THE EFFECTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING ON STUDENT WRITING AND RESEARCH

by

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ABSTRACT

The Effects of Service-Learning on Student Writing and Research

Kimberly Anne Pierce

Several researchers have investigated the outcomes achieved by service-learning; however, the primary focus of many of these studies is on student engagement or the development of civic outcomes. Edward Zlotkowski and Paul Feigenbaum have argued that researchers should look beyond these benefits to discover how service-learning might enhance course work and academic goals. Despite the calls for further research, studies investigating the academic outcomes of service-learning are limited, and those focused on writing outcomes are fewer still. This study, building off the concerns of Zlotkowski and Feigenbaum and utilizing student interviews and artifact analysis, investigates how service-learning affects student writing and research. The findings suggest that service-learning affects student writing and research processes, including topic development and research methods. In addition, service-learning provides rich opportunities to enhance critical thinking and the consideration of multiple perspectives.

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INTRODUCTION

Though there are various reasons why composition instructors implement service-learning projects in their courses, the underlying message from service-learning practitioners in the field of composition is the same: service-learning leads to increased motivation and engagement for both students and instructors. As Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Ann Watters attest, an overwhelming amount of anecdotal accounts in the field suggest that "service-learning makes communication – the heart of composition – matter, in all its manifestations" (2). When students and instructors believe that their work is of significance, they are invested and engaged in that work.

As composition instructors, we strive to teach our students how to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, yet the writing situations that students face are often less than ideal. In many first-year writing courses, students arbitrarily pick a topic to research and write about for the sole purpose of practicing research strategies and research-based writing. Even when instructors invent mock writing situations and audiences, students are still writing for the instructor with the purpose of getting a grade. In these situations, students are typically not invested in their work, and they may lack engagement with course material.

Gay W. Brack and Leanna R. Hall blame this lack of student engagement on the "empty assignment syndrome," where

> [t]oo often the ‘research’ done in such courses is seen by students as an empty exercise, a means of learning how to use the library or how to use correct citation, not as an avenue for changing someone’s mind or making a difference in the world. (143)

Brack and Hall, along with other service-learning practitioners, believe that service-learning is a viable solution to the empty assignment syndrome because it provides students with real writing situations that extend beyond the confines of the classroom (148). In these situations, students’ audience shifts from the instructor to the community, and their purpose extends beyond mere assessment to benefit the community in some way.

When composition is paired with service-learning, participants experience “a greater sense of purpose and meaning in the belief that their work will have tangible results in the lives of others” (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters 2). My own experiences as a student in service-learning integrated courses support these assertions. The writing situations I encountered were engaging and motivating because I was actually involved in something outside of the classroom and creating something useful for a real-world audience, not just going through the motions of writing another paper for the instructor to assess.

My initial decision to implement a service-learning component in my English 102: Introduction to College Writing and Research courses stemmed from a desire to encourage student motivation and engagement by providing the students with an opportunity to investigate a real issue and use their service-learning experiences as a springboard for deeper academic inquiry in their writing. But despite the potential for

engagement, I wondered if there were any additional benefits for students. Simply put, was service-learning doing anything to help them meet course goals and outcomes?

When I began my study, I set out to address the following question: *what are the effects of service-learning on student writing and research?* I asked this question because I wanted to gain an understanding, however partial, of the impact that service-learning can have on students' writing and research strategies and their ability to meet course goals and outcomes. (Aside from this desire, a small part of me wanted to justify my decision for implementing a service-learning project in my courses and requiring students to schedule fifteen hours of service into their already busy lives.) As I reviewed the literature on service-learning, it became apparent that questions like mine resonate in the field. Many studies have been done on service-learning and student motivation, yet there are only a few which investigate the effects of service-learning on learning outcomes, and the studies which emphasize the effects of service-learning on writing and writing outcomes are fewer still.

To address this question, I developed a teacher research study to investigate my service-learning integrated English 102 course. I conducted a multi-modal, qualitative case study of four service-learning students enrolled in my fall 2011 English 102 course. Throughout the semester, I collected written artifacts for textual analysis and interviewed the four student participants to gain insight into their research and writing processes and their perceptions of whether service-learning was helping them meet course goals and outcomes.

My analysis of the data reveals that service-learning affects students' writing and research processes in terms of topic development and research methods. Service-learning also provides rich opportunities to enhance critical thinking and consider the perspectives of others, two outcomes key to first-year writing in general and English 102 in particular.

In the first chapter, I consider the existing literature on the effects of service-learning, dividing the research into two areas of emphasis: learning outcomes, both civic and academic, and writing. In chapter two, I detail the methodology and methods, and in chapter three, I provide context for the course and describe the student participants and their service-learning projects. These three chapters provide a framework to discuss the results of my research in chapter four and consider the implications of my findings and potential for future research in chapter five.

CHAPTER ONE: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, I discuss how my study on the effects of service-learning on student writing and research is situated in conversation with the literature on service-learning and service-learning outcomes. In the first section of this chapter, I define what service-learning is and place service-learning in a larger pedagogical tradition. In the second section, I explore what is already known about the effects of service-learning on learning outcomes using two primary categories from the research literature: civic and academic. In the final section of this chapter, I discuss previous research in composition that most closely resembles my own, looking specifically at the effects of service-learning on writing outcomes.

What is Service-Learning?

In 1979, Robert L. Sigmon describes service-learning as a form of experimental education founded on the idea of reciprocal learning ("Service-Learning"). Reciprocal learning requires that service benefit both the provider and the recipient of the service. Sigmon, among other service-learning advocates, claims that there must also be an equal balance between the goals of community service and academic learning (Eyler and Giles; Furco). Sigmon emphasizes this need for balance in his typology of service-learning, which distinguishes service-learning from other forms of experiential learning (*Linking*). See Figure 1 below.

Service-LEARNING:	Learning goals primary; service outcomes secondary
SERVICE-learning:	Service outcomes primary; learning goals secondary
Service learning:	Service and learning goals completely separate
SERVICE-LEARNING:	Service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants

Figure 1: A Service and Learning Typology

In an article for the *Journal of Higher Education*, Robert G. Bringle and Julie A. Hatcher define service-learning as

> a credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (222)

In essence, the service provided benefits the community recipient by meeting community needs and also benefits the student provider because the experience allows for development of learning and civic outcomes.

What sets service-learning apart from experiential learning, in part, is its relationship to and integration with course content. It is not a form of experiential learning like internships or field experiences because those learning objectives are typically aimed at developing specific job skills. In contrast, service-learning aims to work toward an understanding of course content, and in some cases, “expands course objectives to include civic education” (Bringle and Hatcher 222). The additional focus on civic education is a distinctive characteristic of service-learning and often is “a deliberate

educational goal through which students develop an understanding of their current and future role in their communities" (Bringle, Phillips, and Hudson 6). In short, a well-designed service-learning experience enhances academic goals and enriches students' civic development.

Democracy and Education

The relationship between education and civic development can be traced in the history of education to the sophists in ancient Greece. Democracy grew quickly in the fifth century BCE, which placed political power in the hands of the people. This shift in responsibility required democrats to "equip themselves with knowledge and specific skills" which created a need for a new curriculum, one of "general learning, civic awareness, and capability in discerning issues, shaping and enforcing arguments, and responding to opposing arguments with effect" (Barrett 6). The sophists were able to accommodate this need by offering courses in rhetoric and other subjects like mathematics and astronomy. Their students were meeting learning objectives and mastering the curriculum. Yet, as Harold Barrett states, the sophists' curriculum also incorporated practical elements, "designed to teach the Greek ideal of *aretê*: the knowledge and attitude for effective participation in domestic, social, and political life" (5). Barrett further claims that "[y]oung Greeks were eager for the sophists' instruction in civic goodness, in the wisdom and skill that were basic to serving the city and gaining prominence" (5). This is much like the civic outcomes developed through service-learning, which aim to foster skills for citizenry.

While the sophists do not play a significant role in service-learning literature, many practitioners acknowledge the influence of John Dewey's extensive work in experimental education on current service-learning pedagogies (Anson; Berman; Eyler and Giles; Flower). Dewey believes in the connection between education and personal experience, and that in order to learn, people must reflect on their experiences. Through Dewey's work, it is apparent that "democracy, education, and citizenship are inseparable" (Eyler and Giles, *Where's* 154). This relationship is particularly evident in the practice of service-learning as a whole, even though some service-learning courses may stress one of these three elements over the others.

Like Dewey, Ernest L. Boyer refers to the relationship between citizenship, democracy, and the history of American higher education as "inseparably interlocked" (A48). In "Creating the New American College," Boyer calls on American colleges and universities to prove the worth of the academy by serving the community through scholarship. He also challenges institutions of higher education to hold up their mission statements, most of which include service in addition to teaching and research (A48). Proponents of service-learning in higher education see service-learning as a way in which the academy can provide service to the community and respond to Boyer's call to action (Astin; Bringle and Hatcher; Eyler and Giles; Feigenbaum).

Effects of Service-Learning on Learning Outcomes

Service-learning has been praised by faculty and students alike for the increased feelings of social awareness and civic responsibility it gives to those who participate. Participants are motivated and report a high sense of engagement. Faculty believe their

students are gaining important skills such as listening to others and considering multiple perspectives, ultimately becoming better prepared for their roles as democratic citizens. While they are all interconnected, the knowledge and skills advanced by service-learning are largely divided into two areas of focus: civic outcomes and academic outcomes.

Civic Outcomes: Service-Learning as Pedagogy for *Aretê*

Many supporters of service-learning focus on the service component because they view service opportunities as ways of preparing students to become engaged democratic citizens who are caring, responsible, and thoughtful (Astin; Strage; Wilhelm). Service-learning courses are often explicitly designed to foster development in problem-solving, decision-making, communication, and collaboration (Bridwell-Bowles). In essence, the focus on service has resulted in a modern pedagogy for *aretê* suited to the needs of our democratic society.

Research on outcomes of service-learning demonstrates that service-learning is an effective tool which promotes civic responsibility and develops knowledge and skills essential to citizenry (Berman; Bridwell-Bowles; Eyler and Giles; Giles and Eyler; Herzberg; Heilker; Strage). In a 2006 study on service-learning outcomes, Lori Simons and Beverly Cleary surveyed 142 students both before and after service, categorizing student responses through an open coding process. Through their analysis of the data, Simons and Cleary found that service-learning contributed to an increase in students' civic engagement, political awareness, and appreciation of diversity. Their investigation supports multiple benefits of service-learning, including interpersonal development, developing connections, development of tolerant attitudes, and problem-solving skills

(311-16). These advantages, among others, are skills and attitudes often associated with citizenry.

As Dewey would caution, practitioners of service-learning must not let the sole purpose of service-learning be to prepare students for "future duty or privilege" as democratic citizens (68). He reminds us that "[t]he mistake is not in attaching importance to preparation for future need, but in making it the mainspring of present effort" (56). In other words, while it is important to prepare students for the future, instructors should also explore how service-learning can benefit their present academic needs as well.

Academic Outcomes: Service-Learning as Academic Enhancement

In a 1995 article for the *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, Edward Zlotkowski calls for a change in the way service-learning is discussed and researched in the disciplines. He argues that researchers should look beyond the civic benefits to discover what service-learning does to achieve specific academic goals (127-28). Zlotkowski believes that research in the field will have to demonstrate how service-learning enhances course work in addition to creating well-rounded citizens if service-learning is to survive (130). In a later article, Zlotkowski discusses the importance of this kind of research, saying

> the more we limit our understanding of service learning to classroom practice, ignoring, for example, the need to ground it in theory, research, and discipline-specific scholarship… the more vulnerable our actual practice will be to both intellectual attack and institutional neglect. ("Service Learning Approach" 83)

In essence, Zlotkowski is urging researchers in the field to investigate the academic outcomes of service-learning in ways beyond the anecdotal, not only for service-learning as a whole but also as a pedagogical approach within the content areas.

