: "I have just begun"

Most of the time, students do not explicitly say that they plan to be full-time activists in the future. They often will describe futures where they will; however, take on more social and civic responsibility. They will "be sure to vote", will "volunteer" when they can, will "speak up against discrimination", and will be advocates for their friends when they go to the doctor. Some students plan on doing some of what they describe as the "little things", like posting signs about feminist events on campus, stuffing envelopes, escorting women at the abortion clinic, or taking part in a Take Back the Night march.

With a new sense of efficacy, some understanding of the way things work "out there", and some grounding in the basics of feminist ideology, other students who had neither activist or feminist lives prior to the project begin to think about more formal future activist roles that they may play in their community. In order to "take the next step forward" they may need a bit more "motivation" in order to "actualize all the things" that they have learned. Or they might just be looking for contacts, a "women's network" that they can "hook into", or a phone number to call to volunteer. As one woman puts it, "This whole class has really touched me, and is beginning to light a fire underneath me to do something. How can I participate in the women's

health movement? I would really enjoy talking to someone about becoming active."

While some students do not necessarily refer to their current work as activism, they see themselves now and in the future as part of the women's movement:

> As the term has progressed, I have become consciously aware that there are many brave men and women out there who are fighting courageously to preserve my civil rights and the rights of all my fellow women. In fact, there are several that I come into contact with every Tuesday and Thursday. I am pro-choice, most of my family and friends are pro-choice. But that does not make us active feminists. What makes us protectors of women's rights is whether or not we choose to do something about the threats against our rights, rather than simply wear a label proclaiming us to be pro-choice. I never really thought of myself as a feminist, simply someone interested in civil rights who also happened to be a woman. I volunteer at Planned Parenthood because I want to help educate women (and men) about birth control options, their reproductive selves, and health care in general. I realized, through this class, that just because I don't work downstairs in the abortion clinic, I am still a member of the feminist movement because I strive to empower women through knowledge first, with the emphasis being on prevention. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

> I felt like this class would give me the opportunity to give part of myself to the movement. It was also part of my own healing process. I hope to continue to be involved with the movement for the rest of my life. It is such an empowering experience, and the friendships you make are so meaningful. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

For other students who do not explicitly identify as activists, there is still a shift in the way that they perceive their role: they start to see themselves as part of a universal "we" who are working together toward social change:

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I can now understand both the pro-choicers and the pro-lifers. Each having some strong statements that make even me do some real soul searching, and what I realize is that *we* are really all in this together, all trying to protect the rights of women. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

We can't attribute all the activism and feminism in the room at the end of the quarter to one capstone experience. Many of the students arrive that first day of class with many activist experiences in other movements for social change. What they walk away with is a new feminist perspective on activism. Other young women and men come with a very deep and grounded commitment to feminism. They usually leave with a better sense of how to "get out there" and "do something about it". This young women's studies student, who notes earlier that she already had the "fire in the belly", beautifully links our work to what service-learning in women's studies may just be all about:

What has happened is that I have finally become fine-tuned. And that is the greatest gift you could ever give. While I understand your sense of responsibility as a teacher, you must also remember that we students come to you because of what is inside us. And you have had the great fortune of getting to know, guide, and teach some amazing womyn, who HAVE gone out and done really brave things to better the lives of womyn. And for that, we all must be grateful. And, hey? Isn't that what teaching is all about . . . getting us OUT there, changing the world? ESPECIALLY in womyn's studies. [Narratives of Choice: student journal]

CONCLUSION: COMMUNITY IDENTITIES

May 1999: A group of students just returned from a rap session with a group of cheerleaders from a local high school. During the session one of the girls took a magic marker and traced her hand on a large piece of white paper that the students had put on the table for doodling. The girl then moved around the table and traced all the girls' hands onto the paper with their fingers intertwined. At the end of the session, the girl asked if she could trace my students' hands onto the paper too. When the students talked about it in class the tracing of the hands became symbolic of the connection they had made with these girls in their own neighborhood. They felt like they belonged. [Girltalk, teaching journal]

Capstone students already belong to their local communities. They participate in community-building in their own neighborhoods by being parents, workers, friends, family members, students, and partners. Some of the students have had direct activist experiences as volunteers, interns, grassroots activists, and community leaders. They bring to the community-based learning course identities and experiences that reflect multiple community relationships. However, when asked to describe their own community they often write about it as very close to their immediate lives, describe only their "best friends" and their "family" as members, and do not relate to community problems that sometimes exist right in their own neighborhoods. One woman in the Politics of Motherhood class writes:

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I didn't have to worry about the community issues presented in class. As a matter of fact, I hadn't even thought of them. I have been home raising four children and involved in church, school and family. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

As they move through the capstone course; however, they renegotiate these social locations as they begin to reframe their experiences within the context of our community work. Through these projects, students come to know themselves and their relationship to community differently.

Making the Community Less Abstract

At the beginning of the term, when students describe the community they write about it as something very abstract. The community is also perceived of as more "real" than the university, although the students have trouble finding ways to describe that reality that are not steeped in geographic, social, and economic generalizations and stereotypes. As students work through the scholarship and the community-based projects, they come to see the community as less abstract. People become more than subjects of news broadcast, stories in the paper, or urban myths. About midway through the term students begin to describe the women and girls that they are working with as "whole to me now." They make statements like, "the women came alive to me", the experience "gave me a visual person", and it provided "a reality of their existence." One of the students who was interviewing policymakers in her own neighborhood notes:

All of the other research I have had the opportunity to do in my academic career has been around subjects that are of interest to me, but also so very disconnected from my immediate life. This is especially interesting because it is my neighborhood and with people who have personal faces to me. [Politics of Motherhood, student journal]

Along with the face and the real person that goes with it, comes a new sense of the complexities of these women and girls. Students move from seeing them as one-dimensional stereotypes, to appreciating them as complex people who deserve respect:

What I learned from this group of so-called "troubled teens" is that they are very talented, intelligent and creative. They just want people to listen to them and treat them with serious respect. [Girltalk, student journal]

Once people become more than objectified abstract images, students can envision connecting with them, forming bonds, and making them part of their lives.

Closer to Home

When we begin our discussions of the community work, students often Desiree the community as being "out there", "outside", "far away" and they talk about the existence of "gaps" and "boundaries" between the classroom, themselves, and the community. It isn't until they have what one woman called "crossed the line" and moved out of her "comfort zone" that they begin to feel that the community is not really as distant as they thought it was. This student now sees the women at the local women's health clinic as a part of her world:

As we leave the clinic, I am feeling fortunate to have had the opportunity to visit and to meet the women there. They will no longer be out of my sphere because I have established a link, an awareness and appreciation of what they do, how they do it, and why... and that this service by women for women must continue and must be protected. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

Many students express a feeling that the community is "closer" than it was before and that they now have "steps" and "bridges" and "links" that can get them there:

What's been a nice way for me to gauge this all is to realize that when I thought I might have two connections when this project began, I'm realizing that my connections are broader than I imagined and that means that these girls are not as far away as I thought when we began. [Girltalk, student journal]

Finding a Place in the World

Not so far away, right down the street from our urban university, are local communities of real women and girls who are feminist activists, healthworkers, homeless teens, and policymakers. Through connections with these women and girls as well as extensive classroom teamwork and reflection, most of our students experience some combination of shifts in personal, collective, and activist identities. But the identity that is the most striking, from a feminist and service-learning perspective, is the one that emerges through a sense of belonging to a community of women. Many students start the term looking for a way to belong, relate, and fit in:

Well, just remember, that many of the young womyn in your classes, like me for example, who have the fire in the belly and will (hopefully) get out there and work in the field, came to the class for clarity and

guidance because the fire was already there, or was beginning. . . I have always been active in the Pro-Choice mov't, but I wanted feminist guidance, feminist history, and I am looking for the place in the world where I fit. [Narratives of Choice, student journal]

The most passionate, painful, and powerful descriptions at the end of each term come from the students who have found a new place in the world where they feel they belong and that belongs in them:

> I would like for everyone to know the places of belonging I've felt during the last couple of months, and one of those places is the bookstore. I want to be careful here, this belonging comes from within, and grows because of the bookstore. This isn't of course to say that I've become an integral part of IOW, but rather it has taken a place in me that is unexpected.[Girltalk, student journal]

This student notes how the project has helped her to realize that she can have an existence beyond the two-dimensional world of academe:

> School has satisfied a certain need, to look excruciatingly close at things and analyze them, but it is very two-dimensional you know. The work for this class has given me a sort of confidence back, that I can exist outside of the world of papers and pencils and always the confines of language, language, language. So I'm happy I did it. [Pages Turning, student journal]

For some students, like the capstone mentor below, a community identity also means recognizing not only that they have a place outside of the university, but that they might be able to change that place as well:

> Before my experience with the WS department and my capstone experience I probably would have had a more difficult time stepping out into the real world. I have become comfortable in the University setting, but with the community experience I feel I have a place in the world outside of [the university]. I know I can make a difference and

bring my individual skills and insights to a new place where I am not familiar with the communities. [Girltalk, mentor journal]

These students are telling us that what is really important to them in this process are common bonds with others, collective experiences that feel like friendships, a new sense of confidence and efficacy, and communities where they can belong. When we ask our students to let their feminist knowledge serve the city, perhaps we should also ask them how the city can become one of the places where they can feel more at home.

NOTE: This essay was originally published as: Gilbert, M. Kesler. (2000). "Educated in Agency: Student Reflections on the Feminist Service-Learning Classroom." In K. Heffernan & B. Balliet (Eds*). The Practice of Change: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Women's Studies.* AAHE Discipline Series in Service Learning, E. Zlotkowski (Ed.). Washington, D.C.: American Association for Higher Education.

CHAPTER FIVE
Preface

I have been fortunate over the years to spend a great deal of time facilitating faculty development sessions for colleagues across the country new to service-learning, helping them to: (1) examine different theoretical frameworks emerging from this scholarship to ground their teaching; (2) design effective courses; (3) collaborate with community partners; and (4) assess student learning. I always begin these sessions by asking participants to develop a metaphor that represents the hyphen between service and learning in an *ideal* world. I have been offered over a hundred different metaphors, including interesting biological frames that speak to the living, organic, changing, evolving nature of learning, like parasites, mobius strips, trees, rivers, and DNA. Others offer more artistic constructs that illustrate the complex, twisted, cluttered, and messy substances of learning like a labyrinth, a spiral, or the junk drawer in your kitchen. There is often something sticky in the metaphor like glue or duct tape that bonds people together and creates trust and connectedness. The images people draw to represent their metaphors are cumbersome, usually full of two-headed arrows, joined circles, or squiggly lines that show both how fragile, yet abundant, meaningful and potentially reciprocal relationships can be. Nearly all of the metaphors speak to the diversity of community, including elements that are of different colors, textures, shapes and forms like quilts, tapestries,

and collages. My favorite metaphor is one offered by a group of graduate students at a seminar in Baton Rouge -- the banana milkshake. In this playful metaphor the students are the bananas, the milk is the community, and the faculty member is the blender. The community is fluid and full of richness, the students are organic and ready to be changed, and the faculty members are the ones who shake up the whole mess.

Much of my research over the past six years has explored the ways in which faculty members are "shaking up" their classrooms by rethinking their roles and redesigning their curriculum to encourage their students to move out of the campus comfort zone and into the surrounding communities. I have conducted several case studies at both large research institutions and smaller liberal arts colleges to explore the unique pedagogical strategies faculty members are using to move their students between theory and practice. In the process, faculty members have been "snapped out of the norm" to revision their classrooms.

The following essay is informed by a series of interviews, focus groups, and an e-survey, all representing over 50 faculty voices from across Midwest campuses of all sizes and types. This research emerged from evaluative work I conducted for campuses and state Campus Compacts to assess the impact of their programs on various stakeholders. I explore the ways in which faculty transform their classrooms, shift roles to accommodate different kinds of learning, and create opportunities for student reflection. The faculty

members speak to the prejudices that emerge in their courses, mis-educative moments in the field, and the service-*un*learning that needs to take place before students can fully participate in service. I argue for more supportive infrastructures on campuses to scaffold the work of creative faculty who are willing to take on a risky, messy, and uncharted pedagogy.

Snapped Out of the Norm: Faculty Voices in Service-Learning

> The service-learning classes are the best experiences I've ever
> had. They are my favorite classes. I learn an enormous
> amount, and frankly, I think that students learn more through
> service-learning than they ever learn from my lectures.

Service-learning faculty members are creating distinctive classrooms where students are instructed in the public arts of community building, social responsibility, and civic engagement. They are building on their familiarity with traditional pedagogy, but are taking up the call to transform the ways in which we teach in modern higher education. Teachers are redesigning their curriculum to encourage their students to move out of the campus comfort zone and into the surrounding communities. They have created unique pedagogical strategies to move their students between theory and practice. In the process they have been "snapped out of the norm" to revision their classrooms, rewrite an outdated syllabus, and rethink a curriculum that a few "shocking" visits into the community have made obsolete.

The journey to service-learning is different for each faculty member. A study in 1999 of 33 early practitioners of service-learning suggests that the pioneers of the service-learning movement found their way to service-learning through "multiple and widely varying paths"; however, their motivations all coalesced around one of three axes of the service-learning triangle: "1) connecting education and student development with service; 2) moving from service to social justice, and 3) using experience in communities to prepare an effective citizenry" (Stanton, Giles, & Cruz, 1999, p. 54).

These motivations mirror feminist arguments for transformative education to focus our attention on pedagogical elements of course design that are deliberately structured to embed feminist values (Chick & Hassel, 2009). Feminists argue that to prepare an "effective citizenry" through service, faculty members need to mind to the differences in experience and perspective-taking in the classroom, develop classrooms that cultivate communities of learners, and pay deep attention to matters of authority and power (Chick & Hassel, 2009). It is not surprising to see the service-learning field experiencing an influx of feminist teachers who share the desire to use their classrooms as places to both uncover injustices and teach toward social justice through community service (Wade, 2007). Feminist service-learning sociologist Kristyan Kouri challenges us in "Feminism, Public Sociology, and Service-learning" to discover the intersectionality of teaching and social change that she has experienced and to come to share her hope that "personal and professional activities will serve to bring about positive social change" (2007, p. 83).

Whether or not we come to service-learning because of a desire to educate future citizens or contemporary activists or because we believe in the significant effects of this innovative pedagogy on student learning outcomes, Dan Butin argues that this critical pedagogy "makes us take a stand by acting up and acting out" (2005, p. viii). He notes that "it is easier to teach within boundaries of the normal," suggesting that service-learning is a more

risky, dangerous pedagogy that challenges practitioners to seize

opportunities that take them beyond the traditional contours of academic

practice (Butin, 2005, p. viii).   For faculty members to take these pedagogical

risks, scholars argue there must be institutional support systems in place to

provide both incentives and rewards for taking chances. Klaw and Ampuero

(2007), concluded after teaching their community-based course on intimate

violence prevention, that gaining structural support for classrooms to address

key societal issues is complex and requires an interdisciplinary approach.

They struggled with justifying the place of social justice teaching within both

the curriculum and the academy. Yet, most practitioners claim that once you

have taught a service-learning course, you can never go back to the

traditional classroom. Susan Cayleff and Angela LaGrotteria, who started a

"Young Women's Studies Club" as their service-learning initiative in

American Women's History claimed that their course was "the single most

innovative and rewarding program within 23 years of teaching" because it

gave them both a greater "sense of being alive" and "involvement in our

contemporary world" (2007, p. 135).

FACULTY VOICES

In order to teach effectively, feminist scholars argue that we need to

become reflective practitioners paying "deliberate, reflective attention to

classroom dynamics and environment" (Chick and Hassel, 2009). My

pedagogical research has usually been grounded in ethnographies of my own

service-learning classrooms; where both student voice and my own reflective teaching journal served as data to illuminate the effects of feminist pedagogy on student learning. That reflective research has transformed my own teaching, yet also created new questions about how other service-learning practitioners reimagine their own classrooms. In this study, I have focused my attention on a collection of faculty voices that have become part of the fabric of the field, encouraging all of us to think carefully about the dangers and demands of this pedagogical framework.

This essay is based on focus groups, an e-survey, and interviews with faculty members teaching on 38 different campuses throughout the Midwest, including large research institutions and liberal arts colleges. In 2002, we administered a qualitative E-survey to 37 faculty members who received funding for service-learning courses from Pennsylvania and West Virginia Campus Compact. We asked faculty to (1) describe challenges they faced in their S-L courses and their solutions, (2) to describe the impact the grant funding had on faculty, administration, staff, and other constituents, (3) to share ways in which they have sustained their work, and (4) describe any "lessons learned" they felt would be valuable to others. We received 28 responses for a 76% rate of return. We have analyzed these data using content analysis techniques with two readers. Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with four of the faculty, chosen for their geographical location, type of institution, and scope of contributions to the

field of service-learning on their campuses. This work is also grounded in two focus groups, one conducted with service-learning faculty and another with service pioneers at a large research institution. The protocol for the focus groups were based on standardized instruments developed and tested at Portland State University (Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). The questions were changed to reflect the campus culture (see Appendix D for the focus group protocol). The voices we listen to here are from new faculty and seasoned teachers, rural practitioners and urban activists. They come from small community colleges as well as large research institutions.

The faculty members from this study have developed many new pedagogical strategies to build classrooms that not only train students for service, but support them through their community experience and provide clear paths back to the scholarship of their disciplines. The greatest challenge facing the faculty members is course design and implementation. Service-learning is "messy" work that requires an overwhelming amount of time to develop, practice, and sustain.   The good news is that the faculty members meet these challenges with innovation and rely on strong communities of practice on their campuses to sustain their work. The teachers whose voices we hear in this essay are: (1) encouraging pedagogical transformation, (2) developing collaborative partnerships, (3) building scholarly service-learning communities, and (4) creating new sustainable

initiatives to support service-learning for a new generation of scholars. In all, they teach us a great deal about the serious challenges they have faced in their classrooms and in their communities, as well as within the boundaries of their own campuses. More importantly, these service-learning practitioners share with us some of the alternative paths they have forged to meet those challenges. I begin here with the pedagogical transformations that are reshaping our classrooms and rebuilding our communities.

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE OF LEARNING:
ENCOURAGING PEDAGOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

Ray, a professor at a small college who teaches an Outdoor Recreation course, has an advantage over most of us who teach service-learning courses. In Ray's discipline, he teaches about fun, "We do fun. Fun is our job," he explains. Over the years, Ray has witnessed his students having fun while teaching children how to enjoy and respect the environment. He and his students have worked closely with school programs, Girl and Boy Scouts, as well as the National Park Service. Ray believes very strongly in the value of service-learning, arguing that it provides our students with "a more complete knowledge" which makes a profound "linkage between the sterile, dry, very abstract version of things that you get in text-books and real world situations composed of real people."

Ray has "staggered" through many a textbook, saying to himself, "yeah, right," acknowledging that while these books are filled with ideas that sound very good in theory they have little application in the real world. Although he stands in front of his classroom and encourages students to take some of these theories, "with a grain of salt," he knows it is far more meaningful when they go out and see what is happening themselves. For example, while many textbooks talk about the needs and behaviors of children in different age groups, Ray argues that it is hard to take all 12-year olds and be able to describe them in one paragraph. His students tend to read these paragraphs and count on it accurately describing how 12-year olds will behave or respond to a particular activity they are going to be teaching in the community. Behavior, Ray suggests, is not something that is nearly as predictable as the textbooks would have us believe:

> People do not always behave as they are predicted to behave. Sometimes they love things they are not supposed to love. Sometimes they hate things they are supposed to like. Allowing for situational variance is something that textbooks don't handle real well.

Ray's classroom encourages arguing with these texts, "hunting hard" in the community to dispel myths about children as learners, and embracing the unpredictability of the real world. As a teacher, Ray embraces the circle of learning that service opportunities provide and tries to explain this to his students before they go out into the field:

> One goes forth, one does something, it may work well, it may not work at all. It may even be a horrible disaster. Then you process what

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happened and move onward to complete the cycle. You take with you the lessons learned from the first experience into your next experience. You always have to ask yourself, "what would I do differently next time?"

Building Reflection into the Journey

Ray uses a two-stage process of reflection with his students to help them make sense of their community experiences and complete that circle of learning. When students first return from the field they join together in a very brief discussion. Ray poses questions to the group: How did it go? What do you think about what happened? Is there anything in particular that you noticed today? This part of the process gathers the immediate impressions of the students. During the next classroom period, Ray has the students write down a paragraph or two about their reactions, responses, and feelings, framed by questions about their expectations. After writing down their ideas they are then asked to share them in the group.   These discussions are more in-depth and usually bring more voices into the circle of reflection. Students with different backgrounds and experiences are more likely to share their ideas once they have put them down on paper.

Many faculty use reflection strategies, like Ray's, to deal with new student issues that emerge in their classrooms as a result of community service experiences. Feminist teacher, Kathleen Gallagher, suggests that both searching and reflection matter as much, if not more in the classroom than do the answers to the questions (2000). She compares her students to artists, "manipulating a medium, students uncover their questions and

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challenge the course of the curriculum" (2000, p. 75). Reflection has emerged as one of the most important pedagogical tools in the service-learning field for bridging the gap between service and learning.

Most faculty members are challenged by the emotional work surfacing in class. What the faculty think they are going to be teaching is not necessarily where they spend much of the class time. Faculty involved in this study argued that a great deal of seat time is spent doing the messy, emotional work that is the constant companion to service-learning. Reflective strategies provide spaces for students to wrestle with emotional issues that arise in the community. Service-learning scholar Raji Swaminathan argues that service-learning needs to offer more of these kinds of "spaces of possibility" – spaces for "extraordinary conversations" that "bring to life what may otherwise remain hidden under the surface of routine exercises in reflection" (2005, p. 40).

One faculty member shared her student's response to an ethical issue the student had debated in her journal. For this student the process of reflection helped her to work through a set of consequences associated with letting a student she was mentoring smoke in her car. While the student knew it wasn't "a wise decision," she grappled with the possible effects it had on the relationship she was trying to build with the student. The teenage girl had "spilled out her whole life" to the student and it made her realize how much the girl needed "someone to listen." Like it did for this student, a

journal can become a space for processing decisions, asking ethical questions, and delving into the moral reasoning that service experiences demand of our students.

Faculty who struggle with students who are facing their own prejudices toward community members and students who are resistant to theories about oppression are redesigning their courses to include far more time for reflection than expected, incorporating journal writing and reflective papers as places for students to renegotiate their privilege and prejudice. Other teachers embrace these conflicts in the classroom and encourage lively discussions on these topics as part of the reflective process. Diana, also from a small college, argues that we especially need to make space for these forms of reflective disagreement in our service-learning classrooms:

> The dynamics within the classroom are part of the excitement because they know that unless we have contradicting opinions, unless we have some sort of tension, we are not going to accomplish anything . . . you are not going to get the students to take responsibility for their ethics by preaching your own orthodoxy, you have to let them play with it, create it in their own way, in their own minds.

Reflection can both create knowledge and extend it: "Students have to reflect in their journal, they have to elaborate. They have to extend and they have to tie it all to what we are doing in class," noted Cynthia, a service-learning pioneer at a large research institution. Her art education students produce a journal as the final product for the class after jounalling throughout the course on the process of their art and engagement. Cynthia suggests,

"process is what they're supposed to be learning . . . They need to be able to pass this learning on to someone else, and that is what this is about." Her students were asked to tell their personal story of transformation as they extended themselves into the community as both of form of reflection and documentation. Reflection on the process of *becoming* more responsible and able to apply their skills to community needs was a critical element of the journey for these students.

Other faculty members used journals as the curricular space to *integrate* materials from the textbook and the students' field experiences, "they would find certain topics in the textbook to read and they would add that into their journal and integrate it," one instructor noted. This instructor urged others to fine tune the journal process to create more dialogue between the text and the service terrain – to "be more precise in our questioning" and "go back on a regular basis to them for feedback." One faculty member used reflection cards as a way to help students make sense of their service experiences. The teacher would provide questions for each card, such as "What kinds of gender inequalities did you notice in the high school?" These questions were meant to guide the students by using concepts from the readings, but they could write about anything that stood out, "as long as it was pertinent and it showed that they were going through some sort of process in their head."

Shifting Roles

In every classroom reflection occurred as a process of questioning,
whether it was demystifying a theoretical construct or confronting a journey
toward personal transformation. For faculty members turning a classroom
into a space where questioning takes precedence over fact-sharing demands
role-shifting and sharing. One instructor said her role in the classroom
shifted from speaking as the expert to "serving as the person posing all the
questions" because of the reflective nature of her class. After reviewing
journals, or hearing student comments in the classroom, she would invite her
students to apply their new knowledge to a different context. She would ask
her students, "How does this apply in this particular situation?" If the
students did not offer their own ideas, she would step in and share some of
her solutions.

For other faculty, the shift is toward collaboration. One faculty
member said that her students "ended up being co-collaborators in the
process." Another instructor wanted her students to "maintain as much
independence as possible." Beth, who teaches at a large research institution,
stepped back and challenged groups of students to negotiate the classroom on
their own. This process encouraged students to come into class to discuss
their problems, challenges and issues with other students in what she called
"peer negotiating." In a classroom where peer negotiating is the norm, Beth
argues, "they really had more cognitive synergy in the course – they took

responsibility to help out other groups in the class to make sure no one was falling behind in their different projects." This process is facilitated by initially assigning students who are working on different projects to "base groups," – groups of two or three students who meet routinely to co-collaborate by sharing questions or concerns. After those initial check-ins students can branch out and join other groups in larger discussions.

Leaving the students to figure things out for themselves means taking a step back from who we are as faculty, giving up power and responsibility. "If something goes wrong," Diana, a faculty member from a small midwestern college notes, "all I say is 'fix it'." Her students reflected on their teacher's process of letting go, "We're getting this now, we're on top of this, we're adults . . . you provide entry for us, but the rest of this is something that we need to accumulate an understanding about . . . I'm part of society and I've got to figure out what my job is." While Diana spends a great deal of time designing her Model United Nations course, she has learned to let go of the reigns once she gets to the classroom:

> My best pedagogical practice is to listen to my students . . . give them a very strong structure, a foundation. Give them direction, but allow them to recognize the direction they need to take. Don't stand ahead of them – don't try pulling them along. It doesn't have to be a perfect program every time, it just has to be theirs. If you do everything you need to do to keep the structure in place, they will rise to it.

Unpeeling the Layers: Teaching Toward an Appreciation for Diversity

One of the most significant learning outcomes evident from research on students in service-learning courses is a greater appreciation for diversity

(Eyler & Giles, 1999). Faculty members are intentionally providing students with experiences outside of the classroom that introduce them to diverse groups of people. Latino migrant workers, senior citizens, and urban youth have invited students into the complexities of their lives in order to promote meaningful learning experiences and meet some of the most complex needs of our communities. Janelle, an instructor at a large research institution reasoned, "I had a strong commitment to get students out into the community to gain a greater appreciation for people from diverse backgrounds." Students are encouraged to learn to be proactive participants in the learning process, empathizing with others and appreciating diversity at the same time they are passively learning *about* issues pertinent to these different communities from their textbooks.

One faculty member begins her service-learning course in Gerontology asking students to join her in the process of debunking myths, "This is a way to break down the barriers between us and them. We tend to think that the older people are somehow different than the rest of us." When her students cannot keep up with the retirees when they line-dance together during a service trip, the frail, sick and feeble elders embedded in their stereotypes begin to disappear. This process is what one instructor calls "unpeeling the layers." When her students move into the community to do their work, she insists that they break down many of their stereotypes:

> The community has a reputation for being sort of tough and some of my students were sort of uneasy, but once they found out they could go

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into the area and emerge unscathed, their vehicles and themselves . . . they realized that some of these people – just normal people who don't even have an education – have a lot of interesting things to say.