Previous research on academic learning outcomes in service-learning has yielded mixed results because it draws largely from anecdotal accounts from faculty and student self-report, and therefore lacks the empirical data which institutions value (Eyler 11-13). Janet Eyler and Dwight E. Giles, Jr. have responded to Zlotkowski's call for research on the academic value of service-learning and increased the variety of data by implementing both qualitative and quantitative research. Their work in *Where's the Learning in Service Learning?*, spanning several years and two national research projects, inquires into the learning outcomes achieved by service-learning students in courses across the curriculum.

In the first study, Eyler and Giles surveyed fifteen hundred students from twenty colleges and universities, and conducted follow up interviews with sixty-six of those participants. For the second study, the researchers interviewed sixty-seven students from seven colleges and universities (*Where's* xvii). The results of their extended study show that students believe they learn more through service-learning, have a better understanding of course material, and are able to apply the material to other situations. Eyler and Giles also find that in service-learning courses, students believe learning is richer and more applicable because they are more engaged, learning in a community context, and rooted in personal relationships. Overall, their research reveals small, yet significant effects of service-learning on learning outcomes, supporting their claim that "service-learning makes a difference" (xvii).

While research in the field of service-learning and composition on academic outcomes is limited, the Eyler and Giles study provides insight on two prominent goals in First-Year Writing: critical thinking and perspective transformation.

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking, along with critical reading and writing, is a desired outcome in first-year writing. Under the heading of "Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing," the Council of Writing Program Administrators states that first-year writing students should:

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power. ("WPA Outcomes")

The First-Year Writing Program at Boise State University developed its course framework based on these outcomes. Students in English 102, in particular, are expected to "work to consider how others' ideas complicate and deepen their own understandings, often leaving them with a richer set of questions rather than 'the' answer" ("English 102").

These critical thinking outcomes reflect the pedagogical theory of Dewey who believes that students must wrestle with information and make it their own (160). Eyler and Giles describe Dewey's view of critical thinking as one where "problem solving [is] about a doubt that, when resolved, leads to new forms of doubt" (*Where's* 103). While Eyler and Giles find that service-learning cannot be directly related to critical thinking, they assert that students who participate in high quality service-learning experiences "come to accept uncertainty and complexity as the way of the world" and are more likely to develop their critical thinking ability than students who do not because they are exposed to complex, real-world issues (*Where's* 100).

Perspective Transformation

At Boise State University, one of the course goals for English 102 is that students understand that "[w]riters consider many perspectives on their subjects and speak to and sometimes against those ideas as they explore what they think" ("English 102"). Instructors hope that through primary and secondary research on complex topics, students gather a variety of information and begin to consider the perspectives of others, ultimately taking an informed stance on their area of research.

In their extended study, Eyler and Giles find that well integrated, highly reflective service-learning experiences can impact student perspectives. Service-learning puts students in contact with a variety of issues and provides opportunities for students to interact with people, situations, and ideas that they would not usually come in to contact with. By reflecting on their service-learning experiences, students begin to challenge these outside influences and complicate their own perspectives, beliefs, and values (*Where's* 132-41).

Effects of Service-Learning on Writing

As Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Ann Watters attest, evidence that service-learning projects in a composition course lead to increased motivation, while mostly anecdotal, suggests that service-learning gives students a sense of purpose in their writing (2). However, increased motivation and engagement are generally not enough to satisfy skeptical administrators, teachers, students, and others, and more evidence must be provided if service-learning is to be taken seriously in composition. Paul Feigenbaum applies Zlotkowski's call for change in service-learning research specifically to

composition studies, arguing that the best way to demonstrate that service-learning is beneficial to the goal of composition is to provide overwhelming evidence that engaged writing leads to more effective writing (80).

Service-learning practitioners in composition, like Thomas Deans, often provide anecdotal evidence of the benefit of service-learning to their courses. Through his experience, Deans believes that service-learning courses in which students write about the community "advance[s] academic and critical literacy goals" ("English Studies" 110). Similarly, Wade Dorman and Susann Fox Dorman claim service-learning helped their students become invested in their arguments, develop a greater sense of audience, and conduct more thorough research, improving overall writing outcomes (125-26).

In "Text-Based Measures of Service-Learning Writing Quality," Adrian Wurr describes his assessment of student writing to see if service-learning had an effect on the quality of writing. Using a holistic writing assessment, Wurr scored each student's persuasive essay overall. He also analyzed the essays for each of these attributes: rhetorical appeals, logic (claim, data, and warrant), coherence, and mechanics (424). Comparing the results of these holistic and analytical assessments to those of a non-service-learning composition course, Wurr finds that service-learning students produced better essays, scoring higher in both overall grade and in each of the individual categories (431).

Wurr's work offers the kind of evidence that both Zlotkowski and Feigenbaum call for, providing empirical data which demonstrates the benefits of service-learning to student writing. Wurr asserts that the results of his research

> provide empirical support for including service-learning in college composition curricula… this study has shown that incorporating service-learning in college composition improves student writing. (432)

While these results are promising, Wurr notes that the focus on the final written product is a drawback in his study and suggests that future research in this area include an investigation into students' composition processes (433).

***

This first chapter has been largely concerned with addressing potential effects of service-learning on learning outcomes in general and writing outcomes in particular. In spite of the continued need for more research on the benefits of service-learning to validate the pedagogy as a whole and within the disciplines, research on how service-learning projects are affecting writing outcomes is underdeveloped. My work in the following chapters is a response to Zlotkowski's and Feigenbaum's calls for research demonstrating how service-learning might contribute to students meeting academic goals in composition.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

In this chapter, I discuss the methodology and methods of my qualitative case study which investigates the effects of service-learning on student writing and research. In the first section, I describe the methodology that led me to select particular methods for data collection and the reasoning behind them. In the second section of this chapter, I describe my methods for data collection and analysis.

The Case for Teacher Research

In *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition*, Cindy Johanek asks compositionists to consider "the contexts from which [their] research questions come" and allow these contexts to "guide [their] methodological decisions" (12). Since my research question stems from the context of the composition classroom, it seems only appropriate to employ qualitative research methods often found in teacher research methodology. In her discussion of research methods, Johanek cites Jacqueline Jones Royster and Rebecca Taylor who assert that qualitative research is "a very useful methodology for sharing classroom experiences" because of the narrative elements that allow for the researcher to situate the research within the context of the classroom (qtd. in Johanek 78).

My approach for this study is influenced by the historical tendencies of teacher research within the field of composition. Ruth E. Ray, in "Composition from the Teacher-Research Point of View," presents five beliefs which are fundamental to teacher research:

> that research should account for context (of the classroom, school, and community) in all its complexity; that researchers are active participants in this context; that research should be conducted primarily to inform and improve practice as well as to advance theory; that some research can profitably focus on the detailed and the particular – on one classroom, even one student – in the search for insights in to specific learning environments; and that knowledge and truth in education are not so much found through objective inquiry as socially constructed through collaboration among students, teachers, and researchers. (175)

These five fundamental beliefs which underlie teacher research frame my discussion of methodology for this study.

The benefit of teacher research, as Ray points out, is that it allows for a deeply contextualized understanding of a classroom: the course, the students, and the writing assignments. Bob Fecho, JoBeth Allen, Claudia Mazaros, and Hellen Inyega propose that teacher research "grows out of complex classroom contexts that cannot be addressed by large-scale studies" (109). In my course, there are a variety of students and service-learning community partners. It would be improbable to assume any other course, even those I teach in the future, would be identical; therefore my aim is to study these particular students in their particular service-learning situations, examining whether and how service-learning may affect their writing and research, in order to understand the pedagogy of service-learning and the implications it can have in the classroom.

The second underlying principle Ray presents about teacher research states that the researcher acts as an active participant (175). In this study, I am able to take both an

emic and an *etic* stance, moving from the position of insider/teacher to that of outsider/researcher throughout my research (Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein 52). The dual role of teacher/researcher is vital and provides a complex understanding of student writing styles and personal growth, allowing me to assess authentically whether service-learning has an effect on student writing and research.

The importance of teacher research has been extensively discussed by Ray and others in the field, such as Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater, and Bonnie S. Sunstein. They argue, like Ray in her third principle, that this form of research serves to bridge the gap between theory and practice (52). In essence, the main purpose of teacher research is to establish an informed classroom practice and further develop pedagogical theory. James A. Berlin contends that all instructors should engage in teacher research because it is their responsibility to "improve the quality of student learning" in their classrooms (9). As Glenda L. Bissex recognizes, the case study is an appropriate methodology for teacher research because it is "a way of learning, not a method for proving" (71). In my study, I aim to understand the effects of service-learning on course outcomes and goals in order to learn whether service-learning is an appropriate pedagogy for meeting those outcomes and goals.

Echoing Ray's fourth conviction underlying the methodology, Fecho et al. contend that teacher research provides a distinctive role in composition studies,

> one in which the macro, or the larger issues associated with literary education, frequently is found in the micro, the very human and day-to-day transactions in writing classrooms. (109)

In his discussion of methodology in composition research, Thomas Newkirk emphasizes that the strength of the case study stems from its "capacity for detailed and individualized

accounts of writers writing" (132). This point is especially relevant to my study, as I focus on four individual students writing in particular contexts.

Ray's final principle, that knowledge is socially constructed through collaboration between students and teacher/researcher, particularly in the field of education (175), is reflected through my selection of methods, which complement the overall methodology of teacher research.

Specific Methods

The participants in this study were restricted to those enrolled in my section of English 102: Introduction to College Writing and Research with integrated service-learning at Boise State University. At the start of the semester, Professor Karen Uehling recruited student participants based on their interest in the study (see Appendix A for Recruitment Script and Appendix B for Informed Consent Form). This recruitment strategy was implemented based on the Institutional Review Board's recommendation in order to avoid any potential conflict of interests between students and instructor. Four students out of the twenty-two enrolled in the course volunteered to participate, representing eighteen percent of the total class population. The data were collected from participants through both written artifacts and interviews.[1]

Written Artifacts

Throughout the semester, I collected written artifacts from each participant. These artifacts included drafts of unit projects, reflective cover letters, and the final portfolio. The written artifacts were coded *a priori* for thematic analysis in order to identify themes

and patterns in the writing which address my research question. I will discuss these themes in chapter four.

As Ann Blakeslee and Cathy Fleischer emphasize, the examination of written artifacts allows researchers to "better understand the issues and people they are studying" (117). The artifacts provided insights to how service-learning affects writing, research, and students' perceptions of learning outcomes through their service-learning experiences.

Student Interviews

In addition to collecting written artifacts, I conducted interviews with the student participants three times during the semester, at the end of each unit project. The interviews were conducted with the participants individually after class in Albertsons Library, using the interview protocol (see Appendix C). Each interview was audio-recorded for accuracy and lasted between ten and fifteen minutes. The interviews were then transcribed and coded for thematic analysis to address the research question. Again, these themes will be discussed in chapter four.

It was important for me to include student voices in my study because "[w]ithout informants' voices, you have no perspective to share except your own" (Chiseri-Strater and Sunstein 124). I was able to ask students about their perceptions of service-learning, their writing and research processes, their written work for the course, and the relationship between service-learning and course work. I could have only guessed at these topics based on the written artifacts, therefore the student interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of student perceptions and processes. Blakeslee and Fleischer

emphasize that "interviews can shed light on situations and events, and on people's experiences and actions in relation to or in response to those events" (31). Because I asked questions, I was able to gain a more inclusive understanding of the effects of service-learning on student writing and research than without the follow-up interviews.

Thematic Analysis

To code the interview transcripts and written artifacts for thematic analysis, I read each text closely and coded chunks of the data with a term or phrase that described my reading of that particular passage. See Figure 2, below, for a sample of this coding process.