Marge, a professor at a large research institution, told the story of one of her education students who had to move beyond her prejudices about "troubled teens". Service-learning was her first experience working with someone involved in the juvenile court. She chose a student teaching placement that challenged her, but she knew working at an urban school was important because she wants to become a teacher and that may be where jobs are in the future. When she returned after her first day at the site she had been scared and needed to talk to her teacher about her fears. When Marge asked if she was going back, the student replied hesitantly, "I think so." On the second day of her placement she said, "I can do this," and at the end of the ten weeks, she told her teacher, "I want to volunteer." Marge intentionally chose two partners who served people racially different than her students because "most of the students that go to our university have never met anyone of a different color and they need to." The students who went to the same sites provided support groups for one another – intentionally designed learning communities within the classroom for processing, reflecting, and sharing. The students knew that they were going places that, according to Marge, they "wouldn't dare to have gone by themselves" so she created spaces for them to be together both in and outside of the classroom.

For some faculty members, helping a student discover how to work toward a deeper understanding of difference is viewed as an individual self-actualized process, needing little intentional guidance from authority figures. Before Denise's students began working with a group of African American children, she provided little background on what to expect, "I provided them with no expectations – they had their own," she said. Her students began asking questions like "who are these kids?" Together the students began unraveling their own assumptions and understandings of the children. Their interactions with a group of highly "confident, capable, intelligent, direct, and philosophically grounded" children overturned most of their previous suppositions. By the end of the term, Denise concluded, "They began engaging each other in discussions at a new level – that with other citizens would have been confrontations – but were instead depthful [sic] and probing."

It is clear from the faculty involved in this study that diversity work in and outside of the classroom is never easy. The process of learning about others in the community is most often a journey of service-*un*learning, where students have to *un*learn through experience what they have read in their textbooks about "the other" or teased out of a childhood of profound messages from their families, schools, and the media. Sometimes building diverse relationships fail, but there can still be teaching and learning moments in these failures. One instructor shared her experience of working with a

community group that was not "happy with the approach" that some of her students took when they visited the site. She had done the prep work she thought was necessary – talked with her students about the methodology of collecting oral histories from people and the importance of building rapport. But the generational and racial differences seemed too many to overcome. Her predominantly white group of students were trying to collect the oral histories of a group of informants who were all African Americans, some of whom were 70-80 years old. The cultural and generational differences that the students had read about in their books emerged in very unexpected ways – ways that their textbooks did not cover. "Intellectually, we were able to prepare by using some of the theories of the work," the instructor recalled, "but there was nothing I could do after a certain point but help them to try and figure out ways to negotiate with the people." While the oral history project had its relational problems, the students learned a great deal about the issues that this particular community had been facing. Their interactions with the elders mirrored and manifested the historical racial tensions that had been part of the everyday lives of this community for generations. They came to understand that while they were capable of an interchange that would document the stories of these elders' lives, they were not "going to be able to resolve the complicated interchange between that community and the rest of the city."

Teaching Toward Civic Responsibility

Out of courses like the oral history one discussed above emerge students who are questioning what their responsibility is to the common struggles faced by the communities in which they served. One of the goals shared by most of the service-learning instructors in this study was to help students' "build a sense of responsibility toward people living in their community." Cynthia used written and signed agreement forms to help students realize how important it is to follow-through on their commitments to others. Cynthia argued:

> They had to take that kind of responsibility that they didn't see at school. It wasn't responsibility to me, but to the community, the children, the teachers. When they showed up at the school they got this great reaction from the kids who, unknowingly, nurtured this sense of responsibility -- which then led back into responsibility in the classroom.

Cynthia felt that this sense of responsibility also emerged from a new sense of self-efficacy. She built into her courses opportunities for students to learn "how to see yourself as an active participant in society and make a difference." These students "really saw it . . . they made a difference. They saw that this kid could now read a little better or could write a little better, and was more comfortable with strangers."

Others built responsibility on a solid platform of self-discovery and re-definition. One instructor began this process on the first day of class, by walking into the room and announcing, "Congratulations, you are all communications specialists. . . You are no longer a student. You are a co-

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educator." She saw the process evolve from students applying theories to students becoming "married to the community." "All of a sudden," she noted, " they felt like they were really a part of this community and they were counted on. They had to become responsible." For most students, the ramifications of *ir*responsibility also reinforce a deeper sense of civic responsibility. "They know that if they don't show up," one instructor notes, "one little kid isn't going to get the help that he or she needs."

Assigning Value: A "Really Wacky Grading System"

Grading in service-learning courses requires new strategies for assigning value to work done both in and outside of the classroom. Most instructors grade journals, written assignments, and deliverables completed during the course that integrate academic knowledge and the service experience. According to one instructor, the best assessments are ones that "emerge directly from the work students are doing for and with the community" – journals, essays, and grant applications – work that is not separate from, but is an integral part of "the daily-ness of the course."

Another instructor came up with a system of multiple assessments from different stakeholders. First the students graded eachothers' contributions to the project – their leadership, their collaboration skills, and their ability to negotiate in a group. Then the instructor graded the curriculum the students developed, programs, materials, etc. The final

portion of grade came from the community partners – an assessment of "their responsibility, participation, timeliness and ability to come forward to talk about good questions and issues."

One instructor found these kinds of community partner evaluations to be a very effective tool.   She used two instruments, one of which was about punctuality and responsibility, but the other was a traditional "employer evaluation." Community partners were asked to write a typical evaluation of the student's performance. She encouraged students to get a copy of this form for their records to use as they searched for employment in the future, but it was also a very helpful means to assess what the students had done on-site.

When asked how faculty could "require volunteerism" by students as part of the grade for the course, the instructors argued that "the outcomes of the service are interwoven with the intended outcomes of the curriculum." Service is, as one instructor posited, "as much of a requirement as reading the textbook and writing a paper." Once service is integrated into the class in this way, all you have to say is, "You have to do this because you're not going to experience the learning of the course without it. It's integral to the learning."

SHARING A COMMON VISION:

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Reflective, responsible learning in community-based courses is dependent on the creation of a meaningful community partnership to ground the curriculum. In recent years, the scholarship on the institutionalization of community partnerships in higher education has begun to flourish (see Chapter Six); however, we rarely hear from practitioners about how they actualize a partnership at the course level. However, faculty who are speaking up about community partnerships argue that while some community-campus partnerships are institutionalized, real partnerships toward learning require real course- and faculty-based relationships. Feminist teacher Talia Bettcher notes that one of the major reasons that work with community partners has been successful for her and provided a "tighter integration of course content and community service" is because she has "independent relationships and commitments to many of the agencies" (2007, p. 17). Faculty members across the campuses in this study are brokering and sustaining individual community contacts that provide sound educational experiences for their students. One faculty service-learning pioneer at a large research institution argues, "By putting our students in contact with community partners, they have a proper introduction to the community. It only takes the sponsorship of one community leader to provide students with a legitimate reason for being there."

"You need ways into those communities," a faculty instructor suggests. She recognized early in her service-learning career that inviting several community leaders to the course during the first several weeks of the quarter brought community *into* the classroom as a way to promote their expertise as legitimate knowledge in the academy. But the leaders' trip to the ivory tower also helped her students gain access to community *outside* of the classroom. While the leaders were not the people she wanted her students to be working with in their service projects, they opened some of the doors for her students at other agencies. Once a student made a contact, "they just kind of kept working their way into the community and more and more into the *real* community as opposed to the small portion of the community that are in the leadership roles." Some students are resistant to making the move out of the classroom and into schools, non-profits, and other community settings. One instructor suggests making the first trip a "group trip" to ease this transition and scheduling the actual class-time at the same time the community partner needs assistance, giving up seat-time to community-time.

Sustaining Partnerships

For each of the participating faculty, new sustainable partnership development is clearly one of the most important outcomes of their teaching. For some faculty, one core partnership that serves their own course over time has been an essential project for sustaining their service-learning innovation.

For others, community partnerships take on a life of their own and create multiple experiences for students on a campus. Debra, a faculty member at a small community college, created a community of faculty on her campus committed to teaching courses addressing the nutritional needs of the rural area that is home to the college. While those courses were instrumental in meeting direct, immediate needs, the program highlighted the necessity of a more long-term commitment on the part of the college in meeting the needs of their neighbors. Debra came to know the director of a local soup kitchen through one of the service-learning projects and learned more about the depth and scope of problems facing children and families in the neighborhood. To help meet this growing need, Debra, community partners from several food banks and a program for children, the director of the college's displaced homemaker's program, and a former student who had experienced hunger, started a hunger council. The goal of this new partnership is to coordinate the efforts of various groups and agencies in the area that are working on hunger issues as well as the people who are experiencing hunger. With students and faculty, the council conducted a root cause analysis into the problem of hunger in their community and is now developing business, communication, and marketing plans. Now the community, in partnership with the college, is providing what Debra calls "our conscience," as they bring the needs of the neighborhood closer to the campus. "They are not 'THE hungry," one community partner reminded the council, "they are hungry people."

The Boundaries of Successful Partnering

Not all faculty, however, have had such profound success when forming partnerships for their service-learning courses. While ideal, it is rare that an initial partnership grows, like Debra's, beyond the scope of a classroom project. Many faculty members face unexpected challenges working with community partners at the course level. Faculty experience difficulty in handling unexpected community needs and mismatched partnership expectations. Problems communicating with partners, contact turnover, and newly emerging political issues that side-track initial plans have all been obstacles toward building successful community partnerships for faculty. For example, Ray had to abandon his efforts to work within the "conservative ethic" of his local school system. There was a "certain hesitancy" to let Ray's students provide the environmental programming they designed for fifth graders at a local school. "Even taking the kids outside for a field experience beside the school was deemed impractical," Ray admits. Instead of continually being turned down by the local school system, Ray turned to existing community networks of groups who already worked with children, children who were already interested in the environment. In the rural countryside where the university is located, "everyone knows everyone anyway," Ray notes, so it didn't take long to turn one activity with a local girl scout troop, into a daycamp for children brought together by boy scouts

troops, cub scouts, and 4-H kids. Ray recognizes; however, that he may already have saturated this small rural community of children with their programming and may have to "expand beyond our corner of the county and the folks we have already been able to touch."

Fortunately, Ray has found others in the area who share his vision to provide environmental programming for youth. He has now formed a partnership between his college and the National Park Service to develop educational programs and provide student volunteers for an education center.   The Park Service comes to Ray's class to conduct training sessions for the students and they, in turn, help to accommodate the seventy-plus children that attend educational programs on the Park Service's sites. Having a grant for service-learning initiatives to "put on the table" when Ray first met with the Park Service was the first step toward building a trusting, reciprocal relationship where resources would stream into the community. "The most rewarding part of this partnership is that they understand the need," Ray explains. "When we tried to work with the school district, they didn't really see the need for what we were offering. The local scout troops and the Park Service have been excited about our help. The school district wasn't . . . so we moved on!"

Diana could not "move on" to another school district in her rural neighborhood: she had to make the local high school work in spite of the conservatism of the city.   She struggled to find people in her community who

were "willing to try new things." "We are in a conservative area," Diana

notes, "We don't have the resources or the pressures to do progressive things.

Everyone is satisfied with the way things are . . . that is what conservatism

means." When she met with a city official to garner support for her Model

UN program, the official replied, "They [the high school students] won't need

to deal with that [diversity] unless they leave here." When faced with this

kind of challenge, Diana says she just "ignores these kinds of responses . . . at

some point you have to ignore the people who are that narrow and that

intolerant and simply go to other people. I had to find people in the

community that said, 'I did that as a kid and it changed the way I saw the

world'." Those people became Diana's advocates, helping her to provide one

other reason for the county's teens to graduate from high school and escape

the system of poverty. Diana knows her community well because she came

from a similar background. Her own identity has been an extremely

important part of her ability to forge meaningful partnerships with parents

and teachers in her community. They recognize that she understands the

boundaries erected from conservatism and the limiting effects it has on

youth:

> I don't look at my students and think 'where the hell did they come
> from?' I know where they came from. I was there and I don't say they
> are never going to make it. Because I know . . . They don't have to do
> it today, they don't have to do it tomorrow and they don't have to do it
> on schedule. Some day, though, they will. This experience just draws
> them out of their ordinary lives, it gives them a sense that anyone,
> anywhere, at anytime could be asked to take a stand, to be responsible

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for what it going on. Maybe someday they will think, "WOW, I can do this".

Other faculty negotiated different kinds of boundaries as they worked with community partners. One faculty member found the needs of the community she worked with to be "overwhelming" at times. Unexpected socioeconomic circumstances turned what seemed to be a relatively simple tutoring program, into a complex journey for her and her students to understand the interrelationship between race, poverty, and literacy. Students in this faculty member's course could not see how they could begin to make a difference when such systemic barriers were at work.   For other faculty members, lack of space at community sites, transportation concerns and on-site supervision problems provided students with an authentic impression of the way community agencies struggle to get things done. Instead of experiencing an ideal framework for community action, students witnessed first-hand the slow timeframe for change and the frustrations community partners face daily in their work.   Faculty engaged in these problematic partnerships were responsible for turning these pitfalls into promising learning moments.   This faculty member suggests that we need to employ an *adaptable* pedagogical framework for service-learning:

> Never expect events to go exactly as planned! Any
> involvement with community-based organizations
> demands a high degree of flexibility and an ability to "go
> with the flow."   Any complications or moments when
> events do not seem to be going as planned are excellent
> teaching opportunities for showing students the

constraints and complexities that community-based
organizations must deal with all the time.

One of the positive outcomes of these challenges is that most of the faculty
now realize the importance of working extremely closely with their partners
to develop better communication and mutually shared expectations.   New
partnership agreements are now in place on some campuses and additional
principles for partnerships have been established. As one instructor shares:

> A partnership between a suburban private university and a
> public city school can be a win-win situation for everyone.
> Flexibility, commitment, clear, realistic, and mutually supported
> objectives, enthusiasm, and a desire on the part of each group to
> help the other succeed are factors that make the journey and
> challenges of service-learning professionally and personally
> fulfilling for everyone.

Community-university partnerships are bringing our universities
closer to home, serving our cities and our rural landscapes, and expanding
our local networks of practitioners. While campuses across the Midwest are
institutionalizing service to these partners for future generations, community
partners have also incorporated the service provided by the university into
their long-term strategic plans. This formal recognition of binding
partnerships by both constituencies is strong evidence that these campuses
are developing long-lasting links for the public good.

A THOUGHTFUL SPACE:

BUILDING SCHOLARLY SERVICE-LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Designing classrooms to incorporate room for tension, reflection

opportunities, sustainable partnership and fun is a difficult and time-

consuming process. Faculty members often have difficulty finding the

"appropriate balance" between their regular teaching and the new service

component they have added to their course. They struggle with personal

time management issues as well as problems synchronizing the academic and

community clocks.   Faculty need extra time to design courses, work

collaboratively with interdisciplinary faculty teams, and find moments to

negotiate work with community partners. Faculty need room to practice the

art of teaching a service-learning course and they need to hear from

practitioners like Ray and Diana, learn from their successes, and walk away

with tangible practices for their own classrooms. On each of the campuses

studied, for every one faculty member who designed and taught a course,

another five faculty became involved in some way with service-learning.

While this trend shows great excitement on the campuses about this new

pedagogy, there is also some hesitation on the part of other faculty to get

involved.   Some faculty members are wary of the work service-learning

entails or are struggling with fears about developing community

partnerships. Faculty need a more realistic understanding about service-

learning, "In a nutshell," one faculty concludes, "our faculty need more information and education regarding the service-learning experience."

Sharing their Stories

A positive step on these campuses toward a better understanding of the pedagogy of service is the overwhelming number of opportunities for faculty to share their pedagogical stories. Many faculty members have received support to publicly share their innovative new teaching strategies with colleagues at conferences and in scholarly publications. Over a third of the faculty (36%) have been engaged in the scholarship of service-learning: They have published articles about their pedagogy in both service-learning and discipline-based publications. Many of the faculty have presented papers at national conferences and have spoken on panels at local and regional community events. Securing funding for these scholarly endeavors has helped to lend legitimacy to the work and has attracted the interest of other faculty. As one faculty member notes, "Funding, although limited, enabled faculty to establish a higher level of credibility among colleagues and department chairs for the public scholarship they undertook. Funding, like published research, is coin of the realm."

On many campuses the administration has also provided internal forums for discussions about service-learning where faculty can showcase their efforts. Several campuses have created community service awards for

faculty and have profiled service-learning faculty in their pubic relations materials. These newly created awards and public showcases of service-learning pedagogy have lent credibility and legitimacy to the work. It seems; however, that nothing has been more important to faculty than the opportunity to be a part of something beyond the classroom. While many faculty members say they yearn for a place to share pedagogical ideas with others, some campuses have already successfully built and sustained engaged circles of community scholars.

One of the ways campuses are meeting the collegial needs of their faculty is by creating new environments where practitioners can come together to share information about service-learning. An adminstrator interviewed in this study notes:

> Engaged service-learning faculty are our greatest ambassadors – they bring information to cluster meetings, announce opportunities at professional staff days, and generally bring higher visibility to the service-learning movement. Faculty-to-faculty recruitment has been very successful.

Over three quarters of the faculty (82%) participated in some form of scholarly community for service-learning on their campus. These community-building efforts have been an extremely important part of raising awareness and creating visibility of service-learning.

At Penn State, Jeremy Cohen, the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, has established an innovative model for building an academic community on his campus. What started several years ago as a

small collection of faculty teaching service-learning courses getting together

once a month over lunch to talk about their work, has developed into a 40

member, campus-wide, intercollegiate group of Public Scholarship Associates.

They still meet over lunch (one of the reasons for the group's success) and

have conversations about what it means to go out into the community.

Jeremy describes the lunches as "a place where post-modernists, empiricists,

and humanists sit and talk to each other without shouting at each other."

Sometimes there are topics such as "what it means to make research

something of value to the community in which you are conducting the

research," or a faculty member might be asked to give a short presentation on

their work, but most of the time, faculty just "come on in, eat, and see where

the conversation takes them."   Jeremy suggests that the group draws faculty

because of "legitimacy."   He knows that the faculty members do not really

need any motivation to do research or enhance their scholarly interests.

"More than anything," Jeremy says, "Those who are looking to engage

students in civic engagement need 'permission' to do what they do. What we

hand out is permission."   Jeremy also hands out formal appointments to be a

Public Scholarship Associate, course development grants to faculty for their

scholarship, credibility, and a whole lot of appreciation for the work they are

doing. While it is all about service and scholarship, the luncheons are also an

opportunity, as Jeremy recognizes, to fill a collegial gap on our campuses:

> A lot of us came to the university as professionals, as educators,
> because we wanted to be a part of a thoughtful community. This is one

small corner of the university in which that process is intercollegiate, in a manner that cuts across all of the colleges . . . all of the disciplines come together here.

Other campuses are doing their part in creating communities for faculty. The most common form of faculty community is the workshop or seminar format for sharing best practices in service-learning. Workshops have been offered on such topics as exemplary syllabus construction, reflection strategies, and group facilitation techniques. One faculty member notes, "Through this training, our faculty became more comfortable and proficient with leading meaningful reflection sessions after engaging their students in service-learning projects." Email lists and list-serves to share timely information about internal and external service-learning events are providing visibility for community-building efforts. On several campuses discussions about service-learning are being held at the department level, with chairs and area deans becoming more involved. Campuses are recognizing the value of providing networking opportunities and are taking the steps necessary to engage faculty at both the pedagogical and scholarship level.

One of the most important results of these new scholarly communities is the institutional responses they have garnered. These faculty gatherings have been the beginning of important discussions on campuses about the role of community service in promotion and tenure decisions. On four of the campuses, promotion and tenure guidelines are currently under review to

consider service-learning activities. At least two departments are now
adding participation in community service initiatives to their hiring
advertisements. Out of faculty meetings like these also came new guidelines
for determining course-loads.

On Jeremy's campus there is now a very strong sense of what it means
to be a public scholar and an ever-growing community to support them.   His
hope was always to have "faculty view their intellectual work as public and
have students come to understand that the work they do is scholarship and
has consequence beyond the classroom, in the public arena."   More and more
faculty on his campus are recognizing the significance of viewing their
intellectual work in terms of its public value and are joining this community.
But while public scholarship is catching on as a grassroots effort, Jeremy
realizes there is still room to grow:

> There is no THERE, there. Because we are so large there are many
> pockets of activity, probably overlapping, not only in goals, but in using
> resources, applying for grants, and that is a frustration. More and
> more people recognize that this office is a place where people can check
> in, but . . . We need a center."

THE CAMEL'S NOSE:

CREATING SUSTAINABLE SERVICE-LEARNING ON CAMPUS

When Diana, went "begging" for money to support her innovative
Model UN service-learning program, she likened herself to the proverbial
camel's nose.   Apparently, a cold camel who is close enough to a tent will
edge his nose into the warmth as night begins to fall.   If one is not careful

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and stakes the camel up too close to the tent, that smart camel will come right on in and make himself comfortable. While this old public administration metaphor may not perfectly apply to the process of leveraging funds for service-learning initiatives, Diana notes the practice may need to begin by "assuring people that the program won't take up too much room, cost too much, require anything from any other department or interrupt anyone's life." "You need to get in there just a bit, Diana suggests, "do the footwork. Say, 'I need you to recognize that this is important and support it' . . . get a little funding here and there." Diana also encourages us to say, "this is a good idea" enough times so people will start believing it themselves and conclude, "yes, I have the money." Securing a small grant from Pennsylvania Campus Compact was just the beginning of her journey toward administrative ownership of her program. While the funding provided was relatively limited, it created the foundation and rationale for leveraging future resources committed to existing or new service-learning initiatives.

Diana also credits much of the shift in fiscal attitude toward her program to it being "the right thing to do." She is not all that idealistic though and knows that her program also has, to the delight of her Provost, helped to sustain a group of high school students interested in enrolling at the college. She does believe, however, that helping to create a program for impoverished students to introduce them to diverse perspectives is part of the success. "I believe that if I put forth a program that wasn't a good answer to

our elitism, and our intolerance, and our dismissiveness about other countries," Diana argues, " I don't know that it would be funded. I think that sometimes, some things that we do draw out our better selves."

The other "cornerstone" to the success of Diana's program is the campus' center for service-learning.. "The Director of this office owned the program right away," Diana offers, "she helped me to brainstorm . . . she set up meetings with the Provost and President and community partners . . . she sustained the contact with the high schools and she provided the student coordinator for the program." Without the support of the center, Diana says, "From word Go, there would have been nothing."

Like Diana, many faculty rely heavily on the support from campus centers for service. Leveraging more resources to sustain these places and the people who keep them running is a concern of many of the faculty. On several campuses new centers, offices, or programs have been created recently to coordinate service-learning initiatives.   New staff has been added to existing offices and in some cases faculty have been invited to help coordinate future service-learning initiatives.   Student-led initiatives have also gained credibility and are being allocated resources for development. In addition, new graduate level service-learning programs and interdisciplinary programs are being designed and implemented. These are all positive signs that service-learning is being institutionalized at an organizational level.

One of the most important aspects of these new initiatives is the collaborative and coordinated nature of the work being done. Interdisciplinary programs are emerging on several campuses. On other campuses new offices are bringing together previously disparate programs that were struggling to sustain themselves. Other campuses are forming partnerships between programs to "leverage maximum opportunities" and resources. Jeremy notes that this collaborative model is important for funding as well:

> I've put together the funding from a lot of different pots. Some of it comes from my back pocket, meaning my office. I've convinced other offices to put some money into public scholarship as well. It is more important that people are involved in it than it is how much they give. We invest in it by involving as many people as possible.

There is no doubt that in addition to a collaborative team of supporters, it is also key to have an administrative champion. Where programs have not flourished there has been a lack of upper level ownership. At least one key level administrator (e.g. a president, provost, vice-president or dean) on almost every campus is now enthusiastic about service-learning and is directly involved in promoting service-learning on the campus and in the community. In several cases this administrative support is provided directly in dollars from newly revised budgets. On a broader level, several key administrators are now adding service-learning initiatives to their strategic planning goals.

Building grassroots support step-by-step, little-by-little, through faculty initiatives, centers for service, administrative ownership, and student-run programs is essential for sustaining service-learning on our campuses.   Jeremy succinctly reminds us, "Word of mouth is always the most powerful. All the brochures in the world are meaningless if you don't have a strong cohort of active scholars."

DISCUSSION

Service-learning faculty are designing new pedagogical strategies that are transforming the curriculum and cultivating the growth of community partnerships for student learning. Faculty members are inviting conflict, tension, and flexibility into classroom spaces as they make more room than expected for the messy, emotional work of service.   Grassroots efforts with faculty to expand service-learning on their campuses have been extremely successful and more faculty are becoming engaged on these campuses as a direct result of a new awareness, visibility, and credibility that these successful faculty members have created. On most of the faculty members' campuses there is now the support of key administrators who are taking ownership of service-learning programs and are providing direct resources to new initiatives that will sustain this work well into the future. Collaborative scholarly communities are emerging that not only support a system for engaged faculty, but a fertile ground for essential policy-making discussions that have the potential to change these faculty's professional lives. The

communities served by these institutions have already benefited from innovative, direct short-term projects. Faculty members are witnessing the growth of their initial partnerships into broader collaborations that unite diverse constituents who share a common vision for the public good. More importantly, most communities are well on their way to experiencing the long-term benefits of the services provided by a committed, engaged, and civic-minded educational neighbor.

We have heard a great deal about the challenges faculty face in and outside of the classroom. New programs should take the lead in providing technical assistance to faculty. Faculty would benefit greatly from more opportunities to learn about innovative service-learning pedagogy, reflection strategies, evaluation techniques, and principles of community partnering. We need to build on the existing knowledge of seasoned faculty by providing forums for them to showcase their work and mentor colleagues new to the field. We have also learned that one of the most successful means of recruiting new faculty to service-learning and supporting existing faculty is through the creation of communities where the process and outcomes of service can be shared. If we do anything for the next generation of service-learning faculty it should be to create scholarly spaces where the pioneering programs of tomorrow's campuses and communities can become an essential part of the university's everyday discourse.

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CHAPTER SIX

Preface

Nearly absent from most of the discourse in service-learning are the voices of community partners who have provided the scaffolding for student transformation. In 1997, when I co-wrote this piece with my community partner, the service-learning literature was completely devoid of the responses, reflections and ruminations of our partners in service. To help fill that gap, Catherine Sameh, the manager of one of the few remaining feminist bookstores in the U.S., and I co-wrote this piece as a conversation in two voices, a narrative of our relationship and an analysis of feminist partnerships.

When I was asked to write the piece by the editor of the anthology where it ultimately was published, she asked for a theoretical feminist analysis of community partnerships, expecting something to emerge in one voice that might start to redefine contemporary thinking about best practices in community alliance work. After a cursory look at the literature, it was evident that not only was the work on partnership-building thin, but what was offered only included the lenses of the faculty members teaching the courses or campus administrators responsible for higher education community outreach efforts. I originally considered interviewing my community partners, analyzing the narratives, and writing up a piece that theorized from their collective voices. However, the complete lack of a

partner's voice in the literature urged me ask Catherine to speak directly, in her own voice, without translation, negotiation, or diffusion from my own scholarly lens. We offered the piece as a conversation between partners -- a conversation grounded in recognizable feminist theory and lived experience. Our writing together was a profound scholarly statement that demanded authentic collaboration and reciprocity between partners. We were one of the first service-learning partnerships in the movement to write together for an academic anthology articulating the centrality of partners' voices in the creation and sustainability of service-learning work. Our co-authorship illuminated the importance of both situated knowledge and the co-creation of community knowledges.

In "*Urban Partners in Conversation,*" we explore the process of community partnering in dialogue. We offer a set of six principles of feminist community partnering which have emerged from our collaborative efforts: (1) building on the founding ideals, (2) reinforcing feminist community values, (3) providing feminist space, (4) encouraging inclusive collaboration, (5) enlarging the community of women, and (6) empowering community members. Finally, we explore how our partnership has helped us to personally re-examine our multiple roles as activists and educators.