Data	Code
I needed 102, so it was basically just deal with it. But then I found out that like the service-learning is something that will help me get involved in the community. I am new to the area so it actually made me more excited to take the class…	Reaction to SL
It is nice to have one specific theme to be focusing on. In my 101 class our papers were all over the place so it was hard to stay focused on one specific area. Whereas focusing on service-learning kind of gives you something to focus on. I mean, it gives you one subject you need to worry about instead of having to be all over the place with everything.	Focus
And also, like doing the service-learning gives you a hands on experience writing the papers which is really nice, it gives you a lot more content for your papers. It's very helpful…	Hands-on experience Content
I can't really do steps. Like I have to do it all at once. So I guess if all the steps are kind of all at once… but I went through all of my, um, the little papers we had to do, like the observations and the interviews, I went through all of those… reread everything that I had and just kind of gave myself an outline of what I wanted to cover and how the paper should flow…	Writing process

Figure 2: Sample of Coding for Thematic Analysis

After using this coding process for each of the data sets and re-grouping or consolidating some codes, I ended up with sixteen categories or themes:

- Experience with service
- Reactions to service-learning
- Discussion of project
- Influence of service-learning on writing and research
- Connections between service-learning and the class
- Critical thinking
- Learning outcomes
- Knowledge and skills
- Motivation
- Previous research experience
- Course goals
- Concerns and challenges
- Hypothesis on non-service-learning projects
- Perspectives
- Writing and research processes
- Topic/focus

When working with the data, I chose to exclude seven themes because they did not directly address my area of inquiry. The themes that I carefully considered in this project are as follows:

- Experience with service
- Reactions to service-learning
- Influence of service-learning on writing and research
- Critical thinking
- Learning outcomes
- Hypothesis on non-service-learning projects
- Perspectives
- Writing and research processes
- Topic/focus

While only the above themes were directly included in this project, the additional data I collected was beneficial in helping me develop a deeper understanding of the students, the course, and service-learning.

End Note

[1] The methods for this study also included two surveys distributed to all students enrolled in my English 102 course through Qualtrics Online Survey Software. The surveys were distributed in August (pre-service) and December (post-service), and were designed to gather information anonymously about student reactions to service-learning and conceptions of their writing and research processes. (See Appendixes D and E for these surveys). My intent was to triangulate the data between the methods of collection and use the larger sample from the surveys to inform my understanding of the data collected from student interviews and written artifacts. Because the response to these surveys was minimal (five students responded to the pre-service survey and four to the post-service survey), I decided to exclude the data from my study.

CHAPTER THREE: COURSE CONTEXT

In this chapter, I outline the design of my course and its place within the framework of the First-Year Writing and Service-Learning Programs at Boise State University to establish a context for discussion. In the first section, I describe the mission and course goals of English 102. In the second section, I discuss the mission of the Service-Learning Program and the process of acquiring service-learning designation for a course. In the third section, I detail the overall structure of my English 102 course and the three major writing projects. In the final section, I describe the student participants and their projects and research topics for the course.

English 102 at Boise State University

English 102: Introduction to College Writing and Research is a required course for most students at Boise State University. Because of this requirement, there is a great deal of diversity in the student population – students of English 102 vary widely in age, background, major, and student classification.

English 102 aims to prepare students for future writing situations by introducing them to academic inquiry, writing, and research. According to the First-Year Writing Program's website, the course goals for English 102 state that at the end of the term, students will:

- Understand academic work as a recursive process of inquiry, using writing and research to form new questions and pursue existing enduring questions;

- Craft questions that guide research, making their process manageable and likely to yield insights;
- Find, read, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate sources;
- Integrate evidence in their own writing in a way that complicates (develops, refines, extends, refutes, and deepens) their own ideas;
- Produce research-based writing in formats appropriate to the context, purpose, genre, and audience;
- Implement a variety of research strategies and resources as appropriate to their inquiry;
- Use a variety of media (print and digital) to address different audiences, as appropriate;
- Understand genre expectations for some research-based writing contexts within the university;
- Use an academic documentation style consistently and appropriately;
- Articulate the rhetorical choices they have made as a writer and researcher, illustrating their awareness of a writer's relationship to the subject, context, purpose, and audience;
- Produce prose without surface-level convention errors that distract readers from attending to the meaning and purpose of the writing. ("English 102")

To meet these goals, students of English 102 generally compose three essays, implement forms of primary and secondary research, and revise and reflect on a body of their work for the final portfolio.

Service-Learning at Boise State University

The mission of the Service-Learning Program at Boise State University is "to foster active citizenship and enhance learning through academically-based community service" (*Service-Learning*). To fulfill this mission, the Service-Learning Program requires each potential service-learning instructor to apply for service-learning designation.

The application asks instructors to respond to the Nine Criteria for Service-Learning and develop a syllabus which reflects a service-learning pedagogy. In the Nine Criteria of Service-Learning, instructors describe many components of the course,

including learning and service objectives, the relationship between service and course material, assessment of learning, and development of civic responsibility. These documents are then reviewed for approval by the Service-Learning director and a faculty review committee. (See Appendices F and G for my response to the Nine Criteria of Service-Learning and course syllabus).

Course Overview

Often first-year writing courses take a thematic approach where all readings and assignments reflect back on a central focus. In my English 102 course, this theme is community. For each of the three units, students work to address an inquiry question focused on community and community issues through readings, activities, and discussion.

Service-Learning

Through the Service-Learning Program, my section of English 102 was matched with five community partners for the fall 2011 semester: ArtFaire, a youth outreach program in the arts; Boise Rescue Mission Ministries, a faith-based homeless shelter; Boise State University's High School Equivalency Program, a GED program for migrant youth; Boise Urban Garden School, a community garden and education program; and the English Language Center, a language program for refugees. Students complete a minimum of fifteen hours of hands-on service at the community partner site of their choice, carrying out tasks such as tutoring students or serving meals to the homeless. During the semester, students identify an issue or area of inquiry related to their community partner and develop a research question to pursue for the remainder of the

course. Service-learning becomes a “text” for students to read and analyze, and their experiences at their community partner site serve as another form of research.

As Sigmon defines in his Typology of Service-Learning (see Figure 1), service goals and learning goals must be balanced and mutually beneficial to the student and the community (*Linking*). In this course, the learning goal is for students to make connections between academic learning and community through their experiences, using their experiences as a springboard for deeper academic inquiry, and the service goal is for students to provide direct service to their community partner and compose a piece of persuasive writing for the community. The course work and service work are complementary; student research informs service and vice versa. Both the community partners and the students benefit from service-learning; the community receives hands-on assistance and the written project, and students’ experiences inform their research and potentially contribute to their personal development as well.

Unit One: What is Community?

In the first unit, students begin work with the inquiry process and implement primary research, specifically observations and interviews, into their writing. The goal of this unit is for students to use research and writing to explore the idea of community, and to become acquainted with their service-learning community partners and the people who work and volunteer there.

The writing project for this unit is a community profile. Students compose a profile of their service-learning community partner in order to gain an understanding of that particular community. They are asked to describe the community and consider the

following questions: *How do these people come together and make community? How does this community function? Why does this community exist?* Students collect data for their profile from their own observations, an interview with a volunteer or staff member at their community partner site, and potentially from secondary sources as well.

Unit Two: What Issues Do Our Communities Face?

In the second unit, students develop their own inquiry questions about an issue their community partner is addressing and compose an exploratory essay. The goal of this unit is for students to explore the multiple sides of an issue and the ongoing discussion in that area through secondary research and their own service-learning experiences.

The writing project for this unit is an exploratory essay where students investigate their inquiry topic and share their findings with readers. They are asked to define their area of inquiry and consider the following questions: *What are the multiple sides of the issue? What is being said and done about this issue?* Students collect data for their exploratory essay through secondary research and their own service-learning experiences.

Unit Three: What Responsibilities Do Individuals Have to a Community?

In the third and final unit, students expand upon the work they began in unit two and take a stand on their area of inquiry, writing persuasively to an audience of their choice in an appropriate genre. The goal of this unit is for students to join the conversation and advance the discourse on their topic in a way that would benefit the community.

The writing project for this unit is a self-identified persuasive project. Students compose a text for a specific audience in a genre of their choice. This could include, but

is not limited to, students writing op-ed pieces for the local newspaper, letters to congressmen, or creating YouTube videos. They are asked to illustrate their stance on their issue or area of inquiry and write persuasively. Students continue their work from unit two, and collect additional data for their persuasive project through secondary research and their own service-learning experiences.

Student Participants

In this section, I describe the four students who participated in this study to establish a context for discussion. For each student, I provide biographic information, describe their service-learning project, and discuss their research question which informed the bulk of their work in the course.

Amanda

Amanda is a non-traditional, first-semester freshman majoring in Graphic Design, who started college a few years after graduating from an Idaho high school. She is also a single mother of a four-year-old son and recently moved to the Boise area. Amanda completed her service-learning hours at ArtFaire, a youth outreach program in the arts.

According to the project description on the Service-Learning Program website, students working with ArtFaire would "[a]ssist an instructor with a weekly after-school art class;" however Amanda's duties were quite different than described ("Course List"). There were an abundance of service-learning students registered for the same project, which allowed for Amanda to assist with an art class only once near the end of the semester due to cuts in ArtFaire's class offerings. She expresses her disappointment in not being able to assist with art classes, saying

> I was really expecting to interact with the children and was hoping to experience the joy the children had while creating their works of art. I didn't get any of that.

Instead, Amanda completed data entry for ArtFaire, logging donations made to the organization and making follow up phone calls.

For the first unit project, Amanda composed a profile of the community of ArtFaire. In the second unit, she explored whether art classes should be provided by schools or by the community. For the final unit project, Amanda wrote an article for a school newsletter arguing against budget cuts that reduce or remove art programs from the school curriculum.

Brittney

Brittney is a traditional, first-semester freshman majoring in Human Resource Management. She graduated from high school in California and moved to Boise prior to the start of the fall semester. Brittney completed her service-learning hours with Boise State University's High School Equivalency Program, a GED program for migrant youth.

According to the project description, service-learning students working with the High School Equivalency Program "will be expected to do one-on-one tutoring of GED subjects, including: reading, writing, math, science, social studies and US Government" ("Course List"). Brittney's actual experience with the High School Equivalency Program matched the description well. She explains:

> I basically just sit in this back room and help with whatever they need tutoring on. I signed up for reading and writing, but I found that I've tutored more on math which is kind of interesting. But I kind of just do whatever they need me to do, or help out with little office work and stuff like that.

For the first unit project, Brittney composed a profile of the community of the High School Equivalency Program at Boise State University. In the second unit, she explored what causes students to drop out of high school. For the final unit project, Brittney wrote a letter to an Idaho senator, urging him to take action towards lowering the high school dropout rate.

Dave

Dave is a non-traditional junior majoring in Entrepreneurial Management, and the fall semester marked his second semester at Boise State. He served in the Air Force for four years as a Mental Health Technician and currently owns his own online business. Dave completed his service-learning hours at the Boise Urban Garden School, a community garden and education program.

As explained on the Service-Learning Program's website, students enrolled in the project "will assist in the fall harvest and working the farm stand. They will also perform work to put the garden to bed at the end of the season" ("Course List"). Dave describes the project further:

> We've been getting the garden all set up for winter, so clearing all the stuff that was growing this year out and getting it all into the compost pile. That's basically what we've been doing, working outside. And then Mike said he's going to show us how to plant garlic. It's a cold weather thing, so that should be fun… And outside of that, I'm not sure what we're going to do. I guess… just getting a lot more of the information on [organic gardening] once it gets too cold to work outside.

In addition to working in the garden, students assisted during a fundraising dinner and learned about topics related to organic gardening.

For the first unit project, Dave composed a profile of the community of the Boise Urban Garden School. In the second unit, he explored the differences between organic and non-organic gardening. For the final unit project, Dave created a booklet presenting the benefits of organic gardening and information on how to start an organic garden.