Urban Partners in Conversation: Building Feminist Educational Alliances Between a Women's Bookstore and the University

> It's very much like a trapeze artist trick. Everything depends on the connection of the two trapeze artists' limbs so that one or both is not dropped. We've received a lot of instruction about how to do our community work, but that's kind of like telling a person on a trapeze how to catch the person who will be swinging towards them. It seems more like something you just have to feel and know. The other part . . . is the connection in the middle. The two artists are so vulnerable at that point, especially if one has leaped off the swing and is spinning through the air towards the other artist who is supposed to catch them. (Capstone Student)

Forming partnerships between the academy and the community can feel like the trapeze act described above by one of our community-based learning students. Both activist and academic are rooted on their own platforms, having to leap from what is known and comfortable. Both of us may hang on to the bar for a long time, not wanting to let go of the world we understand, but longing to create a new connection that we know will bring important life to our work. Throwing ourselves across the divide certainly can seem risky -- learning something new may force us to change our beliefs, our work, and our lives. Our prior relationships, career success, and selves may be vulnerable to dissonance and disruption. But somehow we know we have to do it. If we do not, it may mean leaving so many others behind on each platform, without the opportunity to fly.

In this essay (offered as a dialog) we explore the process of community partnering between feminists in the academy and feminists in the community. We share excerpts from a series of conversations between Melissa (the women's studies professor) and Catherine (the feminist bookstore founder and activist). The two of us have been involved in a five year community-university partnership that has been the basis for a series of women's studies service-learning capstone courses. Our students have participated in outreach projects to women and girls throughout our urban community. We have been extremely fortunate in that our partnership has rarely felt as personally risky or vulnerable as the trapeze act depicted above. While any boundaries between us have seemed very permeable, it may be that the safety net below us has been the key to our comfortable connection. That net is pieced together with our shared commitment to our community, our common feminist ideologies, and similar academic and activist histories.

We suggest that our partnership has been successful for both our students and our community because of the emphasis we placed on feminist community-building efforts. We focus our discussion on some of the key challenges we faced as partners and how this work has affected student learning, the bookstore, and our partnership. We offer a set of six principles of feminist community partnering which have emerged from our collaborative efforts: (1) building on the founding ideals, (2) reinforcing feminist community values, (3) providing feminist space, (4) encouraging inclusive

collaboration, (5) enlarging the community of women, and (6) empowering community members.   Finally, we explore how our partnership has helped us to personally re-examine our multiple roles as activists and educators.

THE ACTIVIST AND THE ACADEMY:
A HISTORY OF COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

While our community does sometimes seem like a circus, we actually work in a city of bridges. Many of Portland's bridges cross rivers and highways, in fact, a rusty iron bridge across the Willamette river geographically separates our university from our bookstore. In the passage below, Native American Portland activist and bookstore volunteer, Schar Freeman, identifies the need for other bridges in our metro area that are perhaps more metaphorical and stretch between neighborhoods, race and class borders, and generations.

> We can actually go into the community, get out there with the homeless girls. Be out there in the community because they're not going to come in here. So we have to find a *way to bridge* and do outreach. Those are our future women. Those are our future voices. Those are our future dreams and I feel responsible for nurturing them. . . We can't keep thinking someone else is going to fix it. (Schar Freeman, Bookstore Volunteer).

These kinds of bridges are not new to feminism. They have been at the heart of much discussion about multicultural alliances, border crossings, and academic and community collaborations.

Feminist activists Jael Silliman and Anannya Bhattacharjee (1999)

present the relationship between the academy and the activist as a

"crossover" and suggest that when these kinds of relationships do form that it

is usually because of a single individual seeking to "bridge the divide" (p.

125). They argue that we can break down institutionally erected obstacles to

our partnerships and make a commitment to developing activist/academic

linkages by (1) giving activists access to the university's institutional

resources and (2) making a commitment to an on-going intellectual exchange

between these two communities (1999, p. 133). While some argue (Hope,

1999) that the connections between activism and education are no more than

transitory and weak, many of us entrenched in the service-learning

movement witness stronger and more permanent partnerships forming

everyday. Mary Trigg and Barbara Balliet (2000), from the Women's Studies

Program at Rutgers, suggest that when we approach our community as a "a

partner in education" rather than a "set of clients in need of service" and we

encourage mutuality, that we begin to tear down the walls that seem to

separate the university and the community (p. 91). Because women's

studies grew out of a social movement, they argue, we should be able to rely

on many strong and reciprocal connections that already exist between us (p.

98). We believe that because there has always been a sharing of

participation between the bookstore and the university that our partnership

has not felt many of the tensions described by other feminists doing this

work.   We have been in collaboration since the founding of the store and have shared the vision of sustaining intellectual communities wherever we reside.   The bridge-building did not fall on the shoulders of one individual woman, it began with three, and is now shared by many.

Catherine: Our partnership between the local feminist bookstore and the university began in 1993 with the founding of the store, In Other Words (IOW), and its sister organization, The Women's Community Education Project (WCEP). Johanna Brenner, coordinator of Portland State University's (PSU) Women's Studies Program, Catherine Tetrick, a child-care and reproductive rights activist, and I founded the store together. We had been friends and reproductive rights activists together and began talking about opening a women's bookstore in early 1993. Johanna was looking forward to a sabbatical, and Catherine and I were exploring possible career transitions. We had been customers of A Woman's Place, the feminist bookstore in Portland that opened in the late 1970s and closed in the late 1980s. We all really missed that place, missed the community space and place for intellectual exploration. We felt certain that Portland could support a women's bookstore and began doing research on how to open such a place.

We created our organization as a non-profit, the WCEP, because we knew that the market would never fully support our project. We knew that the sales alone of a feminist bookstore would never cover all our expenses: staff, rent, and all the programming we wanted to do. We were not in this to

run a business, although that is a big part of what we do, but to create a lasting community space, where all women and their friends could discover the rich world of women's community, literature and culture. We wanted the bookstore to be the place to go after leaving the university, or for those who never had access to the university.

Naturally, women's bookstores have a historic relationship with local women's studies departments. Some feminist bookstore founders in other cities have been women's studies professors. Johanna was ideally situated to bring fellow academics on board when we started. We formed an advisory committee of 50 women (and a few men) to help us order initial inventory, plan events and serve as ongoing advisors to the project. Many were from the Women's Studies Department at PSU and others were social workers, activists and other feminist professionals in Portland. Much of our retail booksales come through the academic texts we provide each quarter to PSU women's studies courses. Students from the university have also been earning practicum credit at our store since we opened. We collaborate with women's studies in many other ways as well, from co-sponsoring local lectures to planning fundraising activities. Our most recent collaborations have been part of our capstone partnership.

THE CAPSTONE PARTNERSHIP

Melissa: In 1995, we instituted a new series of general education courses at PSU requiring each student to take a senior capstone course. The

six-credit capstone is intended to be the point in each student's academic career where she puts her academic expertise to use meeting a community need. She works with an interdisciplinary team of students and members of the local community in an effort to, as our university motto suggests, "Let Knowledge Serve the City." In the spring of 1996, I received a grant from the university to develop a series of long-term partnerships with area women's organizations that would provide experiential learning environments for our students. At the same time, these partnerships would help to meet the economic, health, literary, cultural, and educational needs of our city's women and girls. Our goal was to build a network of community partners that would come to learn about each other over the years, hold yearly conferences, and collectively work together as academic and activist partners. Our students would be introduced to these various agencies through the capstone projects with the hope that we might also socialize them into our feminist community and build lasting relationships for their future volunteerism, activism, and professional careers. We called this program Women's Community Partnerships. We piloted two capstone projects that spring with Portland's YWCA and a local family-based service agency, Healthy Start.

In the fall of the same year we met for the first time. While I had been buying my course books from the store and we had spoken several times while making orders, we came to know each other when we worked together

on an oral history capstone documenting the founding of the city's feminist

non-profit, women-run health clinic, All Women's Health Services.

Catherine: Our partnership with the capstone program began in the

fourth year of the bookstore's operation (1996). I was asked to participate in

the All Women's Health Services capstone. I had worked at the clinic for

many years, right up until the time we opened the bookstore. I participated

in the capstone as a narrator, recalling my time as a health worker and clinic

supervisor. In talking about that experience, I relayed what that job had

taught me about building and sustaining a feminist organization, the

challenges and rewards, and how that experience has carried over into

running WCEP.

The next year we began developing a new one-quarter, ten-week

capstone, the CityGirls project. Still relatively new in the community, the

WCEP hoped to use the capstone program as an outreach tool, linking up

with social service and social justice organizations that work with girls and

young women.

Melissa: When we started the CityGirls capstone project we really had

no idea what we were doing. We knew that we wanted to do some kind of

outreach to teen girls, but I remember us struggling to figure out just what

the project might look like. As our community partner for the project, the

WCEP wanted lists of community advocates who might be potential liaisons

for the store in years to come – school teachers, counselors, agency people

who might be able to help with educational programming for teens, special events, and other activities.   We worked with an interdisciplinary group of senior students who also brought varied interests and community experiences to the project. Their goals helped to shape our community work that term.   Half of the students in the first class spent the quarter conducting interviews with community advocates, gathering information, and creating a contact list. The other half of the class met with small groups of girls from various organizations in what we called rap sessions, spaces for identity exploration and self-exploration.   Out of those sessions came transcripts of conversations, amazing artwork, teen poetry, essays, and fiction. All of these contributions from teens ended up being the content for the first Portland-based teen girl zine, *TRIX: Drugs, Sex, and Other Pesky Things*. The girls, our rap sessions, and zine publishing became the primary focus of that term's work. We quickly lost site of our initial community outreach goals.

In that first capstone, we focused less on building our partnership and more on getting the CityGirls project off the ground. We were thinking about window displays and zine distribution, not about how to build a larger community that would support girls' needs today and in the future. The readings I chose for the class were about feminist bookstores and the girl zine revolution.   They were very specific and were meant to introduce students only to the current project.   I know I was not thinking long-term. I was

trying to meet the immediate needs of the project and find something fun and thoughtful that might get my students thinking about feminism. It was my first time doing work with teen girls, studying the literature on adolescence, and exploring zine cultures. It was not until subsequent capstones that we began to fully develop our outreach work.

Catherine: Our initial goal in working with the capstone program, particularly the first CityGirls project, was to expand our outreach to communities and individuals serving girls and young women. We felt this was a particularly important group. We had not done any serious target outreach to girls, and wanted to make them aware of us and build our teen base. Now that the partnership has grown, our goals have grown beyond outreach. Through our work with the CityGirls project, we have built our inventory for young people, increased our zine section and networked with many social service organizations. With each course we develop real working and community-building relationships with students, many of whom are experiencing a feminist organization for the first time. This has become the most rewarding result of our work with the capstone program, and goes back to our original mission of providing feminist community and education.

Melissa: After several years of collaborative work, our partnership has taken on much more meaningful directions. While the CityGirls project is still at the heart of our collaboration, our success together has been rooted in our feminist community-building efforts. We have moved beyond a project-

to-project framework. We have now helped the bookstore and our university become cornerstones for feminist work in our city.   Between myself and my colleagues at PSU we have collaborated with the WCEP on twelve different capstone projects. These projects have focused on sexism in children's literature, breast cancer activism, lesbian history, homeless youth, and teen girls. Through this work we have broadened our community to include advocates and activists serving K-12, women's health organizations, other non-profits, grassroots political groups, and local government agencies. We have grounded ourselves along the way in what we have defined below as six principles of feminist community partnering.

PRINCIPLES OF FEMINIST COMMUNITY PARTNERING

(1) Building on the Founding Ideals

We have learned over time that one of the most important first steps in partnering has been to remember how and why the organization was founded.   While the history of In Other Words is a comparatively short one, calling on its founding circumstances, foremothers, and lessons learned has been a very meaningful process for our partnership.

Melissa: I was fortunate to learn first-hand in the second year of our partnership the value of turning toward the past for insight and vision.   We designed a capstone where students would be helped the store to document its history and to celebrate its five-year anniversary. The resulting historical

collection, *Pages Turning*, has become an essential document for each of my future capstone students to read.   That collection reminds all of us of the struggles of starting a non-profit feminist organization, but more importantly, it forms the basis for our collective understanding of the meaningful ideals the WCEP created for education and community outreach. The collection highlighted the importance of creating a "family of women" at the bookstore, the commitment to diversity, and the making of feminist intellectual space. Each term my students grasp on to the history of the bookstore as a place to ground themselves.   They have a circle of women in that collection who become more real to them through reading their stories. It becomes their first connection to real feminists in the course, some of whom they will come to know personally over the term. It also helps them to recognize how effective an individual woman can be in making a difference as well as the power of a feminist collective, of women working together. Alongside readings on feminist bookstores and feminist organizations, this collection makes the work we do each quarter pertinent to our own city.

Catherine: This project was so important for WCEP. It gave founders, staff, and key volunteers the opportunity to articulate what WCEP/IOW meant to them, why they did what they did, and what the challenges and rewards were. Articulating the history and then seeing it in the context of a beautifully crafted collection like *Pages Turning* had a tremendous impact on all of us. We knew we had blossomed into a really unique and vital

organization, but it helped us recommit and/or deepen our commitments to WCEP and to each other. It was also tremendously affirming and gratifying to see all our hard work documented and celebrated in this way. We use *Pages Turning* to orient new volunteers to our history and mission. It brings our mission statement alive in ways that a three-hour orientation cannot do. It is also a wonderful document for founders, staff, and long-term volunteers to review, a boost on those days when we feel worn out!

(2) Reinforcing Feminist Community Values

Another important aspect of our work together has been our sharing of a feminist framework in our approach to the partnership. Feminist scholar Jo Freeman (1995*)* reminds us that successful feminist movements for social change emphasize their commitment to sharing and reinforcing feminist values in their work. While not so clearly articulated as they could be, we have developed a working ideology and a set of goals that are feminist and community-based. These goals now move beyond one project and reflect both of our commitments to bringing feminism, an understanding of gender inequality, and anti-oppression strategies to our community. Bookstore co-founder Catherine Tetrick identifies this goal to negotiate feminist values within local women's communities: "We'd like to be able to do more -- bringing women to feminism in a way that is not scary and is accessible at wherever place they are." While as partners we share a certain set of feminist values, they are not necessarily reflected by all of those with whom

we work with each term.   Much of the success of our partnering has been the internal reinforcement of our beliefs, coming home to this partnership knowing that we have something in common. But the more challenging work that we do together is through our outreach, where we meet the not-so-like-minded.   It is at those junctures that we have to stretch and acknowledge that the differences in our perspectives may actually be able to carry us toward a new community vision.   We are not just educating the community, but we are learning many lessons of our own.

Melissa: While we never sat down to write out a shared ideology for our partnership (which might be a great idea!), we have, over time developed a working set of principles for our projects that is feminist and community-based. I see these goals focusing on education, outreach, and diversity.   I view these goals as moving beyond one project, guiding us toward social change, toward creating a more just society. I have learned a great deal from my work with the WCEP about the importance of sharing a set of ideological principles with community partners.   Most of this learning has come out of both the challenges I have faced when trying to broaden our community and the realization that I have taken for granted the set of beliefs we share.

In our efforts to build feminist community for the bookstore, our university, and our city we have encountered potential partners who do not share our ideological beliefs. In the CityGirls class we have met many agencies that have laid out objectionable terms for our collaborations. For

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example, one after-school program for girls indicated that they would not work with us if we continued to carry coming-out stories in our zines. A principal of a local middle school refused to participate unless we gave him the right to edit (read censor) the material girls submitted to our zine. Most recently, we discovered after several weeks of working with a transition house for teens that the girls living there were being forced to take birth control pills without their consent.

Each of these experiences has made us return to the ideological commitments we have made in our work. While we still wanted to build community and reach the teens isolated behind these walls of homophobia, sexism, and patriarchal control, we have had to question the value of establishing relationships with these agents. To solve these dilemmas we have relied on all three of the shared goals. My students have prioritized the needs of the girls we are trying to reach and have focused on the diversity of perspective, voice, and self-expression. At the same time, the classes have each decided that we also have to stress the educational role in our work. One student set up an appointment to discuss homophobia with the agency representative. She brought with her to the meeting literature on the topic, statistics about queer youth, and more stories written by lesbian teens. A group of students went to visit the principal and talked to him about the silencing of girls in our society and the need for uncensored spaces where they can communicate. The two students working at the transition house

met with the head of the house to inform her of the girls' desires not to take birth control, to have more control over their own bodies, and to receive some respect for their personal choices.

Catherine: Our ideological challenges have come mostly from within the feminist/activist community rather than from "outsiders."   For example, some people feel we should do more on trans issues or, in fact, less on trans issues and more on lesbian-feminist issues. These challenges have not been particularly fierce, and are usually easily met by reaffirming that we are a place for all women, all feminist voices. We also encourage debates on feminist issues and the kinds of communities we are trying to build.

The stories from the students illustrate just how important feminist debate, education, and activism are, and how organizations that serve girls and women are not inherently feminist. I am so impressed that the students confronted these organizations and attempted to change minds and/or policies, while following through on their commitments to the girls within the organizations. I imagine this was an empowering experience for the students, that it tested their own commitments to feminist ideals. I wonder if any of these students began to self-identify as feminists through this process and found their feminist voices of critique and resistance to homophobia, censorship and class/race oppression (out of which forced birth control comes). I wonder this particularly because I have observed many college age women

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rejecting the label of feminism even while practicing its tenets, or rejecting the notion of women's oppression until they directly experience or witness it.

Melissa: At first these issues caused a great deal of conflict within our classroom. The students are from a range of disciplines, which means they have not come to the capstone with a strong background in feminist theory or women's studies. Many have never studied oppression, homophobia, racism or classism. Some students are angered that they have found themselves sitting in a feminist classroom, volunteering at a feminist bookstore. These students signed up for the capstone because of their interest in working with teen girls in the city, not, as one student put it, "to be indoctrinated into the feminist movement." They are resistant to the use of feminist jargon, feminist scholarship, and feminist methodologies. They write about feminism as radical, exclusionary, biased, and reactionary. Some students were "a bit embarrassed" and "taken aback" when they read the first IOW newsletter and the front page was an article about a lesbian volunteer's experience. These students thought the story was okay, but did not think it was a good idea that it was the first thing readers would notice about the store.

I also remember other issues that prompted one woman who was very new to feminism to search for as many "male-bashing" incidents as she could find in our work. She wrote one journal that shared how "unnerved" she had become when she shared her well-researched bibliography of teen books. She thought that the WCEP seemed "anti-male" because she was asked to

focus on books, "that were only about girls and that did not have a lot of men in them." So, the reinforcing of feminist values within our classroom collective has not always been easy. Before those students got to the point where they were ready to take on the community's homophobia and racism, they had to struggle internally with their own. The good news is that they usually asked for help in this process. For example, the teen bibliographer ended her journal with this request, "I am wondering about why this [wanting books with female protagonists] is and would be most obliged if you could tell me."

I have reported elsewhere (Gilbert, Christophersen & Holdt, 1997; Gilbert, 2000) that for some students the process of developing a more critical consciousness begins (and sometimes ends) with a new awareness, a new perspective, or at the very least a new of way of seeing the world. I use many feminist pedagogical strategies to help students in the classroom stretch beyond their "comfort zones" and to grasp some of the basic tenets of feminism. At the end of each quarter most of my students describe a new understanding of the complexities of oppression, an appreciation for diversity, and a realization about the relationship between power and knowledge. While many students also start to identify as feminist by the term's end, others may at least identify with many of the ideas, beliefs, perspectives, and struggles of the feminist women and girls they have met through these capstones. Students who come to the capstone with previously formed

feminist identities write about our work together as strengthening, deepening, and renewing their commitment to women. Others, like this capstone student, find themselves within a broad definition of feminism with which they feel comfortable: "I have come to realize that I am a feminist, where originally I would not have thought I was one. I am glad that I was able to learn new definitions of feminism and my perspective of feminism has changed."

Catherine: Our commitment to working with a broad and inclusive definition of feminism and to being a space for all women is really our guiding light in all we do. One of the most delightful rewards of working with the capstone program has been to bring in students who might not have come to us otherwise, and to see students develop feminist consciousness. For many of the students, WCEP is the first feminist organization with which they have had contact. As they work with us, they see what feminism looks like "on the ground."

While many volunteers enter WCEP already identifying as feminists, a majority of the time they deepen their commitments to feminism and feminist activism and education as they become more and more integrated into the organization. They develop commitments to feminist ideals like democratic participation, collaborative work, and self-empowerment through education and activism. We founded the store with a broad definition of feminism, with the understanding that there are different feminisms,

different notions of what feminism means to people. We operate each day with that assumption, and the commitment that springs from that to be as inclusive as possible in all that we do. That has been our basis for building community, and we return to that whenever something challenging comes up.

We have not had quite the same challenges that the capstone students faced, but do have times when we need to internally revisit our mission statement, our original vision, ideologies, and values. Most recently we did this at a strategic planning session with our board of directors, staff and volunteers. We were looking at the next three to five years, what we wanted to accomplish, what our strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities are. Our on-going partnership with the university capstone program prompted many of us to question our activist role. While we all agreed that we are a community space for all women, there were some competing notions of what our emphasis is: Is our focus promoting women's literature? Is it creating a space for activists and organizers? Is our priority doing feminist education? Can we do all of this successfully? The conversation was quite dynamic and showed that volunteers are drawn to us for all of the above reasons, that we really do play a unique role in the community because we are a place for women's community, culture, literature, education and activism. It is an ambitious project, but women's bookstores have historically played these multiple roles in their communities and still do so today. For this reason, we are so well positioned to work with the capstone program.

Whatever the project--breast cancer, women's health, girl power -- we are positioned to support those projects and to really benefit from them.

(3) Providing a Feminist Space

Many bookstore volunteers, students, and community members strongly value the intellectual, social, and community space provided by IOW. It is a place that emphasizes personal sharing and emotional ties, the socialization of new members (Freeman, 1995, p. 403), high levels of respect and trust, and the appreciation of diversity:

> Here is where I feel at home! I think its an invigorating place to go where your thing, what is of interest to you as a feminist or a lesbian or a women, are there, present, on the table. (Meg Daly, Bookstore Volunteer)

Our partnership has worked to value and maintain that space and to bring new people into it. Providing feminist spaces has also meant introducing teen girls to IOW, making the PSU classroom feminist, and taking the ideals of feminist space out into schoolrooms, coffee shops, street corners, and agency meeting rooms.

Feminist historians have illustrated the ways in which women were segregated into a separate sphere, what Carroll Smith-Rosenberg (1985) calls a female world, where women developed a sense of sisterhood, formed networks of friendship, love, and support that enabled them to maximize

their freedom and exert political and social influence. Leila Rupp and Verta Taylor (1987) suggest that these women-committed women formed relationships through a process of female bonding that were central to the success of feminist activity throughout history. Since its founding, the bookstore wanted to create what Evans and Boyte (1986) would call a "free space" – a setting between our private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision. One of the founders of IOW describes her initial feelings about creating the feminist space at the bookstore:

> We really felt like what we needed in this community was space by and for women . . . an intellectual space designed by and for women that was not university-based, something for women who have never had access to the university . . . We felt that a women's bookstore was the ideal kind of place to create that kind of intellectual community, for a number of reasons. One it was a very public space and it was also an important organizing tool. . . .to create a community space where women could come together to talk about contemporary issues affecting them and make those connections. (Catherine Tetrick, Bookstore Founder)

For IOW the "free space" was designed primarily as a women's space where autonomous female subcultures could articulate their individual problems, build social analyses of their own oppression, and organize communities. Our partnership has continually emphasized the necessity of this real, urban, women's space. We collect there, laugh there, and make important decisions there.

Melissa. One of the challenges we have faced as partners is that our university classrooms are not free, woman-only spaces. My students include

both women and men and I try to provide equitable experiences in the community for each gender. At the same time, I encourage students to recognize that gender is a social process which greatly affects the potential work we can do in our communities. One particular incident reflects the different definitions of space appropriate to the bookstore and the university. During our second CityGirls capstone course there was a male student who wanted to volunteer at the store. His desire to participate at the store raised important questions for bookstore staff about the work of volunteers and the meaning of women's community space. In the classroom, this experience provided an important learning moment. Many of the women students were outraged that there was any questioning of this male's volunteerism. They felt that the store was participating in "reverse sexism." As a class, we had to work through what it means to be an outsider, how more privileged people (in this case a man) can most effectively work to end oppression, how we can be effective allies, and why many women's groups have stressed the importance of women's space. The students who felt the store was being anti-male did change their minds once we discussed the incident, mostly because so many of their peers engaged with them in a very honest and painful dialog about their own personal need for women's space in their lives.

Catherine: No man had ever asked to volunteer in the store, so we never really had a policy. We never explicitly said that WCEP was women-only space, but only women had been interested in volunteering. This

situation prompted a discussion among WCEP volunteers about what our policy should be. We do have many male customers--fathers, brothers, husbands, partners, feminist men--who really support us. Their support is critical and we welcome it. But women volunteer here because it really is a store by, for and about women; it is women's space, one of the few places that is entirely women-run and women-focused. In this sense it is "safe" space, that is, safe from the everyday sexism encountered in integrated spaces. Our discussion led to a consensus that we welcomed the participation of men in a more secondary way (i.e., helping with events, support of women staff, basically anything but working directly with customers/community), but that the sort of "front-line" visible IOW representatives should be women.

Some students felt it was problematic to assign men a behind the scenes role. Although many students did not initially agree with our policy, it sounds like they came to understand how this feminist model might work, how women-run organizations empower women as leaders/workers/activists. At the time, I worried that we might have alienated some women from the store.

Melissa: Very few of the students have felt alienated from the store. Quite the contrary, these kinds of debates have moved most of them to want to be more a part of a community that builds mutual understandings. At the beginning of each term, the students do the scavenger hunt exercise where they note items at the store that might be of interest to teens. That

exercise gets students into the store for the first time in a very casual and fun way. Sometimes students walk in the store and it is radically different from anything they have ever known before, but they quickly find resources that speak to them.   Most of them immediately want to take a friend there and are very excited about getting teens interested in the place. As one student just wrote to me this morning, "I've never been any place that creates such a safe atmosphere for girls to be their true selves."

The students who actually volunteer on-site at the store describe a wide range of sentiments about their time there, from "catching the volunteer spirit" to finding enormous pride in their accomplishments. The most compelling response that I hear from many of these students is that they finally have had the opportunity to be "a part of something," "to be more connected," and "more bound to the world" through their volunteerism at the store.   Others describe volunteering as helping them to establish new relationships in their city.   One CityGirls' student explains that she was able to "expand that web of community involvement." While providing a space that feels safe, comfortable, and like home for my students, IOW has also opened up many doors for them as well. Another student wrote of her time there as raising her awareness of other possibilities: "there has been a shift in how I think about what forums I have access to . . . like doors opening enough that it isn't so difficult to go on in the new rooms."

Catherine: I saw students making those connections when we worked

with the capstone class on our five-year history and celebration.   Students

were integrated into our volunteer base through their work here. They

developed an elaborate window display, interviewed volunteers, board

members and staff at WCEP, and became part of the collective of volunteers

here, not just for the school semester, but beyond.   They saw that feminist

work is social and fun, empowering and inclusive.