Emily

Emily is a non-traditional, first-semester freshman majoring in Pre-Radiologic Science. She moved from a small town in Idaho just before the start of the fall semester and is beginning her course work at Boise State a few years after graduating high school. Emily also completed her service-learning hours at the Boise Urban Garden School.

For the first unit project, Emily composed a profile of the community of the Boise Urban Garden School. In the second unit, she explored the idea of eating locally, which she perceived as a challenge:

> I think I just kind of chose a terrible topic to begin with, so I don't really know how the re-drafting is going to go on this paper, I don't know if I'm going to have to choose a new topic or what. I would probably choose a totally different topic and choose one that is debatable… comparatively you know. I mean there were a couple cons as far as eating locally, as far as like pricing and availability, but they weren't anything that I could compare right straight across.

Although Emily completed her service-learning hours and attended the class regularly until the end of the semester, she did not submit a unit three project or final portfolio and consequently did not complete the course. While I do not know why Emily did not submit these assignments, I expect it was the challenge she perceived with her choice of research topic.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

In this chapter, I review the findings of my interviews and artifact analysis. In the first section, I consider student reactions to service-learning. In the second section, I examine the effects of service-learning on writing and research processes. In the final section, I discuss how service-learning affects course goals and outcomes.

Reactions to Service-Learning

In "Service Learning and First-Year Composition," Brock Haussamen asserts that students who register for service-learning courses generally fall into two categories, those who have volunteer experience or an interest in volunteer work, and those who pick the class because it fits their schedules. While some in the latter category may drop the course, Haussamen's experience shows that "more often those who grudgingly start the service go on to become fully engaged" and generally "find service learning eventually gratifying" (194). Haussamen points to a shift in student reactions to service-learning during the course of the semester, where students who initially find the time commitment "onerous," often find their experience rewarding by the end of the semester (193).

My initial assumptions were that students would react similarly to what Haussamen describes: some students would be eager for the service opportunity while others would have no idea what service-learning entailed or that it was even a component of the course. I hypothesized that students who were unaware of the service-learning

component would register for projects “grudgingly” and hopefully end the semester appreciative of service-learning and the opportunity to work with the community during the course.

The four participants in this study fell into both of Haussamen’s categories of students who tend to register for service-learning courses. Each had experience with volunteer work or community service, yet all four reported they were unaware of the service-learning component, even though, like Haussamen’s courses, it was published in the course schedule. None of the participants had previously participated in a service-learning course, and they knew little, if anything, about service-learning before the semester began.

While some initial reactions to the required service-learning component were reluctance or fear, these student perspectives shifted during the first four weeks of the semester. At the start, Amanda was initially hesitant about service-learning but decided to “just deal with it” because she needed to take the class. By the end of the first unit, she was excited about service-learning because it would help her get involved in the community, an opportunity Amanda valued since she was new to Boise. Brittney was “scared” of service-learning at first because of “all this extra work on top [of the course work],” yet her attitude towards service-learning also changed by the end of unit one. Instead of viewing it as “extra work,” Brittney saw her service-learning project as helpful because it gave her “something to write about.”

In contrast, Dave and Emily were intrigued by service-learning from the start, primarily because of the hands-on opportunities it allowed for. Emily remarked

> When I found out about [the service-learning component], I was kind of glad because I think it's easier for me to learn in something that's more hands-on. So for me to go there and volunteer time and stuff like that, instead of getting on a computer and researching, is easier for me to kind of write about it.

For these two students, service-learning offered the possibility of gaining first-hand experience with their topics in addition to traditional library-based research, which they valued.

At the third and final interview, the participants reflected on their service-learning experiences and what it was like working with a community partner for the course. Both Dave's and Brittney's experiences support Haussamen's assertions about end of semester reactions to service-learning; Dave and Brittney ended the semester fully engaged and found the overall experience rewarding. Their final remarks also resonated with their initial reactions to service-learning. For Dave, this meant reflecting on the value of a hands-on experience:

> I think it was actually kind of fun for the fact that it did get you out of the classroom and off campus more and just kind of out to do something other than just studying and researching… and, you know, looking at books.

In other words, Dave enjoyed his service-learning experience because it was an alternative to a traditional classroom approach, and he was able to research out in the community instead of limiting himself to online or library sources.

Brittney's final remarks about working with a community partner for the course spoke back to her initial reaction of appreciating service-learning for providing her with a focus for writing and helping her feel connected to the topic:

> I felt [working with a community partner] was good because it gave you something to write about. Like you could build a lot off of it as opposed to

> random essay prompts that you don't feel too connected to… I thought it was a good experience overall.

Thinking of previous writing situations where she was assigned "random" topics, Brittney compares her experiences and acknowledges that her experience writing with service-learning was superior. Service-learning gave her a focus and a place to start, as opposed to the random topics she had been assigned before. Brittney also acknowledges that writing about something that she is currently involved in helps her feel connected to the topic instead of feeling distanced, as was the case in many of her previous writing experiences.

In comparison, Amanda ended the semester with a starkly different outlook on service-learning. Amanda had a challenging service-learning experience, which resulted from a lack of communication from her community partner and too many service-learning students registered for the same project. Reflecting on the semester, she remarks:

> My [service-learning] experience was not good, so I would have rather just left that out. I wrote all of my papers without even going to my service-learning partner at all and it really wasn't beneficial to me at all. So I guess if I had a better service-learning partner, it may have been better.

Amanda's case highlights the importance of a high quality service-learning experience. She was meeting the community's needs by providing assistance with the organization's clerical duties, yet the potential learning outcomes were not conducive to her work in the course.

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Thus, the majority of students who finished the course ended the semester on a positive note, engaged in their writing and research and appreciative of their service-

learning opportunity. However, it is imperative to consider the points that Zlotkowski and Feigenbaum make, urging teachers/researchers to examine how service-learning might affect academic outcomes, and in the field of composition specifically, how service-learning might affect writing itself.

I discuss student reactions in this chapter not to focus on service-learning as a means of engagement, but rather to consider why students found service-learning so engaging. What impact did students believe service-learning was having on their work? Why did they believe it was beneficial? It is through an analysis of the participants' discussion of service-learning and the course from both student interviews and written reflections that I can begin to understand how service-learning affects student writing and research.

Effects of Service-Learning on Writing and Research Processes

Wurr notes that one disadvantage to his study on the effects of service-learning on writing quality is the emphasis placed on final product over process. He suggests that future studies might consider the composition process itself and investigate how service-learning affects student work (433). In this section, I take up Wurr's suggestion for future research and consider the effects of service-learning on student writing and research processes. A thematic analysis of the written artifacts and interview data reveal two major reoccurring themes in relation to writing and research processes: topic development and research methods.

Developing a Topic

In first-year writing courses, students are often afforded a lot of freedom in selecting a research topic that interests them, and they are typically encouraged by their instructors to investigate something that they do not already know much about. The intent of these assignments is to introduce students to the practice of inquiry and to help students develop skills in academic research and research-based writing. Brack and Hall assert that for many students, these kinds of assignments seem little more than "empty exercise[s]" in research (143). As Deans notes in *Writing and Community Action*, these kinds of assignments, while beneficial, often "result in a disembodied or distanced treatment of a topic" (273). He argues that when students write about the community, their service-learning experience "usually lends vitality, complexity, and currency to the writing," which counteracts this notion of the assignment as pure exercise (273).

The participants in this study were familiar with writing assignments that felt little more than like an empty exercise. Amanda in particular recounted her experience in English 101, saying "our papers were all over the place so it was hard to stay focused." While I wondered if students would feel constricted by having to relate their research to their service-learning in some way, each of the participants stated that service-learning helped focus their work in the course. As Brittney discusses in her reaction to service-learning at the end of the semester, working with a community partner while writing and researching about a related community issue eliminated the feeling that her work for the course was a mere exercise. Service-learning gave her "something to write about" that she felt connected to, unlike her other experiences with "random essay prompts" from previous writing situations.

In addition to providing a focus for their writing and research, service-learning played a role in how students developed their extended research topics for units two and three. Dave's experiences working in the community garden at the Boise Urban Garden School with staff and other volunteers helped him generate ideas for the area of inquiry he would pursue. He explains that service-learning

> really helped with formulating some of the thoughts and ideas for some of the papers as opposed to picking some kind of random topic that sounds good and hoping for the best.

Working with a community partner had a direct impact on the topic Dave chose to investigate for the bulk of the semester. He elaborates:

> You know from kind of working with the service organization, we talked with Mike [the garden coordinator] about some of the views that he has with [organic gardening]. I mostly just wanted to learn more about that, so that kind of helped me figure it out as far as, you know, it's something I wanted to know more about. So once I started getting more into it, I started being more, you know, hey that's kind of in the ballgame of what I want to know more about.

The process of developing a research topic was quite similar for Emily. She also credits Mike at the Boise Urban Garden School for helping her identify an area of inquiry, eating locally:

> We were just actually going over eating organic and how you grow an organic garden and stuff like that. And then [Mike] went in to actually explaining eating locally because eating organic has been like a huge topic for the past five years… but I hadn't really heard about eating locally so much. I mean I've heard a little bit about it in the last year but nothing as big as eating organically. So I was just kind of curious as to exactly what it was, how you define it, and how it was different from eating organic.

Dave's and Emily's exposure to the Boise Urban Garden School, in addition to their conversations with Mike while gardening and learning about the process, shaped the direction they took when initially developing a research topic.

Not every research topic was directly influenced by a service-learning community partner. In some cases, service-learning played a more indirect role in influencing students' research topic development. While tutoring for the High School Equivalency Program, Brittney explored the high school dropout rate. Discussing her research focus for the semester, Brittney explains how she arrived at her final topic:

> My topic changed a lot throughout and I think my [initial draft of the] paper didn't quite express what I wanted as my topic… it was hard because I want to do something with the student dropout rate because [the High School Equivalency Program] focuses on helping people who've dropped out… I arrived at the topic just because it would be the issue that leads up to [the High School Equivalency Program].

Brittney's research topic underwent the most change of the four participants throughout the semester likely because of this struggle to express what she wanted to say. By the end of the semester, she had established a strong focus, and while not directly related to her community partner, service-learning still played a role in getting to that point. Brittney remarks,

> I kept going farther and farther away from my service-learning, but it was a good place to start out to formulate an idea… my last [unit project] is about the student dropout rate, which [the High School Equivalency Program] is more about helping the students dropout rate instead of trying to fix it… so it was a little different but it helped with the writing, the ideas and all that.

In this case, service-learning provided an area of focus to explore and branch out from. While taking a stand and arguing to lower the school dropout rate is indirectly related to the aims of the High School Equivalency Program, it is a natural digression.

Amanda's community partner inspired her research topic on art education. Even though she did not have the opportunity to experience the after-school art classes, Amanda shares that she was still satisfied with her topic selection:

> I enjoyed writing about the topic that I had with the school budget cuts affecting the art [classes]… it really opened my eyes because I do have a son and he's going to school and it really makes me realize that I want him to be in a school where they offer art classes and I want to be able to fight to keep those in the schools. Being able to research and learn that has helped not just me but my family as well.

When I asked Amanda if she thought a topic like art education would have come up if she did not have to relate her topic to her community partner, she replied simply, "no" and reflected that "thinking back, I really wouldn't want to change anything [about my research topic]. I enjoyed it." Despite everything that did not go as planned with her service-learning experience, Amanda still found value in researching a topic influenced by the mission of ArtFaire to provide art education to children.

Perhaps a part of service-learning's influence on topic selection can be attributed to how students selected their service-learning project at the start of the semester. While the community partners were limited to the five organizations matched with our class representing a variety of social issues, the participants generally gravitated toward projects in their own area of interest. Brittney, who had tutored in previous service experiences, continued in that direction with the High School Equivalency Program; Amanda, as a mother, was interested in a project that dealt with youth and, as an art major, considered working with ArtFaire as a benefit to her academic experience; Dave and Amy were curious about organic gardening and foods and partnered with the Boise Urban Garden School to learn more about it. While students were constrained to the five community partners matched with the course, they were still able to find projects that met their interests which shaped their topic selection and development.