(4) Encouraging Inclusive Collaboration

One of the key challenges of our partnership has been to work in ways

that promote multiple and diverse voices in decision-making, including

students, community partners, faculty, and bookstore affiliates. By using

consensus-building, consciousness-raising, and other feminist processes we

try to identity common problems and strategize about solutions. An

appreciation of diversity is one of the primary learning objectives of our

capstone program. As these statements by IOW volunteers below suggest,

building a diverse and inclusive community is also one of the strongest

ideological principles guiding IOW:

> If there was one thing that I wanted people to know about In Other
> Words it is that it's a place to build community. If you don't feel like
> your needs or perspective are being reflected at the bookstore, then
> come to us, let's reflect it. Nobody's going to be opposed to you. (Meg
> Daly, Bookstore Volunteer)

> I think women are the visionaries because we see the future. We can
> see further ahead because of our connection with the universe. As
> women of the community we can't just keep opening our door and
> saying we know we need to have more voice with women of color. We

need to be more active in reaching out there. Not expecting them to just come through the door. It would really just fuel my fire to really get it happening. Get it happening.(Schar Freeman, Bookstore Volunteer).
We have had to be accountable in this work to varying constituencies.

As white women from two institutions perceived by the community as elite, our accountability is often called upon. Reaching out has also meant reaching in to find out who we are, why we are doing this work, and how we believe it will really benefit others. Feminist Siobhan Ring (1999) reminds us, "If we are going to delve into people's lives, tell their stories, mold their words, or justify theories on their backs, we owe them a lot" (p. 236).

Catherine: WCEP is definitely a social change organization. We believe in the power of writing, debate, dialogue, reading, activism and education to change lives. We reflect this in our organizational structure, which utilizes a traditional non-profit structure board of directors, small staff, large pool of volunteers, with an emphasis on volunteer participation and leadership.

One of our main goals in founding WCEP was to provide an accessible feminist community space, which would both reflect and attract a diversity of voices. In choosing our inventory, organizing our events, and integrating volunteers, we try to facilitate feminist debates and showcase the diversity of feminist ideas and contributions.

Diversifying our volunteer base in terms of race and class is one of our biggest and most interesting challenges. We have always been mostly white,

mostly younger than forty, mostly lesbian, mostly middle class. We are more diverse now than ever, but have room to grow. Our work with PSU students has been a great way to diversify our base. As an urban university, PSU attracts working-class students and students of color, as well as white and middle-class students who may not have had much exposure to feminism.

Melissa: Issues of diversity have also been a challenge for us both inside the classroom and as we move out into the community. One of the primary goals of our outreach is inclusivity. We work to create a group of teens that is racially and economically diverse as well as inclusive of girls with varying sexual identities. We want the zine to include and speak to a broad range of voices, experiences, and visions. However, the diversity we work toward in our project is not represented in our classroom. Only fifteen percent of the capstone students are women of color. Many of the students do come from working-class families, or are currently living on welfare themselves and there are usually several women in the class who identify as lesbians. But, while we are reaching out to diverse constituents, we do not reflect the diversity of most of the girls with whom we worked.

We have to do a lot of work in the classroom around social location and identity. While I try to provide a multicultural inclusive curriculum for my students to prepare them for community work, I have not always succeeded. I remember last year there were two students in the capstone who were disabled. They felt that the lack of readings on teens with disabilities

excluded them from both the content of the course and their personal possibilities for collaboration in the classroom.   One of the students who used a wheelchair asked me if she could do a quick presentation in class about her disability and invite students to take a ride in her chair. She felt that this experience would break down some of her classmates' stereotypes about her and others with disabilities and might move her to a place where she felt more included. The presentation was extremely powerful and was a turning point for our group. Another student joined her project team and together they designed a Disability Resource Notebook for the store. Because of these students, we have now built up a series of readings and resource material about girls with disabilities and have forged partnerships with three local agencies serving disabled youth.

Community work also means border crossings for most of the students. They are very apprehensive about leaving the university. To prepare them, we do several identity assignments in class and have workshops on breaking down stereotypes and learning interruption skills (for interrupting oppressive statements). Students feel that these exercises are very difficult, but note that they have helped them to uncover prejudices deeply embodied, "close to the heart," and "something that was ingrained" in them. One white middle-class student who had worked though many of her own biases early in the term, still felt nervous about her approaching rap session with a group of diverse teens. She notes, "I feel most uncomfortable about reflecting the

same institutionalized, class, and race bias I've been working a long time to combat."

Moving beyond the classroom is difficult when class and race differences are present between students and teens. We run both integrated groups and groups where both students and teens share racial identities. But where there may be racial solidarity, there are always differences in class, power, and privilege between teen girls and university students. We experience a tension about the possibility of the girls (and the agencies representing them) feeling exploited by our work. That tension has prompted us to incorporate ally training into our preparation. We encourage the girls to set the agenda for rap sessions. When they ask the student facilitators for advice, the students turn the questions back to the girls so that they can negotiate a strategy together from their own shared experiences.

Still, students are not always welcomed or accepted by community partners. Many partners feel over-studied and previously exploited by the university. Our hope for inclusivity is often thwarted because of the agency's previous experiences when teens were put at risk or were made to feel used. Because of these real past histories, we have had a great deal of trouble forging relationships with queer youth groups and drug and alcohol treatment centers. By showing agencies that we are invested in social change, not research, and by having students participate in these agency's on-site training programs, we have been able to make some headway.   But

we remain suspect because we belong to an elite institution. It takes a great deal of work to re-frame ourselves as trustworthy advocates and activists.

Catherine: In many ways, we experience some of the tensions that the university does, but our issues are mostly with activist groups. Even though we are a grass-roots organization, we are perceived by some in the community as "not activist enough." Because we are a bookstore, located in a fairly homogenous (white, middle-class) part of Portland, some perceive us to be sort of elitist in that we are not "on the front lines" in the same ways that many activist groups are. This comes back to trying to be a space for all women, doing all things.

We do activist and educational events, and support activism through our Organization of the Month program, which champions different grass-roots women's organizations in our window and in the store. That is a huge commitment of ours. But of course, we sell books, too, and books are expensive, often seen as commodities of the privileged. It is a wonderful tension to work with -- to try to be a community institution that serves communities of women across class and race lines, and that brings people together to explore these tensions. In that sense, we are a kindred institution to the university and our partnership benefits from a shared understanding of these dilemmas.

(5) Enlarging the Community of Women

Moving beyond the bookstore and the university to strengthen and

enlarge our community of women has been an essential part of our work.

Four years ago, several friends of the bookstore voiced their hope that

community-building would be a part of the bookstore's future:

> I would like to see us be more of a networked coalition. I think there is
> a lot of potential there. We could offer ourselves as a community
> coalition trying to be the coordinator of like-minded, like-hearted
> groups of women. (Schar Freeman, Bookstore Volunteer)

> Let's see if we can partner up with some women's organizations that
> are real grassroots and don't get the exposure they deserve. . . Rather
> than waiting for an organization to come to us, we're going to go and
> see organizations to partner up with. This is a way of building our
> community, networking, and establishing good relationships with
> organizations that aren't already a part of our network. (Johanna
> Brenner, Bookstore Founder).

Historically, forming networks of female relationships has

strengthened political struggles. Feminists (Bookman & Morgen, 1988;

Ackelberg, 1988) argue that women's relationships with one another redefine

conventional politics. They suggest that the contemporary work of social

change often includes everyday struggles to survive and change power

relations. They offer a new paradigm, a "politics of relationship" that is

rooted in on-going social relationships and the connections between the

private and public life of activists. By building new relationships in our

community we have strengthened our problem solving capabilities, built on

our existing assets and created new resources. But as Ring (1999) argues,

our efforts to build these relationships have needed to be flexible and "responsive to the needs and concerns of the activist group (pp. 235-6).

Catherine: One of the greatest outcomes for WCEP in partnership with the capstone program is our enlarged community as women and as feminists. Students are not just working for our organization, but are becoming part of a wider community through their work, commitments and concrete contributions. Through the CityGirls capstone, students have created important resources for the community like the Disability Resources notebook, brochures for teens on eating disorders, depression, web sites for girls, and body image, as well as a bibliography for young women. In breast cancer capstones, students have created art projects—a quilt of breast cancer survivor stories and a bust of a woman with a mastectomy. These are permanently housed at WCEP and regularly used in our window displays and for community forums. These resources provide an important way to bring new community members into our network.

Melissa: To help meet the goals of WCEP, we have also worked to build a rich and complex feminist network of community partners in the Portland Metro Area. One of the ways we have created this network is by strengthening the existing relationships that the bookstore had already established -- with other local bookstores and non-profits. Most of the work, however, has been forging new relationships in the community. This process has meant continually evaluating the kinds of new partnerships we are

forming and determining if the new relationship will mutually benefit everyone involved. Students begin these partnerships through their outreach work. Students make contacts in their neighborhoods. New contacts also come to us through our existing partners. We invite school counselors, teachers, and non-profit advocates to work with us. We provide university resources to the partners and several students may volunteer there during the term as well. We also advertise for their agencies in our zine's resource pages. Partners reciprocate by helping us to bring together teen girls for our rap sessions and zine work. Articles in our city's newspaper and radio shows help all of us to increase our visibility in the community. All of the CityGirls project partners also become partners with IOW. They are part of the constituent base and will turn to IOW when sponsoring events, conferences, and fundraising activities.

This work introduces students to an extremely broad spectrum of teen allies, advocates, and activists, all of whom bring different perspectives to the work we do. We have partners who focus on self-esteem building, girls' empowerment, anti-racist education, self-defense, therapeutic intervention, drug and alcohol treatment, pregnancy and parenting support, and traditional education.

Catherine: Our work with Women's Studies at PSU has harvested so many new relationships. Through the CityGirls capstone in particular, we now are connected to a coalition of scores of social service and social justice

groups working with girls. Many of these groups now call on us to table at events, to provide bibliographies, and to co-sponsor events. They sometimes order books for their programs through IOW. While we always had a section of books for girls and young women, our work with this project made it possible for us to build this section and to add resources like zines and information on disability services. We became more committed to serving girls and parents/workers/educators who serve them. This new role became a more integrated part of our identity. We are now becoming experts in the field of girl studies and use our expertise on a regular basis in our work with girls in the community.

Melissa: At the same time, the teens, and all of our partners are also experts who extend to us knowledge that is situated in our urban community and is informed by everyday life, intellectual work, and shared experiences. Without the mutuality of this relationship and the knowledges we share, we would only be seeing what we have discovered on our own private paths.

(6) Empowering Community Members Toward Social Change

Nelda K. Pearson (1999, p. 101), founder of her own non-profit to work with low income women and women of color, suggests that "social action is not something one group does for or to help another group." She argues that "no one is outside the process" (p. 101). Pearson also notes that organizations in partnership, working to develop their communities, need to rely on the people in that community because they best understand the problems they

are facing and the solutions that will work for them (p. 102). In order to build trust and empower all community members we strove to respect and value the multiple knowledges which inform our work. We are all experts sharing our specific knowledges, moving us toward social change.

Catherine: This partnership is successful in large part because of the very structures of our respective organizations: students are asked to work collaboratively, while also being self-starters and working independently. At WCEP, every volunteer has the right to develop and implement projects. Both the capstone and WCEP encourage and support students and volunteers taking on leadership roles that help them develop as individuals. Our community volunteers offer their own workshop series at the store, sponsor special events and have editorial control of both our newsletter and window displays.

Very often, my initial ideas about how students might work with WCEP do not resonate with students, but they create ways to plug in and work with us that speak to their desires. They take initiative and we support their development by giving them contacts with the community, providing access to our community resources and books, and hooking them up with experienced WCEP staff and volunteers.

In our work with the zine project, students are empowered as leaders on issues that girls and young women are facing. Their hands-on work with teens through the rap groups and zines give them access to a constituency

that is harder for WCEP to reach directly: teens of color, poor and working-class youth, street girls, girls in transition houses, and girls in lock-down facilities. So while we, as a seven-year old feminist organization, can provide leadership and support to students in their work, their work gives us more access to a larger community of girls and those advocates who work with them. Students become "ambassadors" of/for feminism, linking grass-roots feminist organizations (like us) to social service agencies and girls/young women they serve.

Melissa: Serving in this "ambassador" role helps students recognize their own efficacy in the world. They learn a great deal about social and political responsibility and begin to see how social change can take place at the community level. Many students come to understand social change as beginning with education and awareness. Almost all of the students come to believe that social advocacy and social change require a certain type of person, "risk-takers", people who will "put themselves on the line for anyone," and in some cases people who have "blind faith and a lot of luck" (Gilbert 2000, p. 134). Some of the students come to see themselves as these kinds of activists, while others move toward less risky and subtle forms of social change, like community education.   After going out in the community and unsuccessfully trying to rally support for the bookstore and its mission, a CityGirls student identified a new community role for herself: she now wants

to inform her community about "the injustice and oppression of women, the poor, and minority groups. . . That can be my job!"

Our empowerment work goes beyond students and bookstore volunteers. Our outreach to teens strives to empower girls by providing spaces for their self-expression. The girls see rap sessions as the foundation for raising awareness and building "girl solidarity." They come to understand the power of girls working together on issues. They turn that knowledge into art and word-filled zine pages that deconstruct myths about girls' bodies, loves, aspirations, and experiences. They share their visions for a new society through not only their zine work, but also in the murals they paint on urban landscapes and the voices they transmit over our KPSU airwaves. They tell us that they want their parents, teachers, and other adults to "listen-up" and become advocates for their vision of social change.

Just last quarter, when a group from a boy's and girl's club was asked what new kinds of guidelines our society needs, one girl stood up, arms raised above her head holding a poster that said, STOP HITTING WOMAN, MAN! The other girls in the group joined her with cheers, one pre-teen girl shouting, "yeah, boys need to form committees to figure out how to stop hurting women." Girls know how to fight violence, sexism, racism, and other forms of oppression. They tell us this all the time. Their knowledge helps empower us to get out there and "fix it" with them.

PERSONAL JOURNEYS TOWARD CONNECTION

Catherine: I became a feminist, in large part, because I wanted to work collectively with other women toward shared goals. My work on reproductive rights, women's health care, and founding a women's bookstore has been enriched by the connections I have made with other feminists. Making these social and personal connections has not been secondary to the larger goal of getting things done, but the very thing that has sustained my feminist work. WCEP's partnership with PSU's capstone program has enlivened our mission, fortified our resources and enlarged our community of women, girls and those who care about them. And it has forged many new personal partnerships for me. These partnerships, framed by our shared commitment to feminist work, have made my work worth doing and sustained me over the long haul. I look forward to our continued partnership over the years and all the ways it will make life better for our community of women and girls, and for me personally. After all, isn't that what feminism is all about?

Melissa: For me feminism has been all about working with other women, hoping that they will find in our projects the same kind of passion that has come to my life through this partnership. When I moved to Portland six years ago, I did not know this city's women at all, nor could I imagine the impact they would have on my work or my personal life. A year later, I gave birth to a baby girl and found myself looking for support from places similar to those I had been familiar with in cities of my past (as an activist and

volunteer), women's health centers and feminist collectives. That is where I found a larger circle of women who became friends, colleagues, and partners in social change work. Like many of my students, it has been my renewed sense of community and a deeper feeling of belonging to a city of women that keeps me doing this work. I am now extremely fortunate to have an academic career that is a seamless threading together of scholarship, teaching, and activism. We have been able to conspire on conference presentations and collaborative writing as well. While those efforts have been especially rewarding, they have not been nearly as personally exciting as being part of a feminist community-building effort in our city that has bridged our bookstore, university, and communities of women and men working for social change in our city.

While we may not have leaped too far from our platforms or clasped wrists in matching sequined costumes to the uproarious applause of everyone in our community, we have crossed many a divide together and have taught others how to make similar connections. I, too, look forward to continuing our "trapeze trick," -- working out some of the kinks in our performance, and stitching a wider safety net that makes the flight seem less risky for others to take.

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NOTE: This chapter was originally published as:

Gilbert, M. Kesler & Catherine Sameh. (2002).   "Urban Partners in Conversation: Building Feminist Alliances Between a Women's Bookstore and the University." In N. Naples & K. Bojar*, Teaching Feminist Praxis.: Strategies from the Field.* NY: Routledge.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Preface

The final essay in this collection, "Cultivating Interdependent Partnerships," is the most recent of my publications, a theoretical piece on the importance and possibility of creating interdependent partnerships for service-learning that build on a sense of common fate, common responsibility, and common spaces. This work is a culmination of ten years of research and practice in the field that illuminates one of the most critical issues of the contemporary movement – our ability to sustain meaningful partnerships between campuses and communities that reflect authentic efforts to transform and strengthen our humanity.

The essay responds to the previous "Urban Partners" essay in Chapter Six by expanding upon the feminist principles offered in that work. When we wrote this piece in 2009 we were considering a broader audience than the primarily feminist audience of each of the previous essays, so the framework was grounded more in the service-learning and partnership scholarship. Yet the principles offered have a direct lineage to the feminist community-building strategies previously defined. Whereas in this work, we discuss the necessity for defining a "common fate" for our partnerships, feminists would suggest that this is dependent on an understanding of a common history, building on each other's founding ideas, and reinforcing community values. Our work toward illuminating the need for "common spaces" for partnership

development is synonymous (and even draws on the same work by Evans and Boyte) with a feminist emphasis on providing feminist spaces that recognize the co-creation of knowledge and the necessity for "free" and "safe" spaces for transformational progress. "Common spaces" also speaks to the necessity of encouraging inclusive collaboration between diverse participants and ensuring that we are always working toward enlarging the community of women. Our theory, recognizing a partnership's "common responsibility" for social change is also grounded in feminist arguments for empowering communities through voice, agency, and activism.

While the interdependent paradigm offered in this work harkens back to sociological theorists like Emile Durkheim who offered us theories about the role of education and Herbert Spencer who applied evolutionary principles to society to help us uncover systems of exchanges and understand notions like organic solidarity and the social organism, it is grounded philosophically in feminist frameworks for understanding social change. I map out new directions, for example, in this work, based on Bookman and Morgen's theoretical frame (1988, cited earlier in Chapter Six) that suggests we are all embodied in a "politics of relationship" where every act is rooted in an on-going series of social relationships.

My own intellectual influences for this work stem from a passion for feminist utopian fiction, like the turn of the century stories of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a social Darwinist and organicist. She suggested our society

is made up of specialized, yet interdependent parts that when formed into collective entities evolve into healthier, stronger, and more egalitarian communities (1904). Her fiction brought us many examples of communities where traditional androcentric models had been dismantled in favor of more communitarian social arrangements. Her work reminds us that as we imagine utopian societies we must also urgently address the work of dismantling what is dystopian about our contemporary relationships.

Our argument that higher education institutions must recognize that they are networked in unique and important ways to both each other and the community is reminiscent of feminist Jane Addams's emphasis on communitarianism: "how the individual is embedded in and ontologically connected to community associations, values, and political life" (discussed in Whipps, 2004, p. 118). Addams's commitment to creating a network of institutions that would work together to address poverty in the city of Chicago is probably one of the most significant contributions to our contemporary understandings of community organizing across race, class, and gender divisions. This essay moves her commitment into the twenty-first century and hopes to cultivate more humanitarian, communitarian, and interdependent strategies for community relationships that support service-learning.

The work brings together three of us who served as national engaged scholars with Campus Compact in 2008 to reimagine the future of service-

learning. Each of us draws from our own situatedness in service-learning, while sharing common understandings and commitments to the field. In the spirit of interdisciplinary collaborative work within the movement, we were invited by the editors of <u>The Future of Service-Learning</u> to write together as "emerging leaders" on the topic of sustainability of the field. With Matthew Johnson and Julie Plaut, I examine in this essay current theories for networking communities. Our theoretical debate is informed by my own data collected from surveys of community partners and state-wide consortium members (See Appendices H-J). Together, we posit a paradigm shift in service-learning that requires all stakeholders to foster new networked communities of practice who share the responsibility for transforming both education and community.

This essay introduces readers new to the field of service-learning to many of the key institutions that have shaped the face of the movement. For example, the *Community-Campus Partnerships for Health* (CCHP) was founded at Portland State University in 1996 as a non-profit national association, network, and clearinghouse for interchanges between academics and community partners.   CCHP has become one of the most influential associations in the field, helping campuses build authentic partnerships, defining policies for campuses about partnerships and reward structures for faculty, and demanding that community-driven social change (in contrast to

social change defined and orchestrated by academics) remains a critical stance in the movement.

Readers are also introduced to the new *Community Engagement Classification* process for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The Carnegie Classifications are national indicators that are used primarily to support research and policy analysis on higher education. The Community Engagement Classification was established in 2006 to recognize institutions that have made a commitment to reciprocal and mutually beneficial partnerships between campuses and their communities. The Classification is encouraging institutions to pay careful attention to the quality of their partnerships and the depth and scope of their service-learning initiatives.

Our readers may also be new to David Kolb's *Experiential Learning Cycle* (1984) which has been one of the most influential pedagogical frames for service-learning. Kolb theorized that experiential learners moved through a four stage process beginning with a concrete experience, participating in a series of reflective observations, moving through abstract conceptualizations to derive meaning or test theories, and then ending finally at a state of active experimentation where the behavior is modified based on the reflective and critical thinking (Kolb, 1984). The cycle then repeats itself as the learner moves once again into another concrete experience. Many service-learning scholars have applied this cycle to service-learning, arguing that it helps us

understand the distinctive moments during a service experience where different kinds of learning takes place.

This chapter explores many of the tensions inherent in our partnerships and theorizes a new paradigm of interdependence that necessitates the reciprocal participation of all service-learning stakeholders.

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NOTES:
For more information about Community-Campus Partnerships for Health see:
http://www.ccph.info/

For more information about the Carnegie Classifications see:
http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/newsroom/press-releases/carnegie-and-nerche-announce-partnership

Cultivating Interdependent Partnerships for

Community Change and Civic Education

TOWARD AN INTERDEPENDENT PARTNERSHIP PARADIGM

In recent years, service-learning has been variously considered a field, a pedagogical method, and a movement. These conceptual models suggest somewhat different priorities for scholars, practitioners, and advocates of service-learning. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation, for instance, has sought to advance service-learning in part by supporting the development of Melinda Fine's field-building framework, which defines a field as "an area of specialized practice that encompasses specific activities carried out by trained practitioners in particular settings" and outlines key elements for establishing a new one: distinct identity; standard practice; knowledge base; leadership and membership; information exchange; resources; and committed stakeholders and advocates (Fine, 2001). Shelley H. Billig and Janet Eyler draw on that framework to call for more rigorous research to inform practice and to justify an increased investment of resources (Billig & Eyler, 2003). Barbara Holland and others focused on institutionalization of service-learning as a form of engaged teaching and learning in higher education that emphasizes integration of service-learning into colleges' and universities' cultures, policies, programming, and budgets, as well as departmental curricula and expectations of faculty. While those drawn to the idea of

service-learning as a transformative movement worry that institutionalization will limit possibilities for change, Dan Butin suggests that "disciplining" service-learning—creating an academic home for critical dialogue and scholarship, as was done in women's studies—will foster more powerful change in higher education than would likely arise from a social movement striving to stand apart from academic norms (Butin, 2006, p. 59).

These conceptions of service-learning share a primary focus on the place and status of service-learning within educational institutions. At the same time, they all rest on principles of good practice that include the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships characterized by shared planning and leadership, clear roles, consistent communication, evaluation and accountability. Yet strengthening campus-community partnerships is one of three major areas for improvement identified by Amy Driscoll, who directs the Community Engagement Classification process for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Based on applications for the elective classification received in its first round in 2006, Driscoll observes, "most institutions could only describe in vague generalities how they had achieved genuine reciprocity with their communities" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 41). Two years later, the press release announcing the second-round recipients highlighted the need "for more attention to the intentional practices of developing reciprocal relationships between higher education and the community. . . . Building reciprocity into a partnership with community

requires intensive development of mechanisms for mutual understanding, ongoing feedback, and time and attention to a relationship of respect" ("Carnegie Selects," 2008). Since the colleges and universities applying for this recognition tend to be fairly advanced in their commitment to civic and community engagement—and 195 of the 236 applications were successful—this persistent gap between principles and practice is troubling.

The problem stems in part from what Driscoll calls "both internal and external perceptions of the campus as an 'ivory tower'" (Driscoll, 2008, p. 41). As long as campus and community partners see themselves as essentially separate, brought together by individual relationships and mutual interest in a particular collaborative project, their investment in each other will be somewhat limited. In order to move from "transactional" to "transformational" partnerships, Sandra Enos and Keith Morton argue, campus and community partners must "come to understand that they are part of the same community, with common problems, common interests, common resources, and a common capacity to shape one another in profound ways" (Enos & Morton, 2003, p. 20). While partners grounded in a deep, transformational relationship bring distinctive perspectives, backgrounds, and knowledge to their common work, "their relationship becomes based on interdependence rather than mutual dependence," a sense of "a shared context," and a new, collectively created understanding of the issues they have decided to address together (Enos & Morton, 2003, p. 30).

Several recent projects highlighting the voices of community partners also underscore the importance of stronger relationships between campus staff and faculty and community-based organization leaders. Analysis of a series of focus groups with community partners in California revealed a stronger concern for relationships as "foundational" or "essential" than appears in statements of best practice produced by higher education stakeholders (Sandy, 2007, pp. 11-12). Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) also convened a summit of experienced community partners to offer critical analysis of current patterns and recommendations for improvement (CCPH, 2007). Both reports call for greater respect of community knowledge and commitment to building community capacity, more equitable distribution of power and resources, more dialogue among stakeholders to increase mutual understanding, and more involvement of faculty and deeper institutionalization so collaborative efforts outlast changes in funding or personnel.

It is interesting to note that neither report suggests any effort to cultivate a sense of interdependence among partners. Of course, there are very real differences in the power, priorities, resources, and cultures that campuses and community-based organizations bring to collaborative efforts. Service-learning practitioners within higher education, like community partners, often see their work as a process of negotiating and building bridges across distinct campus and community identities. Yet we are inexorably

bound to one another. We operate within the same set of social, economic,

and political systems, and we share both an interest in and a responsibility

for creating the conditions that allow people to thrive—public safety,

participatory democracy, environmental sustainability, widespread access to

higher education as well as shelter, food, and other basic needs. As campuses

stretch to co-create knowledge and actions that contribute to positive

community change, community partners stretch to co-educate the students

engaged in such efforts.

This chapter explores an approach to service-learning that focuses on

deepening a sense of interdependence as the foundation for powerful

partnerships. These partnerships still reflect other generally recognized good

practices such as shared goals, trust, respect, clear communication, and joint

decision-making. By building as well on a sense of common fate, common

responsibility, and the need for common spaces, these partnerships will more

likely result in the societal, institutional, and personal transformation

desired by community partners at the CCPH summit and by so many

campus-based faculty and staff involved in service-learning (CCPH, 2007, p.

13). It is clearly not neat or short-term work. Public policy theorists Barbara

Crosby and John Bryson argue that solutions to the emergent, complex, and

usually ill-defined problems in our society require "networked organizations,"

which are not only comprised of internal networks of individuals and units or

departments, but are also integrated into "a variety of external networks that

are fluid and chaotic" (Crosby & Bryson, 2005, p. 5). While we may yearn for coherence rather than chaos, the experiences and reflections shared here suggest that pioneering civic and community engagement will never be static. Our efforts have grown and benefited all involved the most when they provided common spaces in which stakeholders could develop and act on relationships grounded in a deep sense of interconnectedness.

COMMON FATE

Reimagining community transformation prompts us to develop new networks of partners who recognize that we share in a common fate that requires a shared vision. The Community Impact Statement process developed by community and campus leaders involved with the Phillips Neighborhood Healthy Housing Collaborative and the University of Minnesota's GRASS Routes initiative takes an important step toward dialogue about their common fate by inviting stakeholders to identify their common traits as well as their differences. They pose the question, "What are the attributes that the partnership participants have in common (e.g., being parents, caring for children, wanting to prevent certain diseases)" (Gust & Jordan, 2008, p. 3)? This question demands that all participants negotiate their own situatedness in their community before trying to work collectively on a common struggle. There is great value in trying to build this deeper sense of connection, perhaps in part emotional, but also practical in realizing

we all face the dangers and costs of social problems and we share the responsibility for both creating and changing the conditions that allow those problems to persist.