Methods of Research

Service-learning affected not only *what* students researched, but *how* they researched. This influenced them in two distinct ways: first, student perspectives changed to consider service-learning as a method of research in and of itself; second, service-learning affected the source material used in the essays, either by directly incorporating experiences at the community-partner site, or indirectly influencing the kinds of sources students used.

During the course of the semester, the participants began to see their own experiences working with their community partners as another way to research and gain insights in to their extended research topics. They thought about research in a different way and valued the "hands-on" and "personal" approach to research that service-learning provided over exclusively collecting data from online or print sources.

Dave reflected on the connections between service-learning and the course, saying:

> I'm kind of seeing [service-learning] as another way of doing research… In the fact that you know instead of just trying to look stuff up in books and journals and online and all that, you're actually able to be out doing it and trying it where you see more of the actual impact as opposed to what somebody else says they've seen or heard.

In other words, service-learning becomes a new method of gathering data, one where personal experience with the topic seems more valuable than working to make sense of secondhand accounts from textual sources alone. Dave explains that

> Having that actual place to go to and see how some of the stuff works as opposed to just, you know, reading about it and hearing about it and trying to picture it in your head… actually going out and seeing it was really useful.

This perspective is shared by Emily as well:

> Just going there and seeing it and talking to somebody who actually does that for a living… if you [research] online, I think it's not near as personal and you just are getting as in-depth as talking to a person that's doing it every day.

The shift in perspective of how the participants viewed what counted as research is reflected in the way they used source material in their unit projects. In the first unit, students composed a profile of the community of their service-learning community partner and were assigned two pre-writing explorations: the first, detailed field notes of an observation at their community partner site; the second, a reflection on an interview conducted with a staff member or volunteer with their service-learning organization. These pre-writing explorations influenced the ways in which students gathered information in the first unit project, as exemplified in Figure 3, below.

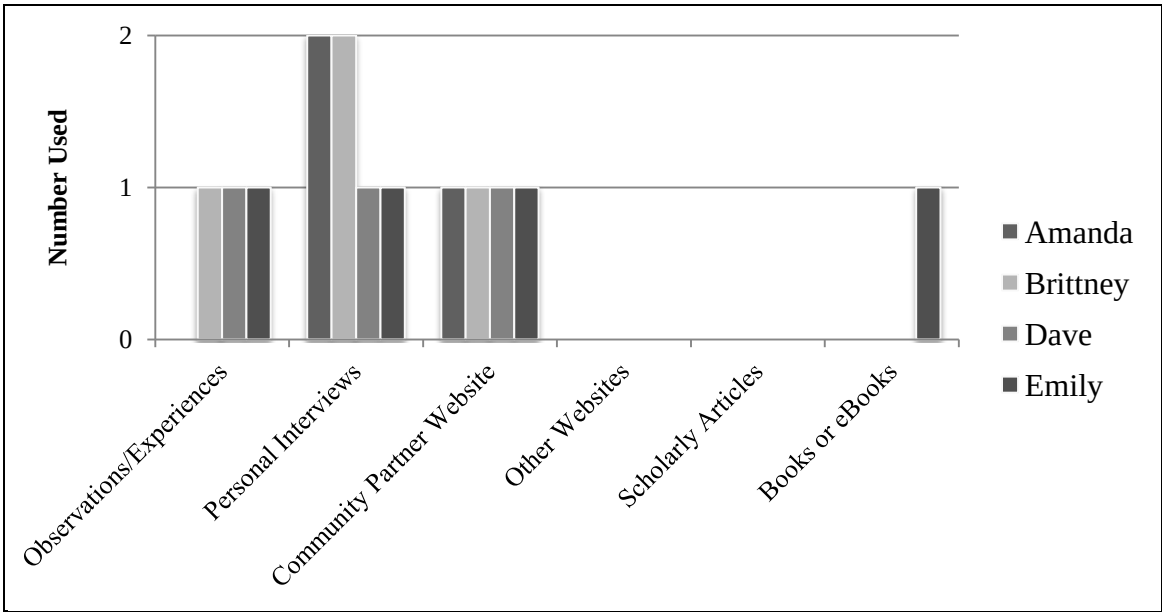

Figure 3: Sources Used in Unit One Projects

Three of the four students incorporated their observations from the community partner site or their experiences with service-learning in their community profile. Each of the students also incorporated their interview in the unit project; however, Amanda and Brittney took this one step further and conducted an additional interview for this assignment. While there was not a required number or type of sources used for this project, including information from the observations and interview with a member of their service-learning community was a natural move for these students since they had already gathered the data in their exploratory assignments earlier in the semester.

I was surprised that students sought additional information to help them discuss the community of their service-learning community partners, but it seemed logical for them to consult the community partner's website. When I asked why, Emily and Brittney explained that they followed up on their interview with a staff member with these additional sources. Emily "went off [her] interview and researched online" to get a better sense of what the Boise Urban Garden School was about. Brittney used this strategy as a way to check the accuracy of the information she gained from the interviews, saying "I took questions that I had asked and then the answers that she'd give, and then I'd search it online."

As the semester progressed, the participants would sometimes draw on their experiences and observations as evidence in their unit two and three projects, but more often, students used their experiences and interactions with others to inform their library-based research practices (see Figures 4 and 5 below).

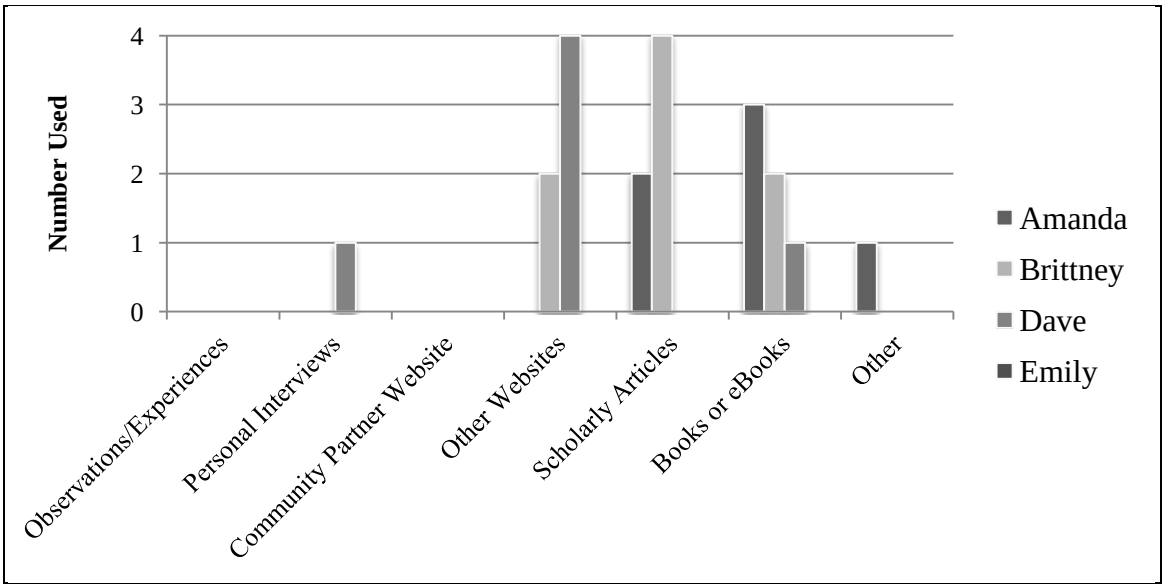

Figure 4: Sources Used in Unit Two Projects

Students developed an area of inquiry to research and write about extensively for units two and three. The exploratory essay in unit two asked students to consider multiple perspectives on their topic and incorporate at least six secondary sources, which likely explains why students used a variety of source types, including articles, books, and websites. And yet, primary source material from service-learning remained prevalent in Dave's unit two projects; he included an interview with Mike Wallace, the garden coordinator, for his perspective on community gardens. Dave writes that

> [M]embers who take care of [the community garden] share the harvest. Many of them can some of the vegetables that they receive, use them fresh shortly after picked, and/or give some of their share to family and friends. According to Mr. Wallace they tend to have more than they can all use during the peak harvest time. Instead of selling them or throwing out the extra vegetables they donate them to some of the local food collection centers which benefit the local food kitchens.

In this example, Mike Wallace's own experiences as a member of a community garden outside of the Boise Urban Garden School informs Dave's understandings of what

community gardens are and how they function. Dave works with this personal account to verify what he has read and experienced on his own about the topic.

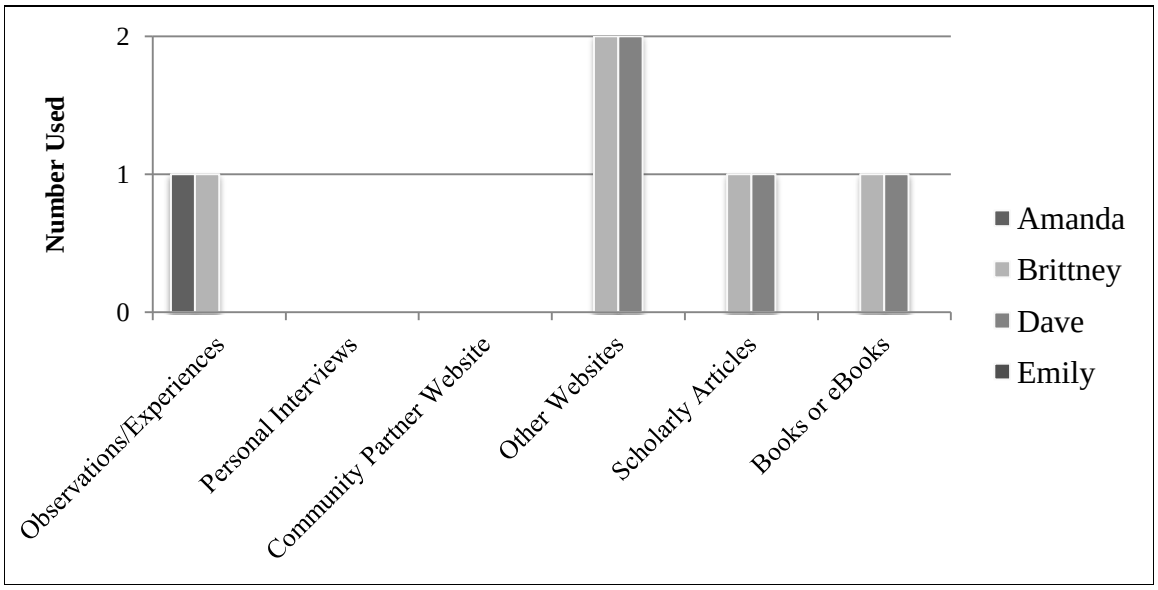

Figure 5: Sources Used in Unit Three Projects

In unit three, students took a stand on their research topic and wrote to a community audience. For this unit, I required that students integrate at least four primary and/or secondary sources to their project. In this writing project, their service-learning experiences resurfaced in a direct way. For example, Brittney drew on her experiences tutoring students in the High School Equivalency Program as an emotional appeal towards her intended audience, Idaho Senator Mike Crapo, urging him to take action in order to minimize the high school dropout rate. She writes:

> I have personally worked with many of these minority students who have dropped out of school through a program called the High School Equivalency Program at Boise State University where we help individuals obtain their GED. HEP showed me firsthand how important an education is. While on the outside, the program may not look like much, it is filled with many good-hearted people who have dedicated their lives to never giving up on a student. The teachers and

> administrators dedicate their time and energy to ensure that everyone has a chance at receiving an education if they so choose. HEP is what inspired me to do something about the student dropout rate.

Brittney's personal account adds a human element to all of the statistical information on high school drop-outs in her letter and creates an emotional appeal towards the reader.

Effects of Service-Learning on Course Goals and Outcomes

Since Zlotkowski's assertion that research on service-learning outcomes must also investigate learning outcomes ("Does Service-Learning" 130), a small number of studies have explored the ways in which service-learning contributes to students' developing academic goals. The most notable researchers in the area of learning outcomes in service-learning are Eyler and Giles. Their work identifies a handful of outcomes that service-learning is well suited to achieve, including critical thinking and perspective transformation ("Beyond Surveys" 148-55). These two outcomes speak directly to the course goals and outcomes for English 102 at Boise State University.

Critical Thinking

As reflected in the Writing Program Administrator's Outcomes for First-Year Writing and the course framework for English 102 at Boise State University, students enrolled in English 102 are expected to develop skills in critical reading, writing, and thinking. To meet this outcome, students must consider the ideas of others to "complicate and deepen their own understandings" through the acts of reading, writing, and thinking ("English 102"). While research on service-learning outcomes does not link critical thinking to service-learning in and of itself, Eyler and Giles attest that it is "a capacity that seems ideally suited to enhancement through service-learning" ("Beyond Surveys"

148). The essence of their argument is that service-learning exposes students to real-world, complex problems, which require critical thinking skills to solve. Among these skills, Eyler and Giles include

> the ability to recognize that problems are complicated and embedded in a social context, the ability to evaluate conflicting information and expert views, and the understanding that there is no simple or definitive solution. (*Where's* 16)

While this outcome can be met in a variety of ways, service-learning seems ideally suited because it puts students face-to-face with real issues and the people affected by those issues. Because of this exposure, students are likely to see problems as complex, beyond simple black and white scenarios that textual research alone may suggest. Dave remarks that in his experience, service-learning

> gives you more of a… you know, this is a lot more of the different aspects of this side of the opinion and then it kind of gives you something more to research on the other side too. You know, some of the specific points that some people talk about in the organization. So I got to see both sides of it especially because I tried to look at both, like the whole picture, when I'm trying to form my own opinion. I've been caught too many times with some weird opinion because I listened to somebody that I shouldn't of, so I try to get as much from both sides.

Dave's previous experiences have taught him to suspend judgment until he can learn about all sides of an issue. In his experience working with the Boise Urban Garden School, Dave talked often with staff members and volunteers about organic gardening, following up with secondary sources to help him formulate his own opinion.

Amanda's work this semester on art programs in public schools was complicated and deepened by service-learning and research, and she came to realize that the issue was not so straightforward after all. Her initial assertion that art programs should remain in public schools, despite budget cuts to public education, led her to examine art programs

in public school curriculum and those offered by the community, like ArtFaire, and question what issues existed with funding. Amanda's experience with ArtFaire highlighted the importance of funding of art programs since the organization cut some planned art classes because they did not have the resources to sponsor them, which even impacted her opportunities to serve. Amanda's first hand exposure to the complicated budget issues faced by ArtFaire helped her think critically about the many factors that play a role in funding. Despite her belief that something needs to be done to keep art programs in schools, Amanda discovered there was no easy solution to the problem.

Considering Multiple Perspectives

A course goal for English 102 at Boise State University is for students to "consider the many perspectives" of their research topics and "speak to and sometimes against those ideas" to establish their own ideas on the subject ("English 102"). A common assignment to meet this goal is for students to explore the multiple viewpoints on a subject in hopes that they will put aside their preconceived notions and consider the views of others before making judgments and coming to a conclusion. As Bringle, Phillips, and Hudson claim, service-learning can facilitate these broader learning outcomes, such as the ability to "view phenomenon from multiple perspectives" (7) because the work students do through service-learning is more personal. When researching, students might search for sources that only support their own point of view, but when they are in situations where they interact with others whose opinions and experiences may differ, the other perspectives are hard to ignore.

While serving as a tutor for the High School Equivalency Program, Brittney worked to understand perspectives about why students dropped out of high school and how the student dropout rate could be addressed that were different from her own initial assumptions. Because she was able to interact with students who had dropped out of high school, an experience Brittney did not share, she was in a situation to understand the student perspective of what affects the decision to drop out. Brittney was also able to talk with program administrators and teachers to discover what their perspectives on what should be done about the high school dropout rate. She relates:

> You see obviously the student [perspective] because they were the one dropping out. Then you see like the administrators who want to help them and fix it… I was talking to some of the administrators and they were saying how [the student dropout rate] is an issue and like what they think we could do to fix it.

Interacting with the program through service-learning helped Brittney see the issues related to student dropouts in a new way. Eyler and Giles claim that the ability to view multiple perspectives is commonplace in service-learning, as students are apt to encounter "people whose experiences are different from their own" and "situations or ideas that challenge their previous assumptions" (*Where's* 141).

Furthermore, students who interact with ideas or perspectives which are different from their own can potentially experience a change in their own perspectives, although research by Robert Shumer and Jane Maland Cady attest that this outcome is uncommon in most students (qtd. in Eyler and Giles, *Where's* 136). Of the four students who participated in this study, one reported that her own perspectives changed because of her service-learning experience. Brittney stated in the final interview that her views on the value of her own education changed: "[I'm] valuing my own education more for sure,

because seeing how they value it, I should really value that I'm getting a college degree." Not only was Brittney able to consider the perspectives of others through her service-learning experience, those perspectives had a powerful impact on her own beliefs as well.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, I consider how the results of my study have informed and improved my teaching practices and advance the discussion of service-learning and composition pedagogy. In the first section, I discuss the implications this study has on my teaching practices. In the second section, I examine the potential for further research in service-learning and composition.

Implications for Teaching Practices

When I first decided to teach English 102 with a service-learning component, it was primarily because of my own positive experiences as a service-learning student. The projects I completed for service-learning integrated courses had a greater purpose beyond simply submitting them for the instructor to assess. Not only was I demonstrating my understanding of course knowledge and skills, I was researching and writing in a way that would benefit the community. At the same time, I was expanding my understanding of course content out in the real world as I served at my community partner sites.

As I pieced together my initial course syllabus, I read a lot about service-learning pedagogy, which convinced me that service-learning could offer many things to students, especially those in first-year writing courses. Numerous researchers point to service-learning as a way to increase student motivation and engagement. Many more discuss the ways in which service-learning contributes to students' personal, civic, and academic

development. Better yet, those who addressed service-learning and composition specifically referred to them as “natural allies” because of the many ways in which service-learning has been successfully implemented in composition courses (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, and Watters 17).

During my first semester teaching English 102 with service-learning in spring 2011, I began to wonder what, if anything, service-learning was actually doing for my students. Was service-learning affecting their writing and research? Was it helping students meet the course goals? In other words, was service-learning an effective tool to teach my students the knowledge and skills I was required to teach them?

While the results of my study begin to shed some light on these questions, it is important to consider the highly contextualized nature of teacher research. I am only taking a “micro” approach (to borrow from Fecho et al.) to this study to understand the bigger picture of what effect service-learning might have in the composition classroom. The conclusions I draw here, however tentative, cannot truly be applied to more than the four students that participated in my study, yet, they do offer a place to renew the conversation on the potential benefit of service-learning to the goals and outcomes of composition.

How does service-learning affect student writing and research? The results of my study demonstrate that service-learning provides students with a narrower focus for their writing and prevents them from becoming overwhelmed by unlimited possibilities. Many students appreciate having a defined scope for their work because it does not make them feel like they are “all over the place” or choosing something “random.” The constraint

that service-learning provides was balanced by the student's ability to select a community partner of interest to them. While the partnership limited what students could do, it provided them with a range of choice on what they might focus on.

Furthermore, service-learning plays a significant role in topic development. Students generate ideas for their topics through their service-learning experiences and through information they gained from their community partners. By serving out in the field of their area of inquiry, students encounter complex questions that are primed for research: *Is eating locally feasible? What are the affordances and constraints of organic gardening? Who should be responsible to provide art education to youth and how do finances complicate this issue? Why do students drop out of high school and what can be done about it?* The students' initial research topic ideas developed in to rich, complicated questions because they were exposed to real-world issues, and they encountered a variety of perspectives. This may not have been the case in a traditional, non-service-learning integrated course.

Service-learning also affects student perceptions about research and the methods that they use. They viewed their experiences working hands-on with the community as an additional form of research, which affected how they used source material. Students incorporated their experiences directly into their writing as evidence, taking on authoritative roles often assigned to "experts." They also followed up on information they learned through their service-learning experiences by researching it further online or in the library, careful to differentiate between fact and opinion, and verify the accuracy of the information.

How does service-learning help students meet course goals? The results of my study extend earlier work on academic outcomes in service-learning specifically to goals and outcomes of first-year writing. Two general academic learning outcomes apply particularly to English 102: critical thinking and the ability to see multiple perspectives.

Service-learning situations are ideal for critical thinking because students are working with complex, real-world issues. Since students gain first-hand experience with these issues, they are likely to see that there are no simple conclusions and wrestle with the ideas to increase their understanding. Service-learning also encourages students to consider the ideas and perspectives of others because they are likely to come face-to-face with perspectives and situations that differ from their own experiences. This is a benefit to first-year writing courses because these situations are personal, and students are likely to experience the viewpoints of others differently in this way than if they were to just read a text.

The personal, first-hand experiences offered by service-learning are well suited to encourage critical thinking and the consideration of multiple perspectives because students encounter real-world concerns face-to-face. In traditional composition courses, students gather information most often through secondary sources alone. In many cases, the information they find is for a different audience, which can make the information difficult to access. There is also a sense of distance between writer and reader through most digital and print sources. Service-learning can contribute to student research as a rich source because it puts them in contact with local experts on their topic – the people affected by or working with their area of inquiry.

***

While I was initially skeptical on whether service-learning was beneficial to the course skills and strategies I am obligated to teach, my findings lead me to conclude that service-learning is a beneficial component to my course design. I believe a well-designed service-learning experience can provide interesting opportunities for students to learn and develop both personally and academically, since Dewey and Boyer assert that these two types of outcomes are inseparable, even though my focus here has largely been on academics.

My focused research with these four students this semester has presented two important lessons about teaching with service-learning. First, when everything seems to go wrong, the overall outcome can still be good. Here I am thinking of Amanda's experience with ArtFaire in particular. This service-learning project did not work well for any of the students who partnered with that organization, which reinforces the necessity for the need to build strong partnerships between community partner and faculty, even when facilitated through a service-learning program or department. Even though Amanda's service experience was challenging and did not work out as expected, she still learned something important about serving the community:

> [N]o matter what you do, even if it is data entry, it still helps. Just any little piece still helps. It might not be what you choose and what you want to be doing, but it's about what the service-learning partner needs you to do and every little bit is helpful.

The second lesson I have learned is that even when everything goes right with service-learning, things do not always work out. This is the case with Emily's experience in the course. She was optimistic about service-learning and completed the required

fifteen hours of service by the end of the semester. While her service-learning experience was successful, Emily struggled with the topic she selected to research: eating locally. In the second interview, she expressed her frustration with the topic, calling it “terrible” and “lopsided.” Even though we met to discuss ways she might approach her topic in later drafts, Emily did not complete her unit three project or submit a final portfolio. I can only speculate that she struggled to work through the topic and gave up.

Potential for Further Research

There are various studies in the literature of service-learning that investigate the personal, civic, and academic learning outcomes of service-learning in general; however, these studies are limited when it comes to composition and first-year writing. While my study works to address that gap, my findings are limited at best because of the small sample size. In order to support the findings of this study, a larger sample size is needed.

Future studies might take a comparative approach similar to the one found in Wurr’s research on service-learning on writing quality, and work to identify if a difference exists in the learning outcomes achieved by students enrolled in a service-learning course compared to students enrolled in a traditional course.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Script

Kimberly is conducting research on the effects of service-learning on student writing and research for her Master's thesis. She is interested in studying student reactions to a course with a service-learning component (like this one) and how service-learning might affect student writing and research processes. She is looking for a few student volunteers to interview at three points during this semester.