The "Core Partnership Model" that now informs Otterbein College's community engagement efforts is an example of one effort to recognize a community's common fate, reimagine that community, and "extend and deepen the energy and synergy" of the partnerships sharing the responsibility for change (Enos & Morton, 2003, p. 30). In 2001, community partners who served on an advisory board for an Otterbein grant from the Consortium for the Advancement of Private Higher Education (CAPHE) argued that the college needed to "drill deeper" at their sites to develop "core partnerships" instead of continuing to focus on increasing the number of partners associated with the college and the overall breadth of its service programs. The board recognized that the college's well-being was interconnected with the local school systems and urged local stakeholders to focus efforts on the development of a common vision for K-16 partnerships that would address youth literacy, risky behaviors, drop-out rates, college awareness and opportunity issues.

When the college founded the Center for Community Engagement in 2003, affiliated faculty, staff, and community partners identified three strategies to support sustainable, meaningful, and transformative partnerships with local schools and non-profits who were also vested in

educational transformation (Gilbert, Weispfenning, & Kengla, 2007). The first strategy in this model is the development of what John McKnight terms community *"connectors"*—applied at Otterbein as a faculty site-liaison who knows a particular partner organization well, recognizes the assets of each partner, teaches at least one service-learning course at that site, and stewards the college's relationship with the partner (McKnight, 2003, p. 13). CCPH also notes the importance of this role, suggesting that campuses need "a community-academic liaison familiar with both community and academic contexts, who can play a 'translational role' between each partner" (CCPH, 2008, p. 6). In the core partnership model, the liaisons also mobilize other students and faculty to become involved by communicating a sense of common values and purpose that connect the community and the college.

The second strategy is the creation of a *collective body* of program planners at each core partnership site, intentionally including representatives of all stakeholders, including those who usually have less voice (e.g., students, youth, and clients of the partner organizations). At some sites this body takes the form of a traditional advisory board, but at others people come together as social change alliances and coalitions. The different ways in which the partners formally or informally come together often reflects the way in which the community partners envision their work. At a local middle school, a Creative Literacy Alliance was formed as the action arm of a teacher-training program that also incorporated a student

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poet-in-residency initiative. This community of practice valued an alternative critical pedagogical stance that argued for poetry across the curriculum and youth voice assembled to raise awareness about issues facing teens today. Where an understanding of a common fate leads participants to a social justice framework, the collective bodies tend to come together in non-hierarchical, dynamic forms. More traditional advisory boards are often formed at community sites where the common goals are more practical, logistical, and formally linked to static existing infrastructures. However, to be successful, all forms of collective bodies need to be able to translate community change goals into possibilities for student transformation and student learning objectives into possibilities for community transformation.

The third strategy for a reimagined core partnership is *concerted commitment*—ensuring that at every core partner site student volunteers, service-learners, and community-based researchers from the campus are readied to participate fully when short- and long-term projects are identified by the collective planning body. While ensuring that streams of volunteers, resources, and expertise are shared, attention also needs to be directed at efforts to build new capacities at partner sites. In 2003, the principal of a local elementary school was the first Otterbein community partner to establish an advisory board where teachers, parents, and students from the school and faculty and students from Otterbein met monthly to plan, assess, and imagine the relationships possible between the school and the campus.

When they gathered in a community of practice dedicated to student learning at both institutions, they identified curriculum needs, posed innovative strategies, mapped out training programs for students, and evaluated new programming. Both partners were surprised to learn during these meetings that they shared common learning outcomes for their students, including developing an appreciation for diversity, citizenship skills, and quantitative literacies. Over time, the school grew to be a community partner where multiple collaborative programs were running concurrently, fully sharing a concerted commitment to jointly realized programs. Otterbein student scholars, trained as part of a developmental Cardinal*Corps* leadership team, ran an after-school program for youth, six service-learning courses were taught at the school, and undergraduate math education students led a research program on cognitively-guided instruction (CGI).   Teachers from the school were earning graduate credit from the institution for their participation in research programs as they were trained in new techniques for teaching reading and mathematics.

In this situation, both partners experienced what Enos and Morton call "*interdependence* rather than mutual dependence" (Enos & Morton, 2003, p. 30). The school flourished with students available to tutor, mentor, and facilitate enrichment activities where youth experienced a richer academic and social environment. Otterbein students inhabited a vibrant school landscape where they were encouraged to explore, learn, grow, and deepen

their commitment to their community. Two years after its inception, the partnership began to be fully transformational when the school began to struggle with accommodating both increasing numbers of English-as-a-Second Language students into their classrooms and students who were redistricted from lower income communities outside of the district limits. The partners developed programs together to explore and embrace the new diversity and internationalization of the school. After-school programs were developed to explore different cultures, students in Otterbein's Growing Up in America integrated studies course were paired in mentoring relationships with youth immigrants from Somalia, and Family Fun Nights were developed by Otterbein faculty and teachers to assist new immigrant families through the transition to a new educational pathway for their children. Both Otterbein and elementary school students have been transformed through this partnership, where new knowledge has been co-created and a new vision for K-16 education has been realized.

The core partnership model and sense of common fate and purpose demanded that the relationship move beyond one campus and one elementary school to extend the synergetic spirit of this work throughout the district. Westerville City Schools has now established six core partner schools with Otterbein at the elementary, middle, and high-school level to address literacy, health and wellness, and most specifically diversity programming. Otterbein has been recognized by the school system as their

"Business Partner of the Year" and was credited with helping one school increase their passage rates on the Ohio Achievement Test.

Developing *core* partnerships requires a willingness to wrestle with difficult questions. Higher education institutions that are actively engaged in their communities often receive daily requests to join or support organizations addressing a wide range of local, regional, national, or global issues through service, organizing, research, or advocacy. How does a campus decide with whom to partner and what issues they will address? Who in the community can influence or make these decisions? How do we effectively balance the need to develop deep, sustainable, core partnerships with the need to evolve and address new ideas that emerge from faculty, student, and community stakeholders? Community-building theorist Peter Block suggests that when we ask "Who do we want in the room?" and "What is the new conversation that we want to occur?," that we are creating a new social fabric "one room at a time" (Block, 2008, p. 11). To answer these questions, he argues, we must converge on a series of core insights, including a focus on community gifts, associational life, transformation that occurs through language, the context that governs our conversations, and our willingness to "speak into the future" (Block, 2008, p. 11). This case study of Otterbein's K-16 campus-school partnership speaks to the necessity of recognizing community assets as well as the goals each partner brings to the relationship when trying to answer these important questions. The core

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partnership model is one way to develop a common language, grounded in a common fate, that can be co-translated to speak to the big questions our future poses. The question is not "Who do we want in the room?," but "Who are we already bound to in the work we need to accomplish?" Our futures depend on our capacity to unpack our interdependence and articulate our convergent and common responsibilities.

COMMON RESPONSIBILITY

According to research by Marie Sandy and Laurie Worrall, partners' commitment to supporting students' civic, academic, and professional development may grow over time as their involvement in service-learning continues (Sandy, 2007; Worrall, 2005). Sharing responsibility for the on-going development of college students as our future leaders is critical to sustaining innovative service-learning. The community partners who attended the CCPH summit and contributed to the resulting report distinguish between community-based research and service-learning, deeming the latter less compatible with "community participatory approaches, authentic partnerships, community capacity building or social change" (CCPH, 2007, p. 12). Their concern seems to arise primarily from the prevalence of one-term service-learning courses that require relatively little time in the community from students, do not have faculty directly involved in the community, and are not part of any larger ongoing effort.

Some campuses committed to enhancing the outcomes of service-learning both for communities and students have developed longer-term student engagement programs and initiatives that allow for deeper, authentic partnerships and invite students to join faculty, campus staff, and community partners as co-leaders and colleagues. Even as these programs explicitly focus on supporting students' development, they ideally engage *all* stakeholders in a continuous and collaborative acting out of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb, 1984).

At Siena College and other schools in and beyond the Bonner Foundation Network, students make a multi-year commitment to service in exchange for financial assistance. These students serve as Core Student Service Leaders (CSSLs), typically committing to 8-10 hours of service per week in a multi-year site-placement. In addition to remaining at a core partner site over the term of their placement, CSSLs attend weekly planning meetings on campus to discuss their service and plan campus and community-based events that highlight the service needs of their site-placements and the social-structural issues that create the needs. During these meeting times, CSSLs also participate in and lead a developmental training program designed to build the skills necessary to move from basic direct-service volunteering to more sophisticated forms of service such as program and strategic planning, program leadership, board service, and resource development. Finally, CSSLs form a student leadership framework,

often along-side the more traditional student leadership framework, and in some cases replacing the more traditional student government model. Within a specific campus-community relationship, the CSSL student leadership framework builds on the Core Partnership Model by organizing service initiatives, placements, and activities focused on a shared set of common responsibilities for the social issues pertinent to the core partner site. Beyond the specific campus-community relationship, CSSL student leadership then connects the individual campus and community to the national student service movement through regular participation in Bonner Network meetings and other national youth conferences.

While the CSSL model began primarily as a student development endeavor through Student Affairs, at West Virginia Wesleyan, Alleghany and other institutions, an academic pathway has been initiated to complement the CSSL developmental pathway. Variously referred to as a major, minor, or certificate, and piloted with support from the Bonner Foundation and FIPSE, these programs usually contain a sequence of courses from an entry course, to considerations of poverty, to policy-based courses, community-based research courses, traditional service-learning courses, and a capstone. These academic pathways give students an opportunity to intentionally connect their service with academic content and rigor. Thus, while powerful for its ability to create student ownership, student leadership, and to contribute to the sustainability of core partnerships, without academic

integration, the CSSL model can only go so far in advancing service-learning practice.

The benefits of a CSSL program to the development of academic service-learning are clear. Students become full stakeholders and leaders in the campus-community relationship. CSSLs become a critical ally in the classroom as a voice for connection to community partners and at the community site as a voice for connection with the campus. Faculty at CSSL program institutions comment consistently that the presence of a CSSL in their course raises the level of sophistication and quality of engagement in service-learning activities. CSSLs often bring community needs and concerns to the attention of institutional actors (faculty, administrators, other students), and frequently become academic service-learning leaders. At Allegheny College, for example, the CSSL program has led to the development of a two-semester sequence of coursework designed to prepare students to be academic assistants to faculty engaged in service-learning pedagogy. The CSSL model illustrates how the growth, development, and sustainability of service-learning rests on the intentional common responsibility and co-evolution of all stakeholders.

Finally a few institutions, in collaboration with their community partners, have found students' intensive, long-term development at core partnership sites so fruitful that they have created additional year-long post-graduate leadership positions. Both Siena and West Virginia Wesleyan are

involved in partnerships that utilize VISTA*Americorps funding to support

positions at key community agencies, while The College of New Jersey

provides fellowships for a cohort of Bonner Program alumni. These recent

graduates are deeply connected in the community, helping to develop new

site-based teams of student volunteers and assisting in capacity-building

innovations with community partners that sustain their interdependence.

COMMON SPACES

Networked communities of practice require common spaces where

community participants who share a common fate and recognize their

common responsibility can gather, explore, share, and unite in social and

civic change. Social theorists Sara Evans and Harry Boyte argue that social

change requires spaces that embrace the "participatory, egalitarian, and open

character of public life" (Evans & Boyte, 1992, p. xxvi). They call these places

"free spaces" and suggest they:

> are the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. . . . settings between private lives and large-scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence, and vision. . . . where people experience a schooling in citizenship and learn a vision of the common good in the course of struggling for change" (Evans & Boyte, 1992, pp. 17-18).

Otterbein College has found significant value in creating these kinds of free spaces, stretching its collaborative efforts to reimagine educational communities beyond the margins of the campus and beyond the singularity of the core campus-school partnership. With support from Learn and Serve America, a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Otterbein College, Ohio Campus Compact, and the University of Cincinnati founded the Great Cities ~ Great Service (GCGS) consortium, comprised of 13 colleges and universities situated in each of Ohio's nine urban centers partnering with local schools and community-based organizations around a common goal of helping urban youth understand and pursue pathways to post-secondary education. Youth and college students across the state come together in alliances to lead service projects for community change in their neighborhoods. Great Cities includes multiple campuses, creating more complex networks of service that come together in common spaces much like the ones Evans and Boyte challenged us to consider. The youthLEAD model that grounds the consortium emphasizes youth voice and leadership through service; it was inspired by a Girl Scout leader who came to an organizing meeting at Otterbein to help plan a new program for scouts whose mothers were incarcerated. She taught the group that these girls should not be labeled "at-risk," for they were, in her words, "at-promise" and could teach college students about resistance, passion, and a will to survive.

The consortium is bound together in a community of practice to harness the promise of Ohio's youth. A common sense of purpose brings together these institutions that normally compete with one another for enrollment. Consortium partners work together to create innovative service-learning courses and student-led programs at their institutions that are in dialogue with similar programs across the state. As a consortium, GCGS was able to create a statewide "gateway to change" where "partnerships forged by one campus with local youth-serving agencies can benefit institutions across the state by providing models, curriculum, assessment data, resources, and funding leverage" (Gilbert, Weispfenning, & Kengla, 2007, p. 73). In a recent survey of GCGS consortium members, participants confirmed these benefits. They reported learning new strategies for working with youth and gaining access to "expertise" that was not available on their own campus, but was available through other consortium members and partners. GCGS has been able to forge broader relationships with organizations like the YMCA, Ohio College Access Network, Project Grad, the National Middle School Association, and Gear-Up satellite sites who have shared extensive knowledge across the partnership. They have also gained "legitimacy" for programs through their affiliation with state and national initiatives. Campuses have institutionalized new service-learning initiatives, have replicated each others' model courses on their own campuses and have leveraged additional external funds to sustain their work well beyond the

time constraints of the grant. The consortium's partnership with Ohio Campus Compact ensures its longevity as a statewide initiative supported by an established network of higher education institutions with strong leadership potential. However, the greatest benefit shared by the participants was the annual exchanges and gatherings with colleagues that they found "invigorating" and provided spaces for "new ideas and new connections."

Data from GCGS community partners also provides evidence that networks focused on a common goal and grounded in a sense of common fate and responsibility have the potential to make significant community change. Over 8,000 college students and 12,000 urban youth have participated in community service programs to strengthen their local neighborhoods through GCGS, creating camps for youth engineers, intergenerational linkages, nursing clubs, environmental initiatives, near-peer mentoring programs, literacy projects, anti-bullying campaigns, and diversity challenge days. Each of these programs has created a sustainable collective body between a campus and a youth-serving agency (e.g., an alliance, coalition, club, or association) and has incorporated both a student and youth development model to ensure that the initiative is educating future leaders for social change. The spaces created across the state for transformational change are embodied in the commitments made by partners. In a survey of GCGS school- and youth-serving agencies, 100% of the partners said that their

organization was committed to providing on-going support to the new service-learning program initiated by GCGS. Over 90% of the community partners involved in the GCGS had established new connections through the consortium and improved their ability to meet community needs. Teachers across the state who have been involved in the youthLEAD programs have also reported a deeper awareness of the capacities of the students labeled "at-risk" in their classrooms.

In similar fashion, Siena, together with two other smaller liberal arts colleges in New York's Capital Region (St. Rose and Sage) and several community partners have begun building the Campus Community Consortium for the Capital Region (4CR) with Learn and Serve support through NY and PA Campus Compacts. While currently at a much earlier stage than the Otterbein experience, the power of network community is already evident. Each of the three institutions, had struggled through fits and starts with developing service-learning only to end up with islands of individual faculty practice for many years. Through co-founding 4CR, and joint participation in faculty development activities, resource-sharing, and a common commitment to a shared community beyond any of the three campuses, the formation of the network has greatly advanced redevelopment and institutionalization of service-learning on the three campuses and created a new sense of "stakeholdership" in the institutions on the part of community partners. "We are in it together," noted a key academic

stakeholder, "Our institutions, our community, our faculty and students. We are becoming a community of the whole rather than a community of parts." Thus far, 30 faculty across the three institutions have committed to and are developing a broad array of service-learning courses, particular to their institutional cultures and community partnerships, while at the same time coordinating and collaborating across schools though the network. From a recent two day Problem-Based Service-Learning training at which faculty, administrators and community partners were participants, the universal response to a training evaluation focused on "the most rewarding part of the training" AND "the most likely to contribute to your continued development and implementation of service learning" was to credit the *networking* with faculty and community partners from throughout the community and particularly across institutions.

Consortia of higher education institutions, just like campus-community partnerships, are often muddied by tensions that emerge from divergent priorities, a lack of transparency about those priorities, limited or unequal resources, conflicting risk management or recognition policies, and different campus/community calendars. These challenges could easily stagnate innovation and effectiveness and can sometimes lead to participants pulling out of consortia. However, service-learning practitioners James Birge, Brooke Beaird, and Jan Torres argue that American institutions "share a common tradition of responding to the needs of society" and can "move

beyond competition to collaboration in addressing the local, national, and global issues" (2003, p. 149). They offer successful incentives and strategies, modeled by GCGS, to encourage institutions to build effective partnerships. For example, whereas distinct academic cultures that define each campus can often pose challenges for working together, GCGS has brought distinctive campus identities to bear on the partnership. The University of Cincinnati, a large state-funded research institution offers consortium partners a wealth of community partnership experience, with partners ranging from medical facilities to museums and city zoos. On the other hand, a small liberal arts institution like Otterbein models for consortium partners innovative practices in bridging the student affairs/academic affairs divide. Many of the perceived barriers to partnerships were grounded in stereotypes about each institution, perceptions about prestige, power, and purpose that needed to be addressed collectively (Birge et al., 2003, p. 141). When GCGS campus constituents came together to share and reflect on their successful and innovative work at regional gatherings, their common commitment to students, student leadership, the youthLEAD model, and community wellness broke down any notions that campuses were too different to be able to speak a common language.

GCGS participants confirmed that most inherent challenges to collaboration were "minor compared with the benefits." However, they were troubled about the consortium's inability to regularly gather everyone in the

same room at the same time because of their dispersion across the state. Participants felt that this work demanded more common spaces for interaction and dialog—a problem one member felt could be easily solved through modern technologies and virtual community spaces. Social media, online exchanges, and other means of communication may serve as helpful tools for those seeking to build deep collaborative relationships. Such technologies may also remind users of our global interconnectedness. Where new technologies, common spaces, and consortia intersect we may find more encompassing definitions of community and enter into conversations with a greater ability to change the future. A consortium's structural complexity, extensive community connectedness, and inherent diversity are essential elements to healthy, sustainable change. Sustaining service-learning by addressing community possibility in partnership with other institutions of higher education encourages us to share limited resources, develop more diverse best practices, and create more systemic community-building efforts. These partnerships pool and distribute resources to meet common needs, making them more efficient while building a cadre of committed faculty colleagues, student leaders, and community partners across institutions.

CARRYING THE CONVERSATION FORWARD

Community organizer and educator Marshall Ganz reminds us that public work requires public narratives that weave together three key stories:

"Our *Story of Self* allows others to experience the values that move us to lead. Our *Story of Us* makes common cause with a broader community whose values we share. And a *Story of Now* calls us to act, so we can shape the future in ways consistent with those values" (Ganz, 2007, pp. 9-10). By telling our stories and listening to others' stories, we can build relationships that acknowledge both our commonalities and our differences, help us wrestle with the challenges and feelings of isolation, despair, uncertainty, or outrage that might emerge, and create together a vision and collaborative plan for change.

In the CCPH report on community partners' perspectives on community-higher education partnerships, the one hint at a vision of interdependence comes in an appendix containing stories -- letters participants wrote, imagining the future as they hoped it would look. One participant shared, "we have seen many people become really serious about addressing the power imbalances that exist in our society. . . . Maybe it's because enough people figured out that if we didn't do this, we were not going to survive as a planet or a species" (CCPH, 2007, p. 15). As we build a new paradigm of interdependence, an ecological lens on this work that questions the survival and evolution of service-learning may be valuable, offering a more integrated, interdependent acknowledgement that we all exist as part of the same ecosystem and face the costs and consequences of environmental degradation, poverty, illiteracy, prejudice, crises in health care and access,

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and other social ills.   An ecosystems approach may help partners working for social change, partners who may now inhabit their own niches, recognize their interdependence. An understanding of the "geography" of service-learning may also help us build new or improve existing partnerships and consortia, allowing us to map where our work overlaps, where our needs intersect, where our vision is shared, where gaps exist, and where our collaborative possibilities merge. New technologies like GIS have the potential to map service-learning programs to the distinctive contours of our communities (Gilbert & Krygier, 2007).

In these times, we feel a sense of urgency about cultivating this sense of interdependence, to help us diversify, bridge social capital, negotiate globalization and resolve religious conflict. The interdependent paradigm for creating high-quality service-learning offered here encourages us to foster new networked communities of practice to sustain our work, communities that are interconnected, where a sense of common fate and common responsibility "inspires people to contribute" and people "support what they create" (Wheatley, 2006, p. 68).   All stakeholders in service-learning are already and necessarily *in relation* to one another, in complicated ways. We share the same societal and systemic contexts even as we hold different identities and positionalities, compete for resources and seek to develop and sustain collaborative work. Service-learning co-exists as a field, a movement, a complex set of interdependent relationships sharing a common fate and a

common vision for the common good. We need to recognize that change, adaptability, and evolution is inherent in the sustainability of our work and we have to continue to build the alliances, the associations, the networks, and the social enterprises necessary for transforming education and community. Journalist David Bornstein, author of *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*, calls people from the "citizen sector" who are tackling widespread social problems by advancing systemic change, "*restless* people" (Bornstein, 2007, p. 1). Service-learning is a restless pedagogy that has the potential to advance through a network of partnerships, energetic, imaginative, alive and relentless in our work to transform our communities.

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NOTES:

(1) This chapter was originally published as:

Gilbert, M. Kesler, Plaut, J. & Johnson, M. (2009). "Cultivating Interdependent Partnerships for Civic Engagement and Community Change." In J. Strait and M. Lima (Eds.) *The Future of Service-Learning: New Solutions for Sustaining and Improving Practice.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

(2) The Great Cities~Great Service Consortium housed at Otterbein is funded, in part, through a consortium grant from Learn and Serve America.

CHAPTER EIGHT: EPILOGUE

Border Crossings and the Need to Stretch

Chapter seven draws this work to an important close as it urges us to rethink community-building principles to inform a paradigm shift in service-learning that demands attention to the common spaces, common fates, and common responsibilities that shape our partnership work. It encourages us to figure out new ways to create networks of partnerships both *on* our campuses and *between* institutions that recognize our interdependence. While the argument for interdependence is not explicitly feminist, it is rooted in feminist arguments for collaboration, intersectionality, and collective action. It is work that I hope will continue to shape important educational reform movements that will require higher education to recognize our responsibility to the communities that house our institutions and look to us to educate their children. As we build partnerships of interdependence for our social change work and our service-learning classes, we must ensure that our pedagogy is preparing our students for their journey into the community. The field is still in need of new models for teaching that integrate our best practices and our most innovative ideas for social justice education. We must be ready to map out new dynamic metaphors for the hyphen between service and learning that remind us that there is still considerable pedagogical work to be done.
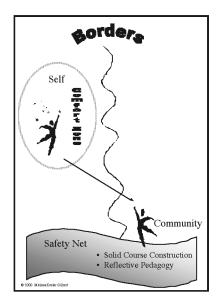
BORDER CROSSINGS

One metaphor that has continually surfaced as a way to understand the movement of higher education *into* community is the geographic view of a *border* situated where the academy meets the community. As one anonymous horticulturalist has noted, "The environment is richest and most diverse at borders, where trees meet fields, desert meets mountains, or rivers cross prairies." These geographic borderlands are referred to as *ecotones*, transition areas rich in new species, biological diversity, and health (Riser, 1993). However, any ecotone, while harboring abundant diversity and unusually good health, also struggles with overlapping tensions when life creates, as one ecologist suggests, "an edge effect" where species from disparate habitats abut (Odum, 1958). The latin "*tone*", meaning tension, is an important reminder that even in the fruitfulness of service-learning courses taught on the "edge" of our campuses, conflicts and constraints new to campuses, community partners, and students can unfold.

For myself, my students, and fellow faculty members who have been colleagues in this work for years, each course has required that we negotiate borders that create a divide between our comfort zones and a new community-identified self. The research examined in this series of essays has taken us into the gendered communities of girls and women; the poverty-stricken educations of children labeled "at-risk" by their schools; the unsheltered lives of our neighbors living on the streets; and the organizations

that both sustain and try to dismantle systems of oppression in our society. Each of these journeys has required that all participants find their way across a permeable border that demarcates a transition, a leap, or a new way of knowing the world. Crossing the border is risky, emotional, and at times dangerous work for everyone involved. Students are challenged to leave behind old ways of learning, faculty have to give up some of their authority and take risks with a new pedagogy that may not be valued at their institution, and community partners open their doors to volunteers who may not be readied for the work ahead.

At faculty development workshops I have led over the past decade, I usually share with participants the image in *Diagram 1.0: Borders* (shown below) and ask participants to define the borders their students cross as part of the service-learning experience.

Diagram 1.0: Borders

The most common borders named in this process are gender, race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexuality. Faculty members are always eager to share how their students are asked to grow cross-cultural competencies for working with the "other", learn new languages, grapple with their own privilege and elitism, or develop either "tolerance" or a "greater appreciation of diversity" in order to effectively serve "others". However, the borders do not end with traditionally recognized sites of oppression. Participants also share epistemological borders – the different ways students and communities create, share, and value knowledge – community knowledge verses academic expertise. Professionalism always makes the list, as students are asked to take on the identity of "expert," "consultant," "teacher" or "nurse" as they move from the classroom to a service site that demands specific skill sets, clothing requirements, and a body of ethics or a code of conduct. Geography emerges as a border that marks the landscape and articulates urban/suburban/rural differences as well as the hidden modes of transportation required to move a student, perhaps on a city bus, from campus to community. Feminist scholar Janice McMillan calls this kind of work in the border terrain of service-learning a "boundary negotiation" that can encompass "knowledge, language, roles, place, identity, and meaning" (2002, p. 56). She suggests that service-learning offers these opportunities by engaging students with people outside of campus to provide a "real

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experience of linking theory with real life issues of both students and academics" resulting in a "constant dialectic" between learner and environment, acting WITH not ON, TO, or FOR" (2002, pp. 65-67). Trigg and Balliet (2000) argue that these border crossings represent a kind of "bifurcation" of service a "reach across boundaries of difference" that separate theory and practice, classroom and community, the private and the public, and the individual and the community (p. 87).

Border crossings create one of the greatest sites of tension in the service-learning movement. Our community partners often argue that students are not prepared well enough for transborder work. They lack the cross-cultural skills to make them effective community change agents or they carry with them stereotypes and prejudices that unveil themselves at a service-site and prohibit them from making the kind of connection necessary to work with a person whose life circumstances are drastically different than their own. When students are not prepared to do the kinds of boundary negotiations necessary for effective service, service-learning can be mis-educative and one of the greatest potential risks of experiential education (Dewey, 1916). The experience can reinforce stereotypes of community participants and create an even wider divide between students and the outsiders they meet in their service work, if not embedded in a dialog about difference.