I will be distributing the informed consent form to those who are potentially interested which has more information about what the interviews will entail. Participation in these interviews is voluntary. There is no reward for participating (like extra credit) and no penalty for discontinuing the interviews at any time or choosing not to participate. The three interviews will take about 15 minutes each. The handout has more information about the interviews, and Kimberly would be happy to answer any questions you may have before or after class, during her office hours, or via email.

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Pierce
Co-Principle Investigator: Professor Karen Uehling
Study Title: The Effects of Service-Learning on Student Writing and Research

This consent form will give you the information you will need to understand why this study is being done and why you are being invited to participate. It will also describe what you will need to do to participate and any known inconveniences and benefits that could arise from participating. If any of the following information is unclear, we encourage you to ask questions at any time. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form and it will be a record of your agreement to participate. You will be given a copy of this form.

Purpose and Background: You are invited to participate in a research study to learn more about the effects of service-learning on student writing and research. The information gathered will be used to better understand the impact of a service-learning project on a college composition and research course, and also to inform the larger community of scholars in the area of composition and service-learning research. You are being asked to participate because you are a student currently enrolled in a service-learning integrated English 102: College Composition and Research course, and a volunteer over the age of 18.

Procedures: If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in three brief interviews at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester, and to provide consent for the researcher to use writing samples from the course work (i.e. journal entries, essay drafts, final portfolio) for further analysis. Each interview will last approximately fifteen minutes and during the interviews, you will be asked about your reactions to service-learning, your research and writing processes, your written work for the course, and the relationship you see between service-learning and the course work. The interview will be recorded and the researcher may take notes as well. Following the interview, you may be contacted via email for brief clarification of any statements you made. Select pieces of written work will be analyzed by the researcher to determine if service-learning had any effect on the writing itself. If you wish, you will also be emailed a copy of the final thesis.

Risks and Benefits: There are no likely physical, emotional, or social risks involved in participation in this study. The purpose of the interviews will be to discuss your reactions to service-learning and your perceptions on the relationship between service-learning and course work, and the purpose of collecting writing samples is to analyze whether service-learning had impact on the writing itself. In the unlikely event that some of the interview questions are making you uncomfortable or upset, or you no longer wish to share your writing samples, you are always free to decline to answer or to stop your participation.

There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, other than the satisfaction of knowing you are contributing to meaningful research. However, the information that you provide may help service-learning and composition instructors to

better grasp student reactions to a service-learning integrated course and the effects service-learning has on student writing and research, and as a result, better tailor future composition classes to your needs.

Confidentiality: For this research project, you will have the option of being referred to through a pseudonym (a different name, or alias) in all resulting materials and we will make every effort to protect participants' confidentiality, if desired.

Participation in research may involve a loss of confidentiality; however, your records will be handled as confidentially as possible. Only researchers will have access to information that has not been changed to use pseudonyms. In addition, the following procedures will be used to protect the confidentiality of your data:

- We will keep all study records (including codes to your data) locked in a secure location.
- Research records will be labeled with a code (pseudonym). A master key that links names and codes will be maintained in a separate and secure location.
- The master key and recordings will be destroyed in 5 years or after the data in them becomes irrelevant, whichever comes first.
- All electronic files (e.g. transcriptions, .mp3 files, writing samples, etc.) containing identifiable information will be password protected. Any computer hosting such files will also have password protection to prevent access by unauthorized users.
- Data that will be shared with others will be coded as described above to help protect your identity.

At the conclusion of this study, we may publish our findings in a relevant academic journal. If you wish, you will not be identified in any publication or presentation, other than by the pseudonym of your choice.

Payment: You will not be paid for your participation in this study.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you should first contact the principal investigator at kimberlypierce@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7100. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study at kuehling@boisestate.edu, (208) 426-7088, or the Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725-1138.

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw from it at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Documentation of Consent: Please initial if you agree to the following:

_____ I give consent for my direct quotes to be used in the results of this study.

Pseudonym: Please select and initial *one* of the following options:

_____ I would like to be referred to by my actual first name in all materials related to this study.

_____I would like to be referred to by the following pseudonym in all materials related to this study: _____ (Please print pseudonym on the provided line.)

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement and possible risks have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand I can withdraw at any time.

_____ _____

Signature of Study Participant Date

_____ _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

Since these interviews will be held in a conference-style format, questions may vary based on student work and response to questions. This list is designed to give a representative example of what kinds of questions I might ask during the interviews. Potential questions I may ask for this study are as follows:

- What did you do to gather information for this essay?
- How did you start drafting your essay?
- What kinds of challenges did you encounter for this assignment?
- How did you work through those challenges?
- Have you written a research paper before this class? What did you do?
- What steps did you take to complete this assignment?
- How is your service-learning project going?
- Do you see any connections between your service-learning project and your work for this course? Explain.
- If you were doing this assignment without completing a service-learning project, what do you think it would look like?
- How do you feel about working with a community partner for the class?
- How do you feel about researching and writing about a topic related to your community partner?
- How useful was service-learning in helping you meet course goals?
- What have you learned from service-learning?
- Did service-learning help you think critically about your research topic?
- Did service-learning help motivate you to do work for this course?
- Do you think your writing process (the steps you take from start to finish of an assignment) has changed this semester? How and why?
- Do you think your research process (the steps you take to find information) has changed this semester? How and why?
- Do you think service-learning has helped you develop knowledge and skills you can use in future situations?

APPENDIX D

Pre-Service Survey

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Pierce
Co-Principle Investigator: Professor Karen Uehling
Study Title: The Effects of Service-Learning on Student Writing and Research

Project Description: This survey is designed to gather information about student reactions to service-learning and their conceptions of the writing and research process. Keep in mind that participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may discontinue the survey at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty whatsoever. All results are anonymous and for research purposes only. This survey should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: Responses from all participants will be anonymous. There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, other than the satisfaction of knowing you are contributing to meaningful research. However, the information that you provide may help service-learning and composition instructors to better grasp student reactions to a service-learning integrated course and the effects service-learning has on student writing and research, and as a result, better tailor future composition classes to your needs.

Confidentiality: The data in this study will be confidential. Any work quoted in research studies will be quoted anonymously. You may also choose to leave questions blank if you believe your answers may reveal your identity. The completed surveys will be stored in a locked file and all copies will be destroyed in 5 years or after the data in them becomes irrelevant, whichever comes first.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you should first contact the principal investigator at kimberlypierce@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7100. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study at kuehling@boisestate.edu, (208) 426-7088, or the Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725-1138.

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to complete this survey if you do not want to. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You may stop this survey at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Question 1 - Do you wish to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No (if no is selected, then skip to end of survey)

----------[Screen Break] ----------

Question 2 - Have you previously participated in a college-level course with an integrated service-learning component?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Question 3 - Have you previously participated in volunteer work or community service projects?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

Question 4 - Were you aware that this English 102 course had an integrated service-learning component when you registered?

- Yes (if yes is selected, then display question 5)
- No (if no is selected, then display question 6)

----------[Screen Break] ----------

Question 5 - Did the integrated service-learning component affect your decision to register for this section?

- Yes
- No
- Some

Question 6 – Did the integrated service-learning component affect your decision to remain in this section?

- Yes
- No
- Some

Question 7 – How do you feel about working with a community partner for this course?

- Like Extremely
- Like Very Much
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Extremely

Question 8 – How do you feel about researching and writing about topics related to your community partner for this course?

- Like Extremely
- Like Very Much
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Extremely

Question 9 – What concerns, if any, do you have about the integrated service-learning component of this course? (Check all that apply)

- Working with a community partner
- Time spent outside of class to complete service-learning hours
- Researching and/or writing about topics related to my community partner
- Relationship of service-learning component to course goals
- Other – please specify: _____

----------[Screen Break] ----------

Respond to the statements below indicating your level of agreement.

Question 10 – It's hard for me to write about things I have no personal experience with.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 11 – When I write a research paper, I pick a topic that I know something about already.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 12 – When I write a research paper, I feel like the topic is too big for me to handle.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 13 – When I write a research paper, I feel like I've said all I can on the topic after the first few pages.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 14 – When I write a research paper, I have a question that I'm working to answer.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 15 – When preparing to write a research paper, what do you do? (Check all that apply)

- Search the internet (Google, etc.)
- Go to the library to check out books on the topic
- Search newspapers and magazines for articles on the topic
- Search an academic or scholarly database (Academic Search Premier, ProQuest, etc.)
- Talk to people who might know about the topic
- Set up a formal interview with an expert
- Set up time for personal observations
- Other – please specify: _____

----------[Screen Break] ----------

End of Survey - Thank you. All results are anonymous and for research purposes only.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact the principal investigator at kimberlypierce@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7100. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study at kuehling@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7088, OR the Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725-1138.

APPENDIX E

Post-Service Survey

Principal Investigator: Kimberly Pierce
Co-Principle Investigator: Professor Karen Uehling
Study Title: The Effects of Service-Learning on Student Writing and Research

Project Description: This survey is designed to gather information about student reactions to service-learning and their conceptions of the writing and research process. Keep in mind that participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may discontinue the survey at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty whatsoever. All results are anonymous and for research purposes only. This survey should take 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

Risks and Benefits: Responses from all participants will be anonymous. There will be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, other than the satisfaction of knowing you are contributing to meaningful research. However, the information that you provide may help service-learning and composition instructors to better grasp student reactions to a service-learning integrated course and the effects service-learning has on student writing and research, and as a result, better tailor future composition classes to your needs.

Confidentiality: The data in this study will be confidential. Any work quoted in research studies will be quoted anonymously. You may also choose to leave questions blank if you believe your answers may reveal your identity. The completed surveys will be stored in a locked file and all copies will be destroyed in 5 years or after the data in them becomes irrelevant, whichever comes first.

Questions: If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, you should first contact the principal investigator at kimberlypierce@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7100. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study at kuehling@boisestate.edu, (208) 426-7088, or the Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Dr., Boise, ID 83725-1138.

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to complete this survey if you do not want to. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer. You may stop this survey at any time without consequences of any kind or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Question 1 - Do you wish to participate in this survey?

- Yes
- No (if no is selected, then skip to end of survey)

----------[Screen Break] ----------

Question 2 – How do you feel now, at the end of the course, about working with a community partner for this course?

- Like Extremely
- Like Very Much
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Extremely

Question 3 – How do you feel now, at the end of the course, about researching and writing about topics related to your community partner for this course?

- Like Extremely
- Like Very Much
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Extremely

Question 4 – How useful was working with a community partner to your writing and research?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

Question 5 – How useful was selecting a topic related to your community partner to research and write about?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

Question 6 – How useful was the integrated service-learning component in helping you meet course goals?

- Very Useful
- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

Question 7 – How useful was your service-learning experience in helping you write and research about your research question?

- Very Useful

- Useful
- Neutral
- Useless
- Very Useless

----------[Screen Break] ----------

Respond to the statements below indicating your level of agreement.

Question 8 – I would have rather picked my own research question than researching something related to my community partner.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 9 – It was easier for me to write about a topic I had some personal experience with.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 10 – For my research paper, I picked a topic that I knew something about already.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 11 –For my research paper, I felt like the topic was too big for me to handle.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 12 – For my research paper, I felt like I said all that I could on the topic after the first few pages.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 13 – For my research paper, I had a question that I worked to answer.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Question 14 – When preparing to write your research paper, what did you do? (Check all that apply)

- Search the internet (Google, etc.)
- Go to the library to check out books on the topic
- Search newspapers and magazines for articles on the topic
- Search an academic or scholarly database (Academic Search Premier, ProQuest, etc.)
- Talk to people who might know about the topic
- Set up a formal interview with an expert
- Set up time for personal observations
- Other – please specify: _____

----------[Screen Break] ----------

End of Survey - Thank you. All results are anonymous and for research purposes only.

If you have any questions or concerns about your participation in this study, contact the principal investigator at kimberlypierce@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7100. If for some reason you do not wish to do this, you may contact the faculty advisor for this study at kuehling@boisestate.edu or (208) 426-7088, OR the Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. You may reach the board office between 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday, by calling (208) 426-5401 or by writing: Institutional Review Board, Office of Research Compliance, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725-1138.

APPENDIX F

Nine Criteria of Service-Learning

1. What course learning objective do you want the SL experience to help achieve?

   Students will make connections between academic learning and community through the service-learning experience and use their experience as a springboard for deeper academic inquiry in their writing.

2. What service will students provide to individuals, organizations, schools, or other entities in the community?

   Students will provide 15 hours of hands-on work with the agency of their choice and create a persuasive piece of writing, such as a letter to the editor or an article to be published in a newspaper or newsletter about the community issue they have been researching.

3. How does the service relate to the subject matter of the course?

   English 102 is a course on introductory college writing and research. Students will conduct research related to the service-learning agency they are working with and write about their experience through reflective writing and create the persuasive project as a final project for the service-learning component of the course.

4. What reflection methods will you use to help students make a deliberate connection between academic content and the service experience (assignments, journals, discussions, and other mechanisms set explicitly in syllabus)?

   Throughout the service-learning experience, students will respond to reflection prompts about their experience with/at the agency. Students will write a reflective cover letter at the end of the unit in which service-learning is the primary focus about their overall experience and how it contributed to their understanding of composition and inquiry. At the end of the semester, students will write an extended reflection about the course as a whole, which will include their service-learning experience and the in-course projects that relate to it.

5. How will you assess the learning derived from the service? Explain how grades will be given for the learning and its relation to the course, not for the service alone).

   English 102 is a portfolio-based course, therefore a good majority of the points that students earn stems from their revised work which is included in their portfolio. Each unit, which is essentially a draft of work to be included in the portfolio, is graded in terms of completion. For the unit in which service-learning is the primary component, students will be given full, partial, or no credit for the work which will occur within the entire unit. To earn full credit, students will be required to submit the

Student/Agency agreement, complete their 15 hours and submit their Time Log Sheet, and complete all of the writing components for the unit, including their reflection journal, cover letter, and unit project.

6. How will the service recipients (clients or agency) be involved in the planning and evaluation of the service?

   I will ask the service-learning agencies to complete the student evaluation for each student. Otherwise, agencies might provide the students with resources and guidance in framing their research projects on an area of inquiry stemming from the student's service-learning experience.

7. What resources will you use (articles, links, etc.) to help the students explore the relationship between the course discipline and the community issue?

   I will provide my students with readings and activities from service-learning texts, such as Thomas Deans' *Writing and Community Engagement.* These texts are geared to fully explore the relationship between academic writing and the community that they are serving.

8. How does the Service-Learning experience foster civic responsibility, which may coincide with career preparation?

   The service-learning experience will help students understand how academic inquiry can extend beyond the classroom and be used in real-world situations, which in turn, fosters responsible and informed citizens.

9. What course options will you allow to ensure that no student is required to participate in a service placement that creates a religious, political and/or moral conflict?

   Each student will choose their own service-learning agency and project from the variety of agency partners paired with the course. With this variety of options, each student will be able to select a service project that best fits their needs.

APPENDIX G

Course Syllabus

English 102: Introduction to College Writing and Research

Course Overview

This is an inquiry-based, service-learning integrated course that continues work with critical reading and writing processes and provides experiences with methods and genres of researched writing. You will initiate research projects, gather information from a range of sources, and demonstrate that you can write about that information purposefully using both traditional and digital formats, and appropriate documentation. In this course, you are expected to develop your own ideas and theories on a subject (subjects will vary depending on your community partner) and report what you learned to others.

In this course, you will work with non-profit agencies in the area as you explore the connections between research, composition, and community. Service-learning integrates course content with relevant community service, enabling you to extend and complicate your understandings of the assignments and make connections between your academic work and everyday life. Your service-learning experience will fuel your work in this course, as you will write journals and compose academic-style essays on community issues and/or pressing social concerns.

The BSU First-Year Writing Program's guidelines state that by the end of English 102, students will be able to:

- Understand academic work as a recursive process of inquiry, using writing and research to form new questions and pursue existing enduring questions;
- Craft questions that guide research, making their process manageable and likely to yield insights;
- Find, read, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize appropriate sources;
- Integrate evidence in their own writing in a way that complicates (develops, refines, extends, refutes, and deepens) their own ideas;
- Produce research-based writing in formats appropriate to the context, purpose, genre, and audience;
- Implement a variety of research strategies and resources as appropriate to their inquiry;
- Use a variety of media (print and digital) to address different audiences, as appropriate;
- Understand genre expectations for some research-based writing contexts within the university;
- Use an academic documentation style consistently and appropriately;
- Articulate the rhetorical choices they have made as a writer and researcher, illustrating their awareness of a writer's relationship to the subject, context, purpose, and audience;
- Produce prose without surface-level convention errors that distract readers from attending to the meaning and purpose of the writing.

Course Texts

Bullock, Richard and Francine Weinberg. *The Little Seagull Handbook*. New York: Norton, 2011. Print. (ISBN: 978-0-393-91151-0)

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2009. Print. (ISBN: 978-0-393-93361-1)

Other Materials

- A spiral notebook and two pocket folder exclusively for this class
- $5 budgeted on your Bronco Print card for copies of class readings, essays for workshop, etc.

Technology Access

As a college course, this English class assumes that you will have reasonable access to a computer beyond our classroom. We will make good use of Blackboard (Bb) this semester to archive course materials, participate in online discussions, and submit work electronically. If you do not have a computer for your own personal use, I suggest becoming familiar with the various computer labs available to you on campus. A list of these labs is available at http://oit.boisestate.edu/labs/.

Class Work and Projects

Informal Writing

You will do a lot of informal, ungraded, sometimes-unread-by-me type of writing in this class which will help you develop ideas and beliefs you may not have known you had. This type of writing is reflective and introspective in nature, and will often connect to a writing project we are working on for a unit.

Reading Responses

For readings throughout the semester, you will post a response that shows me you have carefully read the assigned piece, thought about it, challenged it, and worked to create meaning to how this fits in to your own experience in this course. The purpose for this is to get you thinking about the course reading in light of your own experiences in this course and beyond, and to prepare you for in-class discussion.

Unit Projects

You will complete three unit writing projects this semester. For each unit's project, you will have a variety of explorations, reading responses, research notes and written feedback or notes from workshops. These unit projects will be submitted along with a reflective cover letter. While each unit project should go through significant revision and editing before submission, these are essentially drafts-in-progress of work you might choose to include in your final portfolio. A detailed description of each unit project and is available on Blackboard, and will be distributed at the start of each unit.

Final Portfolio and Reflection
This is a portfolio-based course, which means that you will be working all semester on pieces that can potentially be revised. You will have ample opportunities for feedback and revision on the work you will include in your portfolio. You will also compose a reflective project that explores your experience in English 102 and the connections you developed between research, composition, and community over the course of the semester. More details about this assignment are available on Blackboard.

Note: Because all of the course work is interrelated, you can expect challenges in one area to affect your work in other areas. For example, if you fail to complete required service-learning hours, you will find it impossible or difficult to fully address the unit requirements. You should expect a failure to complete work in some areas to affect your grade in other areas.

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance and Participation Policy
It is crucial that you attend class each day having read the material for that day and ready to participate in all aspects of the class: writing, reading, research, discussion, conferences, workshops and revision.

Because our classroom is our writing community, it is pertinent that we are all present every day so our community can function. If you are not in class, you will be missing out on a lot, and your classmates will be missing out on your contributions. Therefore, it is only fair that this is reflected in your grade. Official university approved absences will be excused, although they should be documented ahead of time, and any work assigned still needs to be completed and turned in on time.

Life does happen, so in this class you have three (3) unofficial absences without your grade being penalized, although you are required to make up any work you miss ahead of time. On each absence after your third, you final grade will be lowered an additional 5%. Should you miss more than six classes, you will not receive a passing grade for the course.

Response Workshop and Conference Participation
You will learn a lot through participating in response workshops and conferences; in them you will both give and receive extensive feedback on your unit writing project drafts. If you are not here, your work and the work of your class colleagues is affected**.** Except by prearrangement, if you miss a response workshop or conference for any reason, or if you come without a draft, your grade for that unit project will be lowered to partial credit.

Grading Policy
I will try to be as clear as possible about grades and my expectations for each assignment, however, it is your responsibility to ask questions when you do not understand how a

grading scale works and to ask for clarification when you are confused or unsure of how you will be graded. For much of the work we do throughout the semester, you will not receive letter grades. Instead, you will earn full, partial, or no credit for the entire unit.

- Full Credit is earned for unit projects that fully meet the unit requirements, thoughtfully and carefully address the unit assignment, and are complete and on time.
- Partial Credit is earned for unit projects that reflect a lack of participation, lack feedback from workshops/conferences, and/or are incomplete or do not meet the requirements.
- No Credit is earned for unit projects that are substantially incomplete, and/or are submitted after the due date.

You must submit all major projects within a week of their due date to receive credit for the course. If these are not turned in throughout the semester, regardless of whether you turn in a final portfolio, you will not pass the class.

Ultimately, this way of grading will provide you with opportunity to take risks with your writing without being penalized and give you time to grow as a writer and substantially revise your work before a letter grade is assigned. Your unit projects are essentially drafts of items you might include in your portfolio, which is why they are assessed for thoughtfulness rather than graded for how they stand at that particular moment. If you make a thoughtful, thorough effort at all of the work for the unit, it will not be hard to earn full credit.

Near the end of the semester, you will have the opportunity to revisit and revise selected pieces for your final portfolio. At this point, your work, as a collection of pieces that demonstrate some range of your work in this course, will be graded with a letter grade. The portfolio is worth a big portion of your grade because you will be able to spend a lot of time revising, editing, and rethinking the pieces that will be included.

Unit One	(10, 5, 0)	Reading Responses	1 point each
Unit Two	(15, 7, 0)	Service-Learning	(10, 5, 0)
Unit Three	(15, 7, 0)	**Final Portfolio**	**100-0, A-F**

Late Work
If an emergency arises and you are having a problem meeting a deadline for course work, please talk to me before the work is due. Pre-arrangements need to be made for work that is not turned in on time; otherwise it will not be accepted for credit.

Academic Honesty
I expect that you might struggle as you work with source material in this course, and we will work on that together, after all, that is an important part of learning how to do academic writing. If I notice source misuse, I will note that and we will conference so that you can revise your essay. However, intentional plagiarism, turning in someone

else's work as your own or using large portions of work from others without citing it, is not appropriate and will result in failure of the assignment or the course. For further details, see Boise State University's Student Code of Conduct.

Writing and Learning Support

Service-Learning
The BSU Service-Learning staff is dedicated to assisting students. They are the ones to contact if you have questions or concerns regarding service-learning. If you have any questions about your service-learning project, contact them at 426-1004, at servicelearning@boisestate.edu, or drop by their office in Simplot/Micron 102. Their website also offers many resources to support students with their Service-Learning projects. Visit: http://servicelearning.boisestate.edu/students/support.asp.

The Writing Center
Boise State University has an excellent Writing Center, and it is free for all students. The Writing Center is a fabulous resource for you in your first-year writing courses and far beyond. When you visit the Writing Center, a Consultant will work with you at any stage: generating ideas, developing your ideas, revising a draft, and so on. The Writing Center's phone number is 426-1298; it's located at LA 200. You can even make an appointment online at: http://www.boisestate.edu/wcenter/.

Access Services/Documented Disabilities
If you have a documented disability that might affect your work in this course, please let me know and we will discuss how to best meet your needs in the context of this course. If you have any questions, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 426-1583 or online at: http://drc.boisestate.edu/.