An example from my own classroom is useful here. In 2000, I taught a course where I asked my students to conduct "rap sessions" (consciousness-raising groups) with teen girls in the city of Portland, Oregon. One of my students, Jill, ended up working with a partner at a local settlement house that provided workshops on parenting for a group of pregnant teens who regularly came to the house on a weekly basis for sessions to help themselves become better mothers. Before the students went out into the field to conduct their rap sessions, my students usually went through a series of trainings in class to learn how to communicate with teenagers and they completed a series of readings with accompanying exercises designed to break down myths about teen girls. Prior to hosting the rap sessions, Jill's journal entries revealed that not only was she not completing the readings, but she also harbored a dangerous stance toward pregnant teens. She repeatedly called the girls "welfare moms" and felt strongly that they were "using the system" by having babies that would allow them to tap into funding for women with young children. She shared her prejudices about race and sexuality in her journals and her opinions about welfare, positively owning her racism and classism as central tenets of her journey. It was clear from her journal entries that Jill was not ready to work with these young women: her anger and prejudice was too strong as she had internalized a set of messages from her lifetime that were saturated with myths about pregnant teenagers. I had to set up a different timeline for Jill's entry into the field to

ensure that her service with the girls would not lead to sessions that in any way reinforced the stereotypes she would bring with her across borders of geography, race, and class. At the same time, it would have been irresponsible to match this student with a group of young women who were expecting an empathetic college student to come to their meetings to have honest and meaningful discussions about the issues affecting their lives. We negotiated a series of journal exercises that directly focused on specific readings for Jill and I required her to attend another student's session before hosting her own. She continued to struggle right up until the moment when she met the girls and heard their stories, scaffolded at that point by several more weeks of analyzing her own situatedness as a teenager and working to dismantle the myths she embraced so keenly. The 'zine pages she created with the girls remain, to this day, one of the most profound series of writings by girls about their own journey toward understanding their positionality as "pregnant teens." Without taking the extra time to negotiate the skills necessary for her inevitable border crossings, Jill might have spent her four weeks in the field with the girls allowing herself to hear only the stories that supported her previously learned assumptions about growing up pregnant.

Feminist scholar, Anna Agathangelou argues (2002), "forming transborder solidarity" between students who share different national and social locations both inside and outside the classroom requires a "recognition of who has access to what power and why" (p. 151). Jill's story affirms this

requirement and begs the service-learning movement to ensure that we are developing a pedagogical toolbox to help students transition to their community roles. I would argue, based on the research shared in this body of work, that the toolbox needs to focus on a process of service-*un*learning and provide specific *feminist* strategies to help all participants unpack the assumptions they bring with them into the community and develop a new sense of agency toward social change. *Diagram 1.0 Borders* also suggests that we might consider returning to the trapeze metaphor shared earlier in this work to help us understand what is necessary for border work. The image implies that it is the role of the faculty member to stretch a "safety net" of solid, well-thought out course construction and reflective pedagogy beneath the trapeze that crosses the border – a net to both support border crossings and to catch our students if they fall.

A NEW MODEL FOR EXEMPLARY

FEMINIST SERVICE-LEARNING COURSE DESIGN

Isn't that what teaching is all about?
Getting us OUT there, changing the world? – capstone student

Kerrissa Heffernan, author of the *Service-Learning Faculty Toolkit* (2001), urges us to situate our pedagogical tools at the intersection of two questions:

> To minimize the potential for harm, service-learning must be well-planned and integrated into the course with a clear sense of *how* to

structure the service component and *why* this service activity is utilized in this course (2001, p. *iii*).

Her work established in the service-learning field the necessity for developing a set of principles and practices that would set in motion meaningful educational journeys for our students. She reminds us here that exemplary course design must be integrated, intentional and grounded in the learning objectives we have for our students. Applying the feminist lens that has developed in this research to Heffernan's *how* and *why* questions is an important first step toward a reimagined commitment to service-learning that is informed by the principles of feminist pedagogy. To answer the question of *how* to design a service-learning component, we might return to the first three tenets of feminist teaching:

(1) Examining how knowledge is constructed

(2) Rethinking positionality and identity

(3) Renegotiating responsibility and authority

These three tenets emerged as important elements of course design in the first three chapters of this research where students articulated the significant transformations they went through as the result of pedagogical choices that urged students to *un*learn, co-create knowledge, process their identity, and reimagine their own voice, authority and agency. To answer Heffernan's *why* question, tenets four and five suggest that service might be situated in our classrooms as the means for:

(4) Debunking current systems of gender, race, and class oppression and

(5) Encouraging a social change agenda

My research on the impact of these feminist tenets on experiential and service-learning classrooms led me to try to answer both of Heffernan's questions with a new model for transforming our classrooms.   Given the findings of my research, I knew that to help our students to become border crossers and to develop their sense of agency, the model needed to do at least three things: (1) name the sites of student transformation as achievable classroom goals, (2) identify the student transformations (learning objectives) one hoped to achieve by integrating service-learning into the curriculum, and (3) provide specific feminist pedagogical strategies to meet those learning objectives.   Toward this effort I created the STRETCH Model (see Table 2). Teaching toward agency means helping students stretch across the many borders created through service-learning programs. I offer here a reflective process to move students from a limited view of their potential contribution to community to a more connected, integrated perspective on community-building.   These pedagogical strategies provide the student with a journey of interaction that is grounded in an interplay between scholarly inquiry, human experience, and collective efficacy. The model asks both students and teachers to stretch beyond our preferred paradigms for learning, knowing, and teaching.

TABLE 2. The Stretch Model

	GOAL	OBJECTIVES	PEDAGOGY
S	Situating the Self	To identify and explore our social and intellectual location. To recognize differences and commonalities and begin to use them to enrich the vision of the project. To deconstruct our assumptions about the communities in which we work and to forge a new appreciation for diversity.	Consciousness-raising Identity Circle Identity Narrative Standpoint Exercise Journaling Electronic Reflection 3 Part Journal Critical Incident Journal Emotive Essay
T	Team-Building	To form a collective space and a personal work and sharing group. To recognize the team as a learning community that will co-construct a project and a new basis for knowledge. To interpret the dynamics of group work and play.	A Collective of Our Own Boundaries to Commitment Creating a Common Language
R	Roles and Responsibilities	To reflect on the multiple roles required as we cross beyond our comfort zone. To think critically about the ways in which we interact with others and the meanings we make. To consider our responsibilities as participants in multiple communities.	Training Stop Action Journal Free-writes Role-Playing Contrived Situations Shadowing Fishbowling Interruption Skills Cross-Cultural Communication Metaphor Essay
E	Engaging with Ideas	To develop a critical consciousness. To form an understanding of the critical debates, social contexts, and community realities of our work. To examine, analyze, and interpret our service experience through an academic lens.	Key Phrase Journal Thematic Journal Directed Writings Ethical Case Study Directed Readings Critical Thought Papers Issue Paper Double Entry/Split Journey Insight Entry Journal
T	Touching Ground	To understand the community as real, tangible, and changeable. To appreciate the complexities of knowledge created both inside and outside of the academy.	Field Journal Process Meetings 3/5 Minute Updates Final Products Presentations
C H	Choosing Directions	To recognize that education involves personal choices, commitments, and responsibility. To gain autonomy, personal authority, and agency.	Portfolio Personal Learning Plans Secondary Project Proposals Learning Paper

The model is not linear or developmental: students can enter at any moment during the service-learning journey. However, to create truly transformative experiences for our students, each goal of the model should be addressed through a reflective pedagogical strategy at some point during the course. The model assumes that the intended outcome is a student who is "educated in agency," readied to become an active citizen of multiple communities informed by a body of scholarship and a set of skills that give them the capacity to become effective change agents. Each of the pedagogical strategies shared in the model are more fully described in Appendix K.

Situating the Self

My three enthographic studies of feminist service-learning courses revealed the importance of providing spaces for students to situate themselves within the social and political contexts of the service experience. Applying a feminist framework to a service-learning experience requires that the teacher integrate intentional spaces for students to examine their situatedness and positionality in order for them to be able to find commonalities with others and deconstruct the values laden in their differences. The STRETCH model offers a collection of feminist strategies, from consciousness-raising to extensive journaling to move students through the process of raising their awareness about others, breaking down stereotypes, and forging a new appreciation of diversity. *Diagram 2.0: The*

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Identity Circle provides both an image of an identity circle with students and teens as it also outlines learning objectives related to the exercise.

Diagram 2.0: The Identity Circle

Identity Circle

Objectives:
- To locate the self within the context of the service-learning assignment
- To reinforce concepts from the scholarship
- To break down stereotypes about others
- To create opportunities for identifying commonalties and differences
- To build community in the classroom

I begin each of my own classes with an Identity Circle (discussed in Chapter 4) where students have the opportunity to uncover the commonalties and differences that they share with others in the class. The circle needs to be a place where students begin the process of situating themselves within the context of the project. For example, in courses where my students have worked with teenage girls, the circle is a place to explore their own

positionality as "teenagers" owning identities as smokers, cheerleaders, band geeks, burn-outs, nerds, sluts, and players, among many others. In my course on the politics of women's health, the students situated themselves within the circle as "patients", sharing moments when their symptoms were ignored, their bodies manipulated, and their embodied knowledge silenced. Students step into the circle one-by-one, share an identity or an experience with the group and then other students who share the identity join the student in the center of the circle while students who do not share the experience remain marginalized at the edges of the circle. Prior to participating in the circle students write an identity narrative that helps them to focus on aspects of the self that were reinforced or devalued by societal institutions like the family or the educational process. Students often write about discrimination they felt based on their ethnicity, the silencing they experienced in school because they were female, or messages they received from kin about their sexuality. After the circle, the experience is processed through a dialogue that helps them to understand the ways in which we value or devalue and privilege or disempower others. We then move on to an exercise that asks them to name the stereotypes that define the people in the group they are going to work with during the course. Situating themselves first within a group helps them to understand the importance of breaking down the myths about the people in the communities

they will serve and is one of the first steps in a process of *un*learning their

own prejudices.

Team-building

Cultivating a community *inside* the classroom is one of the most

important steps to help students move into a community *outside* of the

classroom. The three ethnographies offered in this work that focus on

student voices suggest multiple effective feminist strategies for creating a

community of learners. Creating actual "spaces" for community learning is

one strategy repeatedly used in my own service-learning classes and shared

by the faculty interviewed in Chapter Four. For some feminist teachers this

space is defined as a "safe space" for dialog where "what is said in the room,

stays in the room" – spaces that are conversational, interactive, but most

importantly confidential. My students have called the classroom their

"comfort zone" and consider it a place to process new ideas and secure the

help of their peers in solving experiential challenges. I call my students a

"feminist advocacy team" to inspire them to be problem-solvers and change

agents, but they also evolve swiftly into a "'work and personal sharing group"

where there is a necessary balance between intellectual analysis and

processing of the emotional work that happens in the field. These kinds of

teams develop a collective identity where power is shared and diversity is

valued. They each bring different identities, perspectives, and skills to the

work that they come to acknowledge as critical to their success. Another

important feminist strategy for community-building is providing a networked support system for the students that may include peer mentoring and learning communities that adopt an ethic of care.

It is in these kinds of collective communities of practice that knowledge can be co-constructed. The students learn eachothers' voices and expertise can come together to create new knowledge about our communities. Providing these kinds of communities also helps students to move toward a deeper understanding of the ways in which communities need to be interdependent in order to solve our big problems. They have witnessed first-hand how a group can work together in its diversity to share the capacity for meaningful change. Their own community microcosm in the classroom provides an interpretive lens that they can apply to the communities they are studying through their service experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

Applying feminist principles to a service-learning course requires all participants to rethink their roles and responsibilities. The STRETCH Model suggests that shifting authority can help students to both think critically about the ways in which they interact with others and to discover the roles the may take on in the future. This research uncovered various approaches faculty members may use to shift the responsibility of learning to the students so that they become authorities of their own epistemological journey. Faculty members often feel a loss of control when they shift their

roles while at the same time find a new way of connecting to their students.

We need to consider what the most appropriate role is in the classroom and

begin to develop these new pedagogical strategies for the experiential

landscape that fit our roles. We often find ourselves serving more as

facilitators, discussion leaders, negotiators, and coaches than we do

transmitters of knowledge. It is important to be clear with students about

the shifting of roles. It is unfair to tell them that they are in control of their

learning, and then to take back the control when it is time to evaluate their

learning. If we choose to remain in control of the evaluation (and assignment

of grades), it is more realistic to explain that while we are sharing the

responsibility for learning, the faculty role may shift back and forth between

team player, coach, facilitator and instructor/evaluator.

Students must take on new roles in the community as they work with

clients, organize campaigns and lead collaborative teams. Students who are

accustomed to dealing only with textbooks, notes, and exams find that their

usual way of thinking about education is being deconstructed in this new

educational environment. In-class discussions to process these changing

roles are important. Role-playing exercises can be extremely beneficial to

allow students to embody their experiences in a space that can also help them

to analyze the meanings of their actions and the behaviors of those around

them. Students also need to be informed of their ethical responsibilities

toward community partners and clients. Sharing a code of ethics for the

discipline or the code of conduct for a specific community site and then asking

students to add to the code or create their own is an effective tool for helping

students to understand the complexities of their responsibilities. I often

share a list of common student questions, shown here:

Diagram 3. Favorite Student Questions

**Favorite Student Questions
and Their S-L Answers**

- **Do I have to buy the book?**
- **Do I need to know this?**
- **Is this on the test?**
- **Did I miss anything important?**
- **Could you tell me what I missed today in class?**
- **Can I miss the last two weeks of class and still pass the course?**
- **I did everything assigned, why didn't I get an A?**

This list creates a playful dialog in the classroom that also serves as a

reminder that a student's responsibility in a service-learning course is very

different than it is in a traditional classroom setting. If they do not buy the

book, for example, or they "blow off the readings" like Jill had done, they will

not have the important background training and expertise to carry out their

project. If they "missed something important" by not showing up, it was

probably a woman at a job placement site who was waiting for them to come

and help her edit the first resume she has ever written for an interview

scheduled that afternoon.

Community partners also find that this new connection to the university requires them to negotiate a teaching role that may attempt to situate their knowledge within an academic framework. They become both experts in the field as well as beneficiaries of service. Students must be engaged in reflection that also helps them to consider the shared responsibility they have with these community partners to develop solutions to complex social problems.

Engaging with Ideas

Feminist teachers argue that our classrooms need to be places where we continually deconstruct, dismantle, and demystify systems of oppression, power, and privilege. The STRETCH model suggests that we incorporate specific feminist pedagogical strategies that help our students engage with the scholarship while simultaneously testing its theories and concepts on the experiential landscape traversed during a service-learning course. Most of the strategies for critical analysis in our feminist service-learning classrooms take traditional pedagogical forms. The faculty members who shared their insights in this research tended to use journals as sites for extracting key ideas, concepts, and theories from texts and comparing and contrasting them to observations made during community work. Their journaling strategies were designed to help students uncover the biases in the texts or refute dominant theories that could not account for the lived realities of the people the students served. Journals are the most often used reflective strategy for

service-learning and the easiest for the more traditional teacher to adopt, as most faculty members are accustomed to framing critical questions for their students' writing.

However, one of the most effective and innovative reflective strategies for engaging our students with ideas can be found in Augusto Boal's *Theater for the Oppressed* (1979). He offers interactive theater techniques that are both tools for transformation and strategies for political activism. Boal asks us to embody our citizenship not by just living in society, but by changing it and helps us to recognize that we are always, in the course of our everyday lives, actors. A service-learning course that does not make spaces for students to act out and negotiate their role as a citizen is missing one of the most effective ways to help students cross the unavoidable civic borders. In the classroom Boal's work translates into students negotiating theoretical frameworks for understanding oppression through movement and theater, creating a dialectical approach to learning. I have found these techniques to be the most powerful pedagogical moments in my service-learning classes, as they ask my students to think critically about oppression and quickly turn their interpretations into meaningful frames to teach others. Two of the most effective techniques are *freeze frames* and *forum theater*. I often use the freeze frame to help students understand the complexities of gender, race, and class identities. In my GirlTalk course, where students are preparing to work with teenage girls, I have the students bring to class short narratives

from the readings that illuminate the complexities of female adolescent identity through a specific experience, for example, a girl doing the laundry for her six younger siblings or a girl hiding in the closet from an abuser. My students will inevitably meet a girl who shares a similar real life experience during their service work. In class, the students form groups of four or five members and I distribute to each group one of the girl narratives. They have about fifteen minutes to co-construct a frozen image of the narrative, to hold the action of oppression still for a brief moment, and then to share the frozen frame with the class while someone else reads the narrative aloud. Feminist teacher Kathleen Gallagher argues that using the freeze technique allows students time to interpret oppression while the "positions are shaped collectively as ideas are sharpened against another" (2000, p. 77). The feat of situating their bodies within the oppression is a courageous act that calls both intellectual and emotional work into play. When they process the frames, I ask them to discuss the choices they had to make as a group to produce an image that speaks a truth. They explain why they used both the floor and a chair to either degrade or lift an actor in the narrative. They share why a face was hidden or a back was turned. It is in the answers to these questions that students come to know how we might explain power and powerlessness.

I also use *forum theater* in my service-learning classrooms to help students identify the barriers different forms of oppression create for

individuals and to uncover ways to break down those barriers. In the service-learning class where we met Jill earlier, we examined how systems of poverty function to maintain the status quo and "keep people in their place." Because many of the women we worked with were living in shelters for battered women I had my students do a forum theater exercise that situated a battered woman at the site of the oppression. As is the style of forum theater, one student acted out the role of the oppressed person, in this case a battered woman. Her role was simply to stand at one end of the room. I then asked the students to name aloud, one-by-one, the barriers that kept this woman stuck in this place unable to leave the relationship. As a student named a specific barrier (e.g., her children, lack of money, a biased legal system, lack of family support, fear of retaliation, etc.) s/he joined the woman, standing in front her to embody the barrier just named. One-by -one a wall formed in front of the student. When the wall was sufficiently strong and impermeable, the other students in the room named ways that they could break down the wall. Again, one-by-one a student would come to the front of the classroom, name a strategy (e.g., a battered women's shelter, a good lawyer, a supportive network of friends, better laws or public policies, etc.) and then gently move one of the students representing a barrier out of the way. The student then linked arms with the battered woman. This process repeated itself until all the barriers have been removed and the student and her "strategies" walked silently to the other end of the room.

Forum theater asks students to move through a very complex set of critical thinking tasks while demanding that they put their bodies "on the line" to signify the potential for social change. It is a reflective space in the feminist service-learning classroom that stretches students to engage in ideas that will inform their community interactions. These strategies are essential if we are to move our students away from a band-aid approach to solving community problems to a social change framework that articulates the necessity for a systemic, radical, and restless approach to community-building.

Touching Ground

The STRETCH model also urges us to use feminist strategies in our classrooms to help students make meaning out of their actual work in the field. We need reflective moments that specifically encourage students to examine the places where they touch ground in the community, connect with others, and apply a new set of skills to a social issue. These strategies need to teach our students how make critical observations about their work and provide multiple lenses for our students to interpret those observations.

The process of touching ground often begins with a community partner visiting the classroom to share the mission of the agency and the vision for the service work. In Chapter Two the students noted how important this connection to the community partner was so early on in the course for it allowed them to identify with a "real" person and initiated a developmental

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process of connection that would encourage students to grapple with issues of trust and responsibility. Students need reflective opportunities in the classroom to make meaning out of new attitudes they will develop toward the community as they venture out. I often have students begin a diagram at this point in the journey to map the connections they are making to real people, real geographic spaces, and real institutions. By the end of the course the diagrams look very similar to complex webs and often have arrows pointing in multiple directions, overlapping circles, and squiggly lines that somehow represent the struggles the students have with specific relationships. As my students have argued, these strategies help to make the community less abstract and more real.
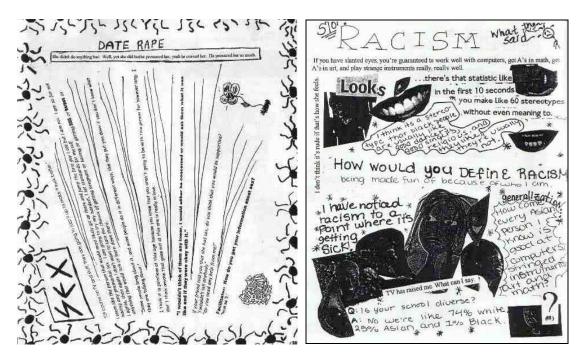
Students also need time in the classroom to process their experiences together. Holding process meetings that are very similar to feminist "rap sessions" encourage students to share and analyze their work together, helping them to understand that they are often struggling with the same issues as their colleagues. If a student has had a particularly difficult experience in the field, I will often turn the classroom into a fishbowl and have the student role play the behavior that has prompted frustration. In a fishbowl, the behavior can be played out numerous times within a circle of observers who can also join in the role-playing, change the direction of the behavior, and prompt an action that might lead to a resolution or at the very least a recommendation to help work through a similar situation in the

future. We often use the same fishbowl technique to practice "interruption skills" – a set of techniques for interrupting acts of oppression that happen at a service site. These acts can manifest themselves as racist comments, sexist jokes, ethnic slurs, bullying, censorship of alternative ideas, or a myriad of other words and behaviors. While our service-learning students are often taught how to recognize forms of oppression in the feminist classroom, we often forget to provide them with the tools to both dispute and challenge them.

Touching ground can also mean requiring that students create final products for the service-learning course that can be simultaneously educational, comprehensive, and reflective. Scrapbooks and photo albums are often used by feminist teachers as spaces for students to share successes in an artistic medium that maps the journey and articulates the learning. Final products that encourage students to work collectively, incorporate community voices, and also continue the process of dismantling oppression effectively challenge students to connect the pieces of their service.   For example, in several of my courses students write and edit 'zines with their new community friends to celebrate the co-construction of knowledge, a diversity of voices, and the culmination of a semester's worth of work toward social change. The images below are from different final zine products from my own courses that articulate the students' understanding of oppression and include the voices of teen girls from their consciousness-raising sessions.

When distributed in communities, these zines raise awareness of the inequities facing girls and become change agents in their own right.

Diagram 4.0 Service-Learning 'Zine Pages

Also illustrated below is a photograph of a mural my students and a group of teenagers painted for the side of a transient youth shelter in the city of Portland, Oregon. This artifact of a service-learning course illuminates the importance of incorporating artistic reflective strategies in service-learning courses.   Other forms of final products can include formal community presentations, written research reports, manuals, quilts, special events, celebrations, webpages, art exhibits, and about any other imaginable medium that gathers student and community knowledge in a meaningful collection of voice and experience. Making space for students to reflect on the tangible

and real act of being *in* the community brings our humanity closer and helps them to make sense out of what can often seem like a recalcitrant world.

Diagram 5.0 GirlPower City Mural

Choosing Directions

The final element of the STRETCH model is an emphasis on student agency through decision-making and goal-setting.   Feminist teachers have argued that we must leave some of the decisions in a democratic classroom up to our students and have gone as far as to suggest that our syllabi should be co-created with students. In a service-learning course grounded in feminist principles, giving students opportunities to make choices about the direction of their community service, their own learning goals, and the responsibilities

they are ready to take on is a critical step in teaching toward civic responsibility. To develop agency, students need spaces where they can decide which pathway to take to apply their skills in the most meaningful way to community-building efforts. Recognizing their own assets and identifying their skill sets is an important first step toward developing a sense of self-efficacy.

The STRETCH model provides a series of strategies that help students on this journey. I usually assign a portfolio at the beginning of each service-learning course that asks students to identify their own learning goals for the class. The portfolio becomes a map for student growth and a reminder of shared expectations for the service-learning work. Students are also asked to identify the skills they bring to the team and willfully offer them up as assets to our community work. My own emphasis on the asset-mapping of student skill sets in the classroom is grounded in the philosophy of social policy analysts John Kretzman and John McKnight, who remind us:

> Every single person has capacities, abilities and gifts. Living a good life depends on whether those capacities can be used, abilities expressed and gifts given. If they are, the person will be valued, feel powerful and well-connected to the people around them. And the community around the person will be more powerful because of the contribution the person is making (1995, p. 13).

Their work demands that instead of searching for the needs and deficiencies of our local communities that we take the time to inventory the gifts and assets of local people who have the potential to become change agents and capacity-builders. Our students have the same kinds of gifts and assets that

can be developed through service-learning experiences if we take the time to help them map their gifts and chart out a journey.

As important as asset-mapping is to student transformation, so are spaces for students to step back and recognize areas where they need help, need to step back, or need to take an entirely different direction than the rest of the class. The STRETCH model identifies a "secondary proposal" option that gives students a space to propose a project that is still connected to the service assignment, but may drift toward a different philosophical stance about the work. One of my own Politics of Women's Health students exemplifies the need for flexibility, self-actualization, and ironically *choice* in the service-learning classroom. Lynn enrolled in the Politics course unaware that our service project would be a series of oral histories with women who founded the women's health movement on the west coast. She was very uncomfortable at first about the idea of visiting a clinic that offered abortions as she identified herself as "pro-human" and "pro-life". Lynn resisted the readings for the course because some of the narratives were vivid accounts and they disturbed her. At the same time, Lynn wanted to remain in the class. She was finding a place for herself in the collective and had identified other pro-life students in the course with whom she shared a deep connection. Lynn needed to define a project in this course that would be all her own, but would also meet the need for the All Women's Health Clinic to create an oral history of the organization. We also wanted to be sure that she learned the

methodological skills of the oral history process and created a document that would be housed in a collection at the Oregon Historical Society. I worked with the clinic to find a feminist health care worker whose connection to empowering women patients was not focused on abortion and we arranged for a telephone interview that did not require Lynn to visit the clinic. Lynn developed a secondary proposal for her service project. While this secondary proposal still asked Lynn to grapple with the inequities in women's health care and to reconsider women's privacy over their bodies, she was able to cross borders which did not completely dismantle her belief system, her own sense of integrity, and her faith. Some students, regardless of our preparation, are not yet ready to move entirely out of their comfort zone. They need to have options that still recognize the gifts they bring to the work and the diversity in perspective that is possible through their participation.

The STRETCH model provides a framework for applying feminist pedagogical strategies to the service-learning classroom to ensure that students are readied to cross the borders necessary for community participation. Students who have multiple opportunities to reflect on identity, teamwork, responsibility, theory, action, and choice are better prepared to move out of their comfort zone and into the community. The model was grounded in the ethnographic studies of my early service-learning experiences and tested repeatedly over the next ten years of research on the

transformational properties of service-learning (for examples of syllabi from these courses, see Appendices L & M).

INTEGRATING THE JOURNEY:
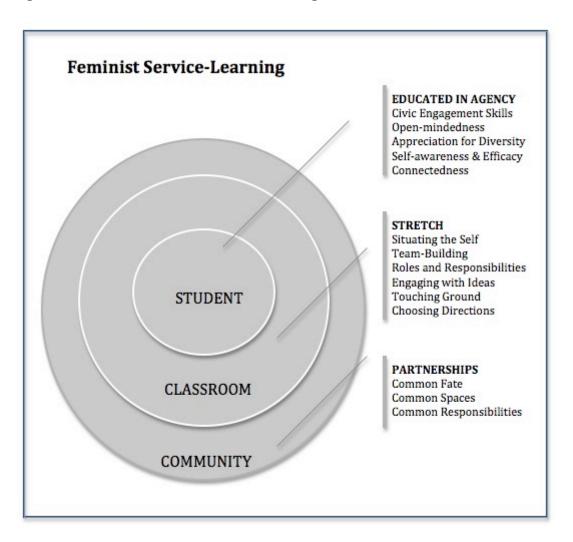## STUDENT, FACULTY, and COMMUNITY

This work has shown that applying feminist pedagogical principles to our service-learning initiatives creates more meaningful transformations for our students, faculty, and communities. The STRETCH model is a first step in defining an intentional pedagogical framework for ensuring that students are ready to cross the borders demanded by this educational innovation. However, there is still work ahead of us in this movement. As we argue in Chapter Seven, we need to be attentive to the ways in which we partner with our communities, recognizing that we are a *we*, not a *they* in that higher education already belongs to the community and has a responsibility in it. Higher education needs to take seriously our role in community-building and use a feminist lens to understand how to organize and cultivate new futures across gender, race, class, sexuality, age, and ability.

A Holistic Feminist Process

While this research has provided strong evidence for the significance of feminist applications to the service-learning classroom, it has also created a more integrated and holistic process for understanding service-learning as a pedagogical journey that is interconnected through multiple standpoints.

The student experience of being *"educated in agency"* is situated within the choices made by their teachers and the networks created between the community and institutions of higher education. Taken as a whole, this collection of essays has posited an integrated and interdependent approach to service-learning informed by feminist pedagogical and community-building theory. *Diagram 5. Feminist Service-Learning* articulates this process as a series of embedded experiences framed by learning outcomes, the STRETCH model of feminist pedagogy, and community partnership principles.

Diagram 5. The Feminist Service-Learning Process

Feminist Service-Learning

STUDENT

CLASSROOM

COMMUNITY

EDUCATED IN AGENCY
Civic Engagement Skills
Open-mindedness
Appreciation for Diversity
Self-awareness & Efficacy
Connectedness

STRETCH
Situating the Self
Team-Building
Roles and Responsibilities
Engaging with Ideas
Touching Ground
Choosing Directions

PARTNERSHIPS
Common Fate
Common Spaces
Common Responsibilities

In this process the student is seen as situated within both the classroom and the community, both intact with a set of principles and strategies that shape that students experience. The line between the classroom and the community represents the values and policies of our higher education institutions for what happens on our campuses is shaped by both the barriers and support systems of our colleges and universities. Taken together this integrated approach to service-learning enables us to ***teach toward agency*** as we come to understand the interconnectedness of the situatedness of our students within the campus as well as the community climate. Without a more intentional and interdependent approach to our understanding of service-learning in all of its contexts we are limited in our view of both the promise and possibilities of this pedagogy.

The Feminist Service-Learning Process posited here as a framework for moving our students across the civic borders necessary for community engagement also suggests that the responsibility for authentic and transformative experiences are the shared responsibility of all participants. While faculty members must adopt innovative new ways to teach toward agency, our students must take on the responsibility for their own learning and our institutions must engage in partnerships that recognize not just our differences, but also our commonalties.

NEXT STEPS ON THE JOURNEY:

METHODOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL

The multi-case ethnographic and multi-methodological approaches that informed the development of the Feminist Service-Learning process recognizes the value of inclusion -- incorporating all voices and standpoints into the frame. The use of multiple methods, including surveys, focus groups, interviews, and narrative analysis ensured that the emergent theories were grounded in a complex interchange of voices that concurrently materialized from multiple and disparate sources. This is one of the first collections of research to make a holistic contribution to the field, situating our knowledge about service-learning through the lenses of multiple stakeholders. The research is broad in scope, encompassing a multitude of experiences, yet untapped in the scholarship. The work has been informed by service-learning initiatives that span the geography of the U.S., from the east coast to the west coast, with generous attention to faculty experiences in the heart of the Midwest. The initiatives focus on societal challenges that address nearly every site of oppression in our communities, including; sexism, poverty, ageism, homelessness, abelism, violence, heterosexism, illiteracy, classism, food security, environmental degradation, and racism. The diversity of faculty voices emerging from the varied landscapes of higher

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learning also keep us mindful of the similarities in teaching experiences at both small and large institutions and across private and public domains.

However, this inclusive approach is potentially limited in that, for the purpose of this analysis, I have grouped all courses, pedagogical journeys, and community partnerships into one defining category, "service-learning courses", not enabling me to make specific conclusions about the differences between the *types* of courses that are emerging on the horizon of the movement. While this work examines specific feminist applications to *all* types of courses, future research may explore these applications to different *types* of courses, noting the specific differences in effectiveness affected by the pedagogical model chosen (e.g., research-based, pure service-learning, etc.). We may also want to explore the differences between experiences at different types of institutions, different disciplines, and different geographies. While it is important that future research must continue to include the voices of all participants, especially those of the partners "served" by this movement, we may want to make room for a more thorough analysis of how gender, race, class, age, and ability could impact a participant's engagement. Examining our different approaches to service-learning through a critical lens will ensure that we do not take for granted the complexities of educating a new generation toward social justice. We need more research that puts students, faculty, and community partners in dialog with one another to shape new stories that can guide our work. We already know that interdependence is

the key to making our work more meaningful. We need to continue to search for exemplary models to apply to our teaching so that our work is transformational and relentless in our hope to make social change.

My own personal search for pedagogical models and metaphors for service-learning is not over, although I do realize that somewhere between my activist life and my sociological imagination now sits a very muddy pair of boots that have taken me far beyond the ivory tower to teach toward agency *in community*. I have lept off of many pedagogical platforms (like the ones on the ends of my student's trapeze), stretched beyond traditional frameworks in higher education to create a new paradigm of interdependence, and even hit the powerful puree button over and over again on the campus blender that is churning up new banana milkshakes of learning.

My work has often been situated on the borderlands of higher education, where community meets the campus and feminist thought wrestles with the canon. It is a challenging environment, wrought with tensions between stakeholders and limited resources, but it is a place I have come to know as one of the most exciting and rewarding landscapes of learning. It is a borderland poised for a paradigm shift in higher education to help us provide transformational journeys for both our students and our communities where we can be *un*learning the patterns of our past together and co-creating new knowledges for a future steadfast in its attentiveness to social justice.

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APPENDICES

DESCRIPTION
Much of what you will take with you from this course will be a result of your own serious thinking and reflection about our course readings and the work we are doing for our community partner(s). One way to appropriate this course for yourself is to keep a process journal. In this journal, you will struggle with ideas presented by the authors, look for connections between the readings and the community research we are doing, and explore the ways in which your own personal experiences touch on the issues raised in our work. In this journal you will be writing about the bridges we are building between academe, scholarship, and theory AND ourselves as members of our communities.

CONTENT
For each journal entry you are asked to write a reflection on the research work, class discussions, and group work you have completed prior to writing. Your reflections MUST include:
- ✓ <u>connections</u> BETWEEN the readings and the fieldwork (note the author's arguments/main points and use the terminology from the piece as evidence of your careful reading). Choose one theme that is reflected throughout all the readings and apply it to the work we are going to do/are doing in field. Be sure, however to properly cite all of the authors and compare points of view as you apply their scholarship to your own research.
- ✓ <u>critical analysis</u> of our research-is it effective, useful, relevant to the purpose?
- ✓ <u>a personal response</u> to the work you are doing in the field (e.g., frustrations, successes)
- ✓ feelings about <u>group dynamics</u> and your role within the group and the class
- ✓ reflections on what <u>you are learning</u> from the research experience and how this relates to your connections to your own community and /or activism
- ✓ <u>suggestions</u> for different and/or new directions for the project

PROCESS
When to write: journaling is a timely process and should be ongoing throughout the term. In order to prepare for writing you may want to gather your notes on course readings, class notes, group work notes and field notes. Read through them carefully and think about what you have been working on all week. Then sit down at the computer and write for approximately <u>45 minutes</u>.

How to turn it in: You will come to class with a prepared journal to share with your reading reaction group in class each Thursday. You will be reading your paper to your colleagues. It will be turned in at the end of class each Thursday. You should have a total of eight entries for this course (each is worth fifteen points). Your first journal will be due the first week of class.

EVALUATION

Evaluation: Your journal will be assessed on its thoroughness, evidence of careful reading, and evidence of analytical thinking about the reading and the research process.

Late Journals: One point will be taken off for each day the journal is late. Journals will not be accepted three days past the due date. Plan ahead and save often.

APPENDIX B

FACULTY
(PACC/WVCC)
INTERVIEW GUIDE

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS
What were the objectives of your funded project? How were they achieved?

What were some of the unexpected challenges your service-learning program/project faced? How did you overcome them?

Describe one of your service-learning "success stories":

Any other "lessons learned" you think might be valuable to share with others?

IMPACT OF FUNDING
Please share with me the impact this funding has had on your campus:

Probes:
- On Faculty? How has it influenced professional practice, faculty development efforts? Pedagogical shifts on campus? New tenure/promotion guideline? Scholarship of outreach/service/engagement?

- On Students? Leadership programs, mentors, new courses offered, new curriculum

- On Admins/Staff?

- On the Institutional level? Mission, engaged campus, ethos of civic engagement?

- On community partnerships? new partnership guidelines, campus resources for partners?

- On the community? new programs developed, client outcomes

THE FUTURE
How have the funded projects continued? How are you sustaining this work?

In what ways has the funded project prepared you for future developments in service-learning on your campus?

APPENDIX C
Student Focus Group Protocol

Introduction:

<u>Goal</u> – open and interactive discussion, learn more about your experiences in the community and the classroom, will be framing some questions for you, but I will not be participating or making value judgments.

<u>Purpose</u> – hear everyone's ideas, offer your own view, describe your perspective, no right or wrong answers, capture a wide array of comments, ideas and suggestions.

<u>Informed</u> – will be tape recorded, faculty instructor will not hear the recording, transcripts will not individually identify speakers, is confidential, speak one person at a time, speak clearly with more volume than usual.

<u>Shared understandings</u> – respect others' opinions, speak for yourself and not for others, or a group of others (use I statements), listen to others, don't name names.

Questions: *We want to focus today on how academic learning, personal development, your civic involvement, and your social justice perspective have been enhanced by both your community work and your classroom experience.*

BACKGROUND:

Describe the service-learning project:
- Relationship to coursework
- Personal learning goals
- Learning goals for the class

ACADEMIC LEARNING:

What connections can you describe between the community service work and your academic learning?
- Skill development
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Subject matter
- Methodology
- Raising questions
- Participation
  - ➢ Most important learning you will take with you from this experience.

CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE:

How successful was your classroom experience? Why/why not?
  - ➢ Describe your greatest success in the classroom

- Problems/challenges/concerns?
- Well organized
- Required readings (on civic engagement, service, social justice, diversity); relevance
- Reflection activities
- Relevance of lectures, written assignments to community work

What role did your instructor play in your community service work?

- Develop a relationship?
- Effective?

PERSONAL/INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Describe your interactions with people from the community.
- Problems/challenges/concerns
- Deeper understanding of diversity
- Tolerance of others
- Comfort working with others
- Question personal beliefs /attitudes
- Relationship to career goals

In what ways have you developed leadership skills?
- Knowledge of how to lead/communicate in a cross-cultural situation
- Knowledge of how to lead/communicate in a new situation

  - How has the service experience, in particular, enhanced your development?
  - How has the classroom experience enhanced your development?

SOCIAL RESPONSBILITY/SOCIAL JUSTICE:

What did you learn about the community or society in general from this experience?
- Understanding of the needs in the community
- Understanding the ways to solve community problems
- Social and economic equality/fairness/poverty
  - How was this learning reinforced in the classroom?

Describe how you feel about your individual role toward community/society.
- Responsibility to provide community service
- Responsibility to help others
- Need for public policy and programs directed at social justice
- Confidence in making a positive difference/promoting equal opportunities
- Willingness to work for social justice issues
  - How was this learning reinforced in the classroom?

OVERALL RATING OF EXPERIENCE:

Overall, in what ways were you satisfied with your project? Your classroom experience?

What recommendations would you make for future service-learning courses?

APPENDIX D

Faculty Focus Group Protocol

Introduction:

<u>Goal</u> – open and interactive discussion, learn more about your experiences teaching a service-learning course, will be framing some questions for you, but I will not be participating or making value judgments.

<u>Purpose</u> – hear everyone's ideas, offer your own view, describe your perspective, capture a wide array of comments, ideas and suggestions.

<u>Informed</u> – will be tape recorded, transcripts will not individually identify speakers, is confidential, speak one person at a time, speak clearly with more volume than usual.

<u>Shared understandings</u> – respect others' opinions, speak for yourself and not for others, or a group of others (use I statements), listen to others, don't name names.

<u>Use of data</u> – evaluation efforts, future faculty development work, research and publications

Questions: *We want to focus today on your teaching experiences, pedagogical strategies, and the development of resources to support your work in the future.*

BACKGROUND:
Introduction: Background sheet, name and community partner only to start.

PEDAGOGY:

In what ways was this a successful teaching experience?
- Challenges?
- Concerns – and how did you address them?
- Barriers?
- Support?

Student outcomes
- Academic and personal?
- Different in course than other courses w/o S-L?

Share a teaching strategy that was particularly effective.
- Reflection
- Portfolios
- Preparation

In what ways has your teaching changed as a result of having a community dimension?
If you teach this or another S-L course in the future how will your approach change?

SCHOLARSHIP:

How has your community-based teaching experience influence your other scholarly activities?
- Publications
- Research
- Conferences

DECISION TO USE S-L IN YOUR COURSE:

Describe the evolution of your decision to incorporate a community-based learning experience in your curriculum.

- Departmental support
- University-wide support
- Resources needed (faculty development)
- Challenges

LEARNING:
After teaching this course, how would you describe your own learning experience?
- About others in the community
- About community-based teaching
- About partners
- About students
- About society in general

WRAP-UP
Would you teach a S-L course again?

What recommendations would you make to another faculty member preparing to teach a S-L course?

APPENDIX E

Community Partner Focus Group Protocol

Introduction:

<u>Goal</u> – open and interactive discussion, learn more about your perceptions of the campus's progress toward meeting community needs through service-learning, will be framing some questions for you, but I will not be participating or making value judgments.

<u>Purpose</u> – hear everyone's ideas, offer your own view, describe your perspective, capture a wide array of comments, ideas and suggestions.

<u>Informed</u> – will be tape recorded, transcripts will not individually identify speakers, is confidential, speak one person at a time, speak clearly with more volume than usual.

<u>Shared understandings</u> – respect others' opinions, speak for yourself and not for others, or a group of others (use I statements), listen to others, don't name names, speak one at a time, interact with one another.

<u>Use of data</u> – evaluation efforts, future faculty development work, research and publications

Questions: *We want to focus today on your perceptions of the service-learning program and the development of resources to support your work in the future.*

BACKGROUND:
Introduction: name, organization and a brief description of the community-based project students participated in.

OUTCOMES of the Project
- How would you describe the outcomes of the partnership?
- Are we meeting community building efforts?
- What went well?
- What factors contributed to successful outcomes?
- What was the most important factor in achieving success/meeting the needs of your clients?

BENEFITS TO THE ORGANIZATION
- New insights into your work?
- New capacity to serve clients?
- Social/economic impact?
- Were your expectations met?
- What kinds of resources would benefit your organization? Have current resources been used appropriately?

OBSTACLES/CHALLENGES
- Describe any obstacles/barriers to success that you encountered.
- How did you move through these issues with students?
- What would you do differently next time? One thing you would change?
- How could the faculty member, staff, and or the university assist you?

FUTURE
- What is the most important thing you'd like the university to hear from you?
- What relationship, if any, do you anticipate you will develop with the university in the future?

APPENDIX F

Pioneer Focus Group Protocol
On "institutional progress"

Introduction:

Goal – open and interactive discussion, learn more about your perceptions of progress toward institutionalizing service-learning, will be framing some questions for you, but I will not be participating or making value judgments.

Purpose – hear everyone's ideas, offer your own view, describe your perspective, capture a wide array of comments, ideas and suggestions.

Informed – will be tape recorded, transcripts will not individually identify speakers, is confidential, speak one person at a time, speak clearly with more volume than usual.

Shared understandings – respect others' opinions, speak for yourself and not for others, or a group of others (use I statements), listen to others, don't name names, speak one at a time, interact with one another.

Use of data – evaluation efforts, future faculty development work, research and publications

Questions: *We want to focus today on your perceptions of commitment to S-L, and the development of resources to support your work in the future.*

BACKGROUND:
Introduction: Background sheet, name and a brief overview of your personal involvement in the S-L initiative – e.g. taught courses, served on the roundtable, etc.

POSSIBLE STARTERS:
- In what ways has the campus supported/not supported S-L?
- What evidence do you see for the institutionalization of service-learning.
- What is your vision of S-L in the future? What will it take to get there?

TOPICS – I've identified some indicators of institutional commitment and am interested in your perception of how the campus is doing in these areas:

- **F: Promotion, tenure, and hiring**
- **F: Infrastructure to support service**
- **F: Faculty involvement, leadership, rewards/incentives (focus here on the roundtable)**
- **F: Orientation to teaching/learning acceptance/faculty development in this area**
- Organizational structure (coordinating body) -- the SLRC – service-learning resource center
- Representation in campus PR/publications
- Resource acquisition/funding
- Image/reputation
- Community involvement, leadership, rewards/incentives
- Engagement in the community
- Student involvement, curriculum, leadership, rewards/incentives
- Visibility on campus
- Leadership in S-L
- Strategic planning/policy-makers involvement/leadership
- Evaluation and assessment
- Mission

Otterbein College
Community Partner Service Learning Survey

This survey is designed to measure general attitudes and perceptions of service learning community partner organizations, and/or schools. This information will be used to improve and enhance the college's service learning program.

Please respond as honestly as possible, relying on your current beliefs or attitudes toward the particular issues raised. Indicate your level of agreement with each statement by circling the appropriate choice.

Please circle your response, using the following scale:
1 = Strongly Disagree   2 = Disagree   3 = Neutral   4 = Agree   5 = Strongly Agree

1. The college's service learning students were an asset to our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
2. The college's service learning students were reliable in performing their assigned duties.	1	2	3	4	5
3. The service learning students were sensitive to the diversity of our clients/students.	1	2	3	4	5
4. The service learning students understood our organization's mission as part of the greater community.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The service learning students were well-prepared for their service experience.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The service learning students generally have adequate skills and abilities to fulfill assigned service tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The service learning students exhibited attitudes of an effective citizen.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The service learning students understood the connections between their coursework and the service.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The amount of time needed to supervise the service learning students was reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
10. There has been sufficient communication between the college and our organization.	1	2	3	4	5
11. The work of the service learning students benefited our agency's clients.	1	2	3	4	5
12. We want to continue to have the college's service learning students work with our organization.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Describe the service completed by Otterbein College students.

14. How did Otterbein College students positively affect your agency and the clients served by your agency?

15. What challenges, if any, did you encounter with students?

16. Would you like to meet with the Director of the Center for Community Engagement and/or your faculty partner to discuss our partnership?

Agency name _____ Phone # _____

Your Name and Position
_____

Email _____

If you have questions about this survey, please contact Melissa Gilbert, Director, Center for Community Engagement. E-mail: mgilbert@otterbein.edu

APPENDIX H

Great Cities ~ Great Service Community Partner Survey

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2"><h2 style="text-align:center">GCGS Community Partner Survey</h2></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION:_____
_____

NAME: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION: Phone #:_____ Fax # :_____

E-mail:_____

GENDER: _____**RACE/ETHNICITY**:_____

</td></tr>
</table>

Section 1: Efficacy/Capacity. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement at this point in time: "As a result of this service learning partnership, my organization was able to..."	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Improve our ability to meet community needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increase the number of clients served	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Increase the number of services offered to our clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Establish new connections and networks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Grow our capacity to serve our clients	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Meet strategic planning goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Persuade others that youth can be an asset in the community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observe that our beneficiaries valued college students' efforts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 2: Reciprocal Partnership. Please rate your level of satisfaction with your connection to college/university.	Deeply Unsatisfied 1	Unsatisfied 2	No Opinion 3	Satisfied 4	Highly Satisfied 5
Communication with faculty, college students and staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of college student work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Feedback and input into planning of experiences	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Scope and timing of service activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall coordination of service-learning programs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 3. How strongly do you agree with the following statement at this point in time:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
The service-learning program effectively addressed a real community problem.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My organization is committed to providing on-going support to the service-learning program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 4: Reciprocal Partnership. Please rate the level of challenges you encountered with the following issues:	Not a Challenge 1	Moderate Challenge 2	Not Applicable 3	Significant Challenge 4	Highly Significant Challenge 5
Demands upon staff time	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College student service time period insufficient	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lack of college student commitment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Too few college students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Too many college students	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College students not well prepared	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
College students did not perform as expected	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Little contact/interaction with college faculty/staff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other (please list)_____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please add any additional comments about this service-learning experience in this box.

APPENDIX I

Great Cities ~ Great Service Student Survey

Great Cities Great Service College Student Survey

Last 4 Digits of Social Security #_____   Age: _____ Today's Date:_____

Course Title: _____

Class Standing (Circle One):   Freshmen   Sophomore   Junior   Senior

Gender: _____

Race/Ethnicity/Heritage (Check ALL that apply)

- ☐ White/Caucasian
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black/ African-American
- ☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native
- ☐ Latino/Hispanic
- ☐ Multiracial
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Section 1: Social Problems. Describe a social problem explored in this service-learning course, identify its causes, and explain what should be done to try to solve this problem:

Section 2: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement at this point in time.	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Being involved in a program to improve my community is important.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is important to work toward equal opportunity (e.g. social, political, vocational) for all people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is not necessary to volunteer my time to help people in need.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think that people should find time to contribute to their community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that I can have a positive impact on local social problems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We need to work towards changing social systems.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteer work is a temporary solution.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social issues have very complex causes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Solutions will take more time and money.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is important to work with people from other cultures.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am aware of some of my own biases and prejudices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Section 3: Skills and Competencies. Please indicate your level of competency in each of these areas.	Very Low 1	Low 2	Average 3	High 4	Very High 5
Civic Engagement Skills.	Championing or campaigning for a good cause	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Planning effective service projects	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Recognizing both rights and responsibilities as citizens	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Fostering a commitment to lifelong service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Responding to real community needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem-Solving Skills.	Solving challenging problems	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Comparing different approaches to solving a problem	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership Skills.	Using leadership skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Communicating across cultures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Understanding values of people different from you	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Working as part of a team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other Academic Skills.	Expressing ideas, opinions, and facts in writing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	My ability to analyze ideas	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Applying principles from courses to different situations	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 4: Social Justice Continuum. For each of the following issues, please CIRCLE the number that corresponds to where you are on a continuum from thinking about how an issue affects the community to acting on it. If the specific issue is not a concern for you, circle 0.

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Health Issues	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Neighborhood/Local Issues	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Environmental Issues	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Education, literacy, school issues	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Poverty	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Racism	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Sexism	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Heterosexism	0	1——2——3——4——5				

	NOT AN ISSUE	THINK				ACT
Ableism	0	1——2——3——4——5				

APPENDIX J

Great Cities ~ Great Service Faculty Survey

GCGS Service-Learning Educator Survey
NAME: _____
K-12 Information (if applicable)
School Name:_____ Grade:_____ # of students in class_____
Higher Education Information (if applicable)
Course Name:_____ # Students Enrolled:_____
PREVIOUS SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE :_____
CONTACT INFORMATION: Phone #:_____ Fax # :_____
E-mail:_____
GENDER: _____**RACE/ETHNICITY**:_____

Section 1: Pedagogy. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement at this point in time: "As a result of teaching this class using service-learning..."	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
I have an understanding of the service-learning strategies, philosophies, and antecedents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know how to design a service-learning course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand the process of selecting an appropriate placement site and the function of the service-learning program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand the purpose and techniques of reflection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have a basic understanding of how to develop and implement a service-learning activity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students had a voice in designing our service project.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have an understanding of the principles of effective partnerships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand the place of service-learning in education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service-learning enhanced my ability to communicate the core competencies of the subject matter I teach.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My students saw the relevance of service-learning to the core subject matter.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reflection activities added depth to my students' learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
More of my time as a teacher was required.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was able to effectively facilitate conversation about diversity issues related to students' service-learning experiences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I will use service-learning as a teaching strategy in future courses.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 2: Institutionalization. How strongly do you agree or dis-agree with the following statements:	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Undecided 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Service-learning helps fulfill the school's mission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
There should be more service-learning classes offered at my school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 2: Institutionalization continued: Rate the following activities/services supported by your institution.	Poor 1	Fair 2	Can't Rate 3	Good 4	Excellent 5
Placement and support services for students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Professional recognition for your campus efforts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communication from service-learning personnel to you.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community service site development/maintenance for students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Service placements directly related to your academic coursework.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resources to incorporate the pedagogy of service-learning into your classes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Funding to incorporate service-learning pedagogy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Materials to assess student learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategies to monitor students at placement site.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 3: Impact on students. Assess the impact the service-learning experience had on your students.	Very Low 1	Low 2	Average 3	High 4	Very High 5
Communication skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quantitative skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem solving skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Decision making skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Civic competencies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ethic of social responsibility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leadership skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section 4: Please check the <u>top three</u> reasons for deciding to teach a course using service-learning as a teaching method.

_____ Desire to try something new   _____ Desire for increased relevance to course

_____ Encouragement from colleagues   _____ Professional recognition

_____ Prior experience serving community   _____ Encourage civic responsibility

_____ Enhance student learning   _____ Potential for scholarly work

_____ Prior experience with service-learning   _____ Other

APPENDIX K

Reflective Strategies for Enhancing Critical Thinking

*A good teacher is prepared to set his or students upon a journey to knowledge
and then be willing to go along for the ride. -- David Cooper*

PLANS & PROPOSALS

Portfolio: A written document in which the student reflects on their academic learning to date, questions past assumptions, reviews their interests, and relates their past work to the current endeavor. Can include specific questions about skills, community involvement, disciplinary expertise, and feelings about group work.

Personal Learning Plans: A set of learning objectives set by the student for their academic/service work as well as personal development.

Secondary Project Proposals: Some S-L courses provide students with alternative and/or additional assignments which are completely designed by the student based on their personal interests.

WORKSHOPS/DISCUSSIONS

Consciousness-raising: Small groups of students discuss a topic relevant to their service and identify common themes in their experiences.

Identity Circle

Objectives:
• To locate the self within the context of the service-learning assignment
• To reinforce concepts from the scholarship
• To break down stereotypes about others
• To create opportunities for identifying commonalties and differences
• To build community in the classroom

Identity Circle: Before conducting this exercise, students complete an Identity Narrative -- a written essay on a part of the student's identity that makes them both the "same as" one group of people and "different than" another. The instructor should choose a timeframe and or experience related to the service assignment. The exercise begins as students form a circle and begin to process commonalties and differences in their experiences by stepping into the circle and identifying an experience/moment/identity. Other students who share the experience join in the center.

Standpoint Exercise: Based on the identity narrative and the identity circle, students participate in a workshop that helps them to realize how assumptions/stereotyping affects our views of others. Students answer the following questions: What kinds of messages did you get from others (family, the media, schoolmates, etc.) about people LIKE you? What kinds of messages did you get from

others about people DIFFERENT THAN you? What kinds of messages do we take for granted about [the people the students will work with in their service assignment].

A Collective of Our Own: Students do a group activity where they identify how they commonly work in groups. They fill in questions such as: When I am in a group I tend to be _____; I like being in groups when _____. The class uses the student insights to form a consensus list of guidelines for working collectively as part of a learning community.

Boundaries to Commitment: Students are asked to do a free-write in the class about all the other commitments they have beyond this course and then rank those commitments. A discussion follows about what commitment to others, community, etc. means. Each student then writes out a back-up plan for completing a service-assignment task if they have to attend to another priority.

Role-Playing/ Contrived Situations: Students perform roles related to their service assignment as both training for and processing specific tasks. Professors may contrive situations ahead of class, students may write them based on expectations (fears, frustrations) and students may bring them to class after the actual experience has occurred for processing.   Shifting roles and stop-action journals can be used well here.

Fishbowling: A common technique for discussing problematic issues and/or debating. A small group of students act out a planned conversation in the center of the room. As the talk unfolds other students may join the "fish" and add their voice. A good way to represent the power of a learning community.

Interruption Skills: An important type of workshop on the skills necessary for interrupting prejudice/stereotyping in the community. Helps students to recognize their own prejudices and teaches them a new way to respond to the inequities they witness in their service placements.

Cross-Cultural Communication: Workshops/exercises which help students to understand the cultural differences in communication. Helps students to both prepare for their placement and interpret their experiences through multiple lenses.

Shadowing: Students shadow a client, agency contact, advocate for a period of time and then reflect on that person's roles, responsibilities, actions, perspectives, etc.

Exit Cards: Index cards passed out during or after class. Students reflect on the classroom content -- How does what I learned today relate to my service-learning project? What questions were left unanswered? The cards are then used by the instructor to begin the next class session.

JOURNALS

A variety of journal techniques are pertinent to our service-learning work [see the national Campus Compact website, the TOOLKIT, and others for standards/expectations for journals]. Here are some common journal types:

3 Part Journal: Describe the experience, Analyze/Interpret, Apply to Personal Life

Critical Incident Journal: Choose a "fork in the road," a frustrating moment, a conflict from the service assignment. Describe, Interpret, Discuss how you might have handled it differently (changes you might make)

Stop Action Journal: Stop a role playing situation OR have students stop a case study in the middle and discuss how they would act/react in the situation.

Key Phrase Journal/Thematic Journal: Students and/or instructor select key concepts, phrases, or themes from the week's work which must be used in the student's journal entry about the service assignment.

Double Entry/Split Journal*:* Field notes, concepts, timelogs, ideas, experience on the left; analysis, interpretation, connections to scholarship on the right.

Insight Entry Journal: Students include weekly reflections on: Things I Didn't Know I Didn't Know, Expanded Ideas about What I Knew I Knew, and New Questions emerging from What I Know I Don't Know.

Field Journal: Entries focus entirely on descriptions of experiences at the service site. Can be used as a basis for papers and essays or group projects and final products.

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Problem-Solving Essay: Focuses entirely on a problem situated at the service site. Describes the problem and suggests plans for change, solutions. Helps students to place an emphasis on the need being addressed and the community participants.

Emotive Essay: Describe a situation. How did it make you feel? How has it challenged your way of thinking? What might you do differently?

Metaphor Essay: Write an essay that uses metaphor to interpret a situation at your service-learning site, your role in service, your feelings about the service, etc.

Directed Writings: Any writing assignment where specific questions are posed by the professor that are both situated for the student in the readings and are to be related to encounters at the site.

Ethical Case Study: A study of a specific ethical dilemma at the site. Begins with a detailed description and moves to analysis from one or multiple perspectives.

Issue Paper: Students find current articles, newspaper clippings, magazine pieces that are directly related to their service assignment. They compare the issue in the media to the complexities of a similar issue at their site.

Final Products: Any product that emerges from the service placement which is formal in design and content [e.g., a research report, executive summary, article, web-site, etc.] and includes student reflections on the process of creation and/or meaning of the work.

Learning Paper: Focuses entirely on the what the student has learned during the placement and/or the course. May be based on professor and/or student written learning objectives.

DISCUSSION/ORAL REFLECTION

Process Meetings: Meetings of the entire class where students are invited to process frustrating moments, conflict, successes. Students often ask for advice for further work in the field.

3/5 Minute Updates: Each team/individual provides a brief update of the placement. Specific issues might be introduced by the instructor to help provide a context for the updates. Students may be asked afterward to discuss common themes/issues that they heard across the updates. Time should be spent at the end working through common questions and problems.

Presentations: Presentations of community outcomes, final products, celebrations, etc. are important points in the S-L process. The public, community advocates, and university friends should be invited. Reflection on the experience can be an integral part of these summative events.

Women's Community Education Project

Portland State University
Professor: Melissa Kesler Gilbert
Community Partner: In Other Words
Summer 2000
Melissa Kesler Gilbert

DESCRIPTION:

In this course, we will be working with our community partner, the local non-profit feminist bookstore **IN OTHER WORDS** and their sister organization, **The Women's Community Education Project.** Our project this term is to coordinate a series of *rap sessions* with local teen girls about current issues in their lives. We will use these group conversations to encourage the girls to become a part of our ZINE project — where they will write, edit, and publish a grassroots, mini-magazine with our class. Please take a look at the enclosed outreach plan for more detailed objectives. In preparation for this project, we will read feminist scholarship on women's organizations, feminist bookstores, and teenage girls as well as focus group and zine publishing methodologies.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVES:

This CAPSTONE course is designed as an advocacy project-in-progress: We are building a bridge between women's studies scholarship in the academy and praxis in our community. team, we will design our project with the following objectives in mind: As an interdisciplinary research team, we will design our project with the following objectives in mind:

1) A TEAM APPROACH: To work together as a collaborative research team — learning to value, respect, and incorporate our different standpoints.

2) FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS: To apply women's studies scholarship (and the expertise you bring from your own discipline) to contemporary women's issues in our community.

3) A BRIDGE TO THE COMMUNITY: To encourage you to become an active member of your community by introducing you to a network of women involved in grassroots organizing, feminist community building, and women's educational resources.

4) A CRITICAL PIECE OF THE PIE: To enhance your ability to think experientially, analytically, and critically about girl's/women's everyday lives as they are experienced in your community.

5) FINDING A VOICE : To assist you in reflecting and interpreting the complexities of girl's/women's experiences, resulting in a variety of opportunities for both oral, written, and graphic communication.

TEXTS

Francesca Lia Block& Hillary Carlip. ZineScene: The Do It Yourself Guide to Zines. GirlPress. 1998.

Hillary Carlip. GirlPower: Young Women Speak Out. NewYork: WarnerBooks. 1995.

Brown. Raising Their Voices.

Pipher. Reviving Ophelia.

GirlPOWER! Capstone Workbook. Available at Clean Copy.

Selected research articles and agency literature to be distributed in class and/or on reserve in the women's studies office (CH401). Please note that the office is open from 9-3:00 M-F

REQUIREMENTS

Scholarly & Personal Reflections: 100 points

A third of your grade will be based on your reflective VOICE in this course — evidenced in a written response journal due each week. The following are required:

(1) Portfolio Assignment (not-graded, but required: **20 points** see handout)

(2) Research Reflection journal (see handout) **(EMAIL is required)**
10 points per journal x 8 weeks = **80 points** total

Community Work: 100 points

A third of your grade in this course will be based on your **informed community** work as part of our research team. This work will take place both in and outside of the classroom and is dependent on the design of our project. This portion of your grade includes both PRIMARY and SECONDARY TASKS.

(1) **PRIMARY TASK: Rap Sessions & Publishing a Teen Zine (75 Points)**

Your primary task for this course is to make contacts with teen advocates in the Portland area and to conduct several rap sessions with teen girls, encourage them to participate in our project, solicit submissions, and design our zine. Your "focus group" work may include the following:

Background Reading
Focus Group Guide Design
Taped Focus Groups (rap sessions)
Legal Release Forms
Transcript (NOTE: **1 hour interview = about 10 hours transcribing- plan ahead!**)
Editing Transcripts
Editing Zine Submissions
Running Zine Workshops
Writing Zine Article(s)
Research on books, movies, scholarship, internet sites related to Zine topics
Presentation to *In Other Words*

Final Products: At the end of the term you will be responsible for depositing the following materials in the Women's Studies Program Oral Narratives Archives: tapes, transcript (on paper and disk), legal release forms & final papers. These materials will be a valuable source for future capstone courses.

(2) SECONDARY TASK: Of Your Own Design (25 Points):

You will negotiate a secondary task applicable to our project that you will be responsible for completing on your own with your mentor's & community partner's assistance. This task is your opportunity to use skills specific your major and should reflect your personal interest in an issue related to teen girls or the bookstore. It may or may not be directly related to the ZINE.

You will submit a proposal to your mentor and instructor on the second week of our class. We encourage these projects to be completed in small groups, but individual projects are also a possibility.

<u>**Team Work — Socially Responsible Learning: 100 points**</u>

A **third** of your grade is based on evidence of your **acting responsibly to each other and our community partner.**

<u>We are working as a group:</u> We will move through this course together setting goals, designing projects, brainstorming, delegating tasks, negotiating expectations and setting deadlines. It is important that each of you is present and takes part in the decision-making process. The syllabus is here as a guide, but each of you has a voice in this agenda and may advocate changes as the course evolves. We are interdependent on one another to make our project work. Your BEING here is critical!

<u>We are working with each</u> other: Each of you will work closely with each other, your mentor, community partners, and the instructor. Each of us is **responsible** to the other members of our research team in meeting the expectations of the group. As members of both a research community AND a social community we need to appreciate the life choices of all of those involved in this project (from the person sitting next to you to the teen girls you will work with). I hope that this work will help us to practice our own capacities to engage in collective, ethical, interactive, and organizational challenges that mirror those in our local women's community.

POINTS: You will earn **6.25 points** for each working class session in which you:

(a) are in attendance in the classroom (or participate by a service/research task in the community during class time);

(b) show evidence of careful preparation for our working session (including notes on readings, drafts, notes from research, etc. — you may be asked to turn these in);

(c) contribute to class discussions, planning sessions, and small group work; and

(d) confirm that you have carried out assignments on time and volunteer for additional research tasks when appropriate.

PLEASE NOTE: The 16 sessions include all T/TH sessions (including holidays) and the final presentation.

MISS A WORKING SESSION? If you miss a working class session, a community meeting, or other capstone-associated event it is **up to YOU** (not your instructor OR your mentor) to get notes from class, check on deadlines, retrieve materials passed out it class, and get up to speed with the project. If you know in advance that you will be missing class (an emergency, another priority, etc.) you should contact your MENTOR as soon as possible **before** the class and/or drop off material related to that working session. If you miss a class unexpectedly you should contact your mentor as soon as possible **after** the class session to explain your absence and arrange to pick up materials from the session. We understand that life is full of surprises and understand that everyday life may make demands on you that conflict with our work. If you keep us informed of unexpected events and make arrangements to complete your work, meet deadlines, and/or participate in some other agreed upon way, we will work with you.

<u>**GRADING:**</u>

Your final grade for this course will be based on:

(1) the <u>completeness</u> of the above requirements, as well as
(2) the <u>quality</u> of your analytical thinking, reflection, writing, and oral presentation.

Your mentor and I will assign grades to your journals after consultation with the instructor. Mentors will also keep records of your class participation. Final grades for your community work will be assessed by your mentor and instructor as the project evolves. In addition, you will be asked to assess your own work

from time to time in this course. Please feel free to ask about the status of your work as the course progresses. You are encouraged to discuss feedback with us as often as possible.

Please NOTE: You will NOT receive a grade for this course until you have returned all loaned equipment and turned in the final products listed above.

Capstone Project Plan

Readings: With the exception of <u>your texts,</u> readings will be assigned as we move through the project (in order to make choices most relevant to the flexibility and design of specific content, issues, and methodologies). These readings will be on reserve in the Women's Studies Office (CH 401) where you may borrow them to photocopy or loan for a two hour period between 9 and 3.

WEEK ONE: INTRODUCTIONS

T June 20 **Introduction to Capstones, Mentor, and Your Collective**
What is a capstone? Issues of Confidentiality and Anonymity.
Video clips from past GIRLpower! classes

<u>RESEARCH TASK:</u> sign confidentiality agreements, fill out forms, get to know each other, review assignments

TH June 22 **Starting Our Own Collective**

Reading: Articles on Reserve (Feminist Bookstore Movement Articles); Capstone Handbook

<u>RESEARCH TASK:</u> A Group Process Exercise: How can we work together as a group? What kinds of ground rules should we establish as guidelines for our collaboration? Sharing Portfolios.

√ **Portfolio Due**
√ **Short list of possible girl contacts from your own community**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK TWO: COMMUNITY BUILDING

T June 27 **Meeting Our Community Partner & Local Girl Advocates**

<u>GUEST:</u> Catherine Sameh from In Other Words; The Girl's Initiative Network (GIN), et. al.

Reading: Articles on Reserve
<u>Reviving Ophelia</u>(Selected Chapters)
<u>Zine Scene:</u> CH. 1 & CH. 14

<u>RESEARCH TASK:</u> learning about local girls, setting group goals

√ **Questions for Catherine and other GIRL advocates.**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

TH June 29 **Building Bridges with Community Contacts**

Reading:
<u>Zine Scene:</u> CHPS. 2-4

RESEARCH TASK: Laying out our constituencies, making preliminary contact assignments.

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Reviewing contact protocol for phone calls to – - ! Review Contact Sheets

√ **Secondary Proposal** (might include a BOOKSTORE activity)

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK THREE: METHODOLOGIES for GIRL TALK

T July 4 HOLIDAY: NO-CLASS

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

TH July 6 THEME ONE- **The Ethics of Girl Talk**

Reading: Raising Their Voices (Selected Chapters)
Zine Scene p. 41

RESEARCH TASK: Review oral history ethics, review consent forms for girls and parents, discuss legal issues: publishing work/distributing to teens, mandatory reporting, interruption skills training, handling flashbacks

√ **a list of your concerns about this project, dealing with teens, publishing work, dealing with schools, teachers, agencies**

√ **FIELDTRIP to the Bookstore:** Before class today you should make a trip to the bookstore. We will give you a list of questions to answer about the store and its resources. We encourage you to go with someone from class, take a friend, or a teen girl with you!

THEME TWO, **Learning to Listen to Myself: Personal Standpoints**

RESEARCH TASK: Applying ourselves to our work. How does my voice, my assumptions, my perceptions, and my inferences affect my role as a focus group facilitator?

√ **Your Personal Identity Narrative**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK FOUR: GETTING READING TO RAP IN THE GIRL ZONE

-PLEASE NOTE; YOU SHOULD TRY TO SCHEDULE YOUR FIRST RAP SESSION FOR THIS WEEK

T July 11 THEME ONE: **Framing our Rap Sessions**

Reading-. Articles on reserve
Zine Scene: CHPS. 5-6;
Girl Power (Selected Chapters)

RESEARCH TASK: Brainstorm about possible rap session formats, share ideas
√ **Bring a design for your rap session**

THEME TWO, **A Session of Our Own**

RESEARCH TASK: Practice sessions, interruption, facilitating and using our equipment. We will run our

own rap session in class – be prepared to rotate in as a facilitator.

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

TH- July 13 TALKING BACK: Reflections on Rap Sessions Writing Girl's Voices … From Tape to Paper

Reading: Articles on Reserve

RESEARCH TASK: Our session will consist of us talking about what we are learning from the girls, processing their words and thinking through new directions., for our zine project. We may want to come up with questions to ask across all of the sessions — or a specific writing or art piece we would like the girls to work on! We will also discuss transcribing.

√ **Revised Rap Session Formats**

Personal Research Tasks:

WEEK FIVE: GIRLTALK

T July 18 **TALKING BACK AGAIN: More reflections, revising, rethinking**

Reading: Articles on Reserve

RESEARCH TASK: Talking more about what we arc learning from the girls, processing their words and thinking through new directions. for our zine project. Discuss analysis/thematic organization

√ **Thumbnail sketches**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

TH July 20 **TALKING MORE: Reflections on rap sessions**

Reading: Zine Scene: CHPS. 7-10; Articles on reserve

RESEARCH TASK: Laying out what we have, what we still need. Scheduling follow-up rap sessions. Conducting more focus groups or follow-up sessions.

√ **Interview Notes, Transcripts, Thumbnail sketches**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK SIX: ZINE SHEEN

T July 25 **NAME THAT ZINE & FORMAT IDEAS — Our Own Look**

RESEARCH TASK Making format decisions, collecting submissions, deciding on a table of contents, identifying themes in our work, assigning sections

√ **examples of zine submissions, freewrites, artwork, and a list of themes from YOUR sessions**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

TH July 27 **FORMAT IDEAS**

RESEARCH TASK Making more format decisions, collaborating in writing teams, prioritizing work and

dividing tasks. How will the GIRLS be involved in the ZINE editing? How to WRAPUP with the girls —saying goodbye?

√ **envelopes with quotes, freewrites, transcripts, artwork for each theme section**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK SEVEN: – GETTING IT ON PAPER

T August 1 **Writing & Editing**
Reading: Zinc Scene: CHPS 11-13
RESEARCH TASK*:* Edit sections, Invitations Out to People for our FINAL PRESENTATION!

√**Drafts of submissions**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete: -

TH August 3 **Writing & Editing**

RESEARCH TASK: Edit sections

√ **Drafts of your zine sections**

Personal Research Tasks to Complete:

WEEK EIGHT: GLUE

T August 8 **Layout, paste-up sessions & photocopying**

RESEARCH TASK: Editing final copies, laying out pages; Organizing the final presentation –How will we present this to the community, the teens, teen advocates, agencies, and the university? What do we need to do in order to prepare? Follow-up phone calls. How do we want to celebrate privately? How to wrap-up?

Getting the Zine to the GIRLS! Making Distribution Plans

√ **Final Submissions**

Personal Research Tasks To Complete:

TH August 10
FINAL:
SHARING OUR WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY

Invite your friends, family, teen girls, advocates, etc. to our
presentation. Please note that you are required to present for this presentation — so plan your schedule ahead of time! This counts as your final for the course.

WOMEN'S STUDIES 110

Winter Quarter ~ Collegeview 156 ~ T/TH 1:00-2:50PM

Melissa Kesler Gilbert
82 West Main (CCE)
823-1251
mgilbert@otterbein.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of women's studies with specific attention to the social construction of gender and the manifestation of structural inequalities. We will explore the intersections of gender, class, race, age, and sexual orientation as significant factors in the construction of women's lived experiences. Through multiple disciplinary lenses we will examine the key issues and debates in the field, explore theoretical frameworks for understanding women's oppression, and investigate multiple feminist methodologies for studying women's lives. Special topics include: the gendered journey, families and relationships, body politics, women's health, women and work, and women and social movements. Students will also have the opportunity to consider, in depth, the social construction of girlhood through history, literature, film, ethnography, and the media. As a class, we will participate in the **citygirls** project, an opportunity for connecting with local teen girls in the central Ohio area to create a feminist zine.

TEXTS

Women: Images and Realities (WIR): Kesselman, MeNair & Schniedewind
The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls: Brumberg
Make Lemonade: Wolff
Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls: Simmons

PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

This course is designed as a theoretical seminar, a research program and an advocacy project-in-progress: Together we will be building a bridge between women's studies scholarship in the academy and praxis in our community. As an interdisciplinary team, we will explore women's studies with the following objectives in mind:

1) A TEAM APPROACH: To learn together as a collaborative team — learning to value, respect, and incorporate our different standpoints.

2) FROM THEORY TO PRAXIS: To apply women's studies scholarship (and the expertise you bring from your own discipline) to contemporary women's issues in our community.

3) A BRIDGE TO THE COMMUNITY: To encourage you to become an active member of your community by introducing you to a network of women involved in grassroots organizing, feminist community building, and women's educational resources.

4) A CRITICAL PIECE OF THE PIE: To enhance your ability to think experientially, analytically, and critically about girl's/women's everyday lives as they are experienced in your community.

5) FINDING A VOICE : To assist you in reflecting and interpreting the complexities of girl's/women's experiences, resulting in a variety of opportunities for both oral, written, and graphic communication.

WOST 110 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. to be knowledgeable about key issues, questions, and debates in the field of women's studies
2. to understand some of the theoretical frameworks and key concepts that feminist scholars have developed
3. to become aware of the ways in which gender shapes the experiences of women and men
4. to become acquainted with interdisciplinary and disciplinary approaches to understanding women and gender
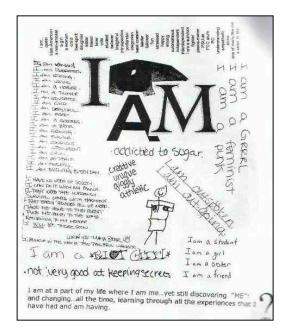
GRADED WORK

A. **20%** **Socially Responsible Learning** (10 pts/class):   200

B. **30%** **Feminist Thinking**
  ❑ Zine Page POSTS: (5 pages x 20 points/page):   100
  ❑ Final Exam: Growing Up Girl   200

C. 30% Feminist Research
  ❑ Praxis Paper 1: Content Analysis   150
  ❑ Praxis Paper 2: Oral History   150

D. **20%** **Feminist Praxis (Community Work)**
  ❑ *CityGirls* Curriculum: 50
  ❑ *CityGirls* Zine Production: 50
  ❑ *CityGirls* Reflective Paper   100

                              TOTAL POINTS =   1000

A. Socially Responsible Learning (20%)

Twenty percent of your grade is based on evidence of your acting responsibly to each other and our community partner (The Girl Scouts). We are working as a seminar team. It is important that each of you is present and takes part in the learning, research, and community-based process. The syllabus is here as a guide, but each of you has a voice in this agenda and may advocate changes as the course evolves. We are interdependent on one another to make learning possible. Your BEING here is critical! As members of both a scholarly community AND a social community we need to appreciate the life choices of all of those involved in this course and our community project. I hope that this work will help us to practice our own capacities to engage in collective, ethical, interactive, and organizational

challenges that mirror those in our local women's community. You will earn TEN points for each working class session in which you:

(a) are in attendance in the classroom (or participate by a service/research task in the community during class time);

(b) show evidence of careful preparation for our working session (including notes on readings, drafts, notes from research, etc. in your double-entry journal and on your concept cards— you may be asked to turn these in);

(c) contribute to class discussions, planning sessions, and small group work; and

(d) confirm that you have carried out assignments on time and volunteer for additional tasks when appropriate.

MISS A SEMINAR SESSION? If you miss a session, a community meeting, or other event it is up to YOU (not your instructor) to get notes from class, check on deadlines, retrieve materials passed out it class, and get up to speed with the project. If you know in advance that you will be missing class (an emergency, another priority, etc.) you should contact your instructor as soon as possible before the class and/or drop off material related to that working session. If you miss a class unexpectedly you should contact your instructor as soon as possible after the class session to explain your absence and arrange to pick up materials from the session. I understand that life is full of surprises and understand that everyday life may make demands on you that conflict with our work. If you keep me informed of unexpected events and make arrangements to complete your work, meet deadlines, and/or participate in some other agreed upon way, I will work with you.

B. Feminist Thinking: (30%) You will be asked throughout the course to apply concepts and theories from the scholarship to your own writing and creative work.

ZINE POSTS: Approximately every two weeks you will post to our class WIKI a zine page that illustrates your interpretation of the readings/lectures/discussion. Each page must include at least three concepts from the readings, but you may be creative in your expression of these ideas. Pages may include poetry, images, prose, collages, rants, raves, etc., but they must be grounded in scholarly thought and feminist analysis. You are required to post pages on the following five topics:

(1) I AM (Identity)

(2) The Body Project

(3) Women & Institutions

(4) Women & Violence

(5) Feminist Social Change

Zine-Based Extra Credit:

You may post additional pages on other topics and receive FIVE extra credit points for each page that is considered highly innovative/creative in its interpretation (up to 20 points extra may be earned).

FINAL EXAM: Your final exam for this course will be a five page essay (double-spaced, 12 point times new roman font) on the topic *"Growing Up Girl"* based on readings, lectures, and discussions from class. This will be a comprehensive paper and will require scholarly analysis and reflection.

C. Feminist Research (30%)
You will write two papers this quarter based on your own feminist research.

1) CONTENT ANALYSIS: In your first paper you will use the feminist research methodology, content analysis, to analyze the gendered messages in a form of media directed at TEEN GIRLS. For example, you may select a series of advertisements in a teen magazine, a television show directed at teens, video games played by teen girls, toys for teens, or websites for teens. More details will be provided in class about this assignment. (3-5 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font)

2) ORAL HISTORY: You will conduct an oral history of a woman of your choice about growing up female. The woman you choose must be of a different generation than yourself. This oral history should focus on the intersection of the different institutions that shape women's lives (e.g., family, education, work, law, religion, etc.) and her TEEN years.   More details will be provided in class about this assignment. (3-5 pages)

D. Feminist Praxis (20%)
This quarter we will be working as a team to help teen girls find their voice. We will design an effective community advocacy project for local girls that will result in a teen girl zine to raise awareness about the issues contemporary girls face in their everyday lives. As part of this project you will design a curriculum for a consciousness-raising session with teen girls, produce zine pages with the girls, and write a reflective essay on this project. More details to follow as we make decisions together about this part of our work together!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Integrity (from Fatherly, WOST110):
We will remain committed in this course to fostering academic integrity. Such integrity is based on students and faculty using the qualities of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility to inform their interactions with one another and their academic work. Toward this end, we will not tolerate academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or cheating in this

course. In particular, if we find an instance of plagiarism—unacknowledged use of another's ideas, words, or evidence—and thus are unable to establish the originality of your ideas or words, then you will fail that particular assignment. A second instance of plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Instances of plagiarism will also be reported the Academic Dean. For further information on the college's policies, see the section on "Plagiarism, Cheating, and Dishonesty" in your Campus Life Handbook.

GRADING
Your final grade for this course will be based on:
(1) the completeness of the above requirements, as well as
(2) the quality of your analytical thinking, reflection, writing, and oral presentation.

EXTRA CREDIT
You may earn five points of extra credit by attending a women-centered/feminist event (pre-approved by your instructor) and writing a one page analysis of the event that uses at least three concepts from the readings.

Course Schedule

WK	DATE	READING	TASKS
1	T: Jan. 5	Course Introduction	* Knowing ourselves * Theater for Social Change
	TH: Jan. 7	WHAT IS WOMEN'S STUDIES? WIR: Chapter I; article 138	***Guest: Tammy Birk*** * Claiming our Space
2	T: Jan. 12	BECOMING A WOMAN WIR: Chapter II; 9-18	* Film: Still Killing Us Softly
	Th: Jan. 14	LEARNING GENDER WIR: Chapter II: 19-28	* The Identity Circle (I AM: writing prep)
			@WIKI: Post I AM PAGE
3	T: Jan. 19	WOMEN'S BODIES WIR: Chapter III: 29-37	***Guest: Michelle Acker***
	TH: Jan. 21	<u>THE BODY PROJECT</u> **>> THE CityGirls PROJECT**	*Writing on the Body
4	T: Jan. 26	<u>THE BODY PROJECT</u>	* The Freedom Trash Can * Presentations (prep)
	TH: Jan. 28	<u>THE BODY PROJECT</u>	* The Freedom Trash Can * Presentations (prep)
			@ WIKI: Post Body PAGE
5	T: Feb. 2	WOMEN'S DIVERSITY WIR: Chapter VI: 93-104; 105-108; 111, 116, 120	**# PAPER DUE: Feminist** **Research/Content Analysis**
	TH: Feb. 4	WOMEN, LAW, SOCIAL POLICY WIR: Chapter IV: 56-62 **>> THE CityGirls PROJECT**	*The Girl's Bill of Rights
6	T: Feb. 9	WOMEN & WORK WIR: Chapter IV: 45-55	**Guest: Joan Esson (Girls & Science)**

			Case Studies of Workplace Sexism
	TH: Feb. 11	*POLITICS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH* WIR: Chapter V: 78,79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 90, 92	* Meredith & Abigail report out on their visit to the Statehouse!
7	T: Feb. 16	WOMEN & FAMILY WIR: 63-70 **Make Lemonade**	* Say Yes to the Dress! Or "The Toilet Paper Bride"
	TH: Feb. 18	VIOLENCE AGAINST GIRLS **Odd Girl Out** >> **THE CityGirls PROJECT**	* Designing the GirlTALK curriculum @ *WIKI: Post Institutions PAGE*
8	T: Feb. 23	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WIR: Chapter VII: Intro +122-127	* Theater for Social Change (Forum Theater: Battered Women/Women's Shelter)
	TH: Feb. 25	VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN WIR: Chapter VII: 128-137	FILM: College Rape * *Guest:* Human Trafikking
9	T: Mar. 2	CHANGING OUR WORLD WIR: Chapter VIII	**# PAPER DUE: Feminist Research: Oral History** *Coalition Building
	W: Mar. 3	*Human Trafikking Teach-In 5:30PM Campus Center (extra credit)*	
	TH: Mar. 4	>> **THE CityGirls PROJECT**	* Processing GirlTalk @ *WIKI: Post Violence PAGE*
10	T: Mar. 9	>> **THE CityGirls PROJECT**	* Processing GirlTalk
	TH: Mar. 11	>> **THE CityGirls PROJECT**	* Zine SHEEN: Layout and Paste-up Production (in class) @ *WIKI: Post Social Change PAGE*
11	FINAL EXAM Mon., Mar. 15 10:30-12:30	*Zine Readings	* FINAL EXAM DUE "Growing Up Girl"