Chapter

1

What Is Service-Learning?

In 1999, six students at the University of Central Florida created documents for their local zoo as a class project for a Writing for Business Professionals course. The group of sophomores, juniors, and seniors from a range of majors and backgrounds shared interests in animal conservation and environmental education. Together, they helped an organization with similar values enhance educational programs and raise community support for conservation efforts. This involved producing educational materials, an informational web site, and promotional brochures, flyers, and signs. Creating these various texts required the students to apply practical and theoretical concepts covered in their course. They analyzed "real" audiences such as zoo employees and patrons who had vested interests in the success of the project. They adapted writing and design principles to the documents' specific purposes, audiences, and uses. They collaborated with each other and zoo personnel in managing a major project from the initial brainstorming phase through the successful implementation of a new marketing campaign.

These students were participating in service-learning, the kind of approach we'll be discussing throughout this book. They connected with a local organization, produced writing that helped meet this organization's needs, and contributed to the larger community. They acted as writing consultants on a "real-world" project that enabled them to study the functions and effects of their writing outside the classroom.

When these students first learned that they were taking a course that involved "service-learning," some had a reaction to which you may be able to relate. This term sounds a lot like community service, an experience you may associate with punishment for a speeding ticket or something you do on your own time in connection with a church or other civic group. How could such an activity be justified as part of a writing class? Since the early 1990s, service-learning has been a growing field for research and teaching across academic disciplines. Today, this kind of approach is being used on college campuses across the country to enhance students' educational experiences and improve local communities.

At its core, service-learning is a hands-on approach that uses community service as a vehicle for teaching specific course-based skills and strategies. Service-

> **STUDENT VOICES 1.A**   First Impressions
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> *Amy:* I had never heard about service-learning before, and now I have read about it in two courses in the same semester. I can understand why service-learning is considered to be a means to help students focus on their writing skills, and it seems to me that, when used properly, service learning can help to give purpose to writing assignments.
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> *Liz:* This whole "service-learning" thing is all new to me. I've never taken a writing class that approaches professional writing from this standpoint, and I'm curious to see where it takes me throughout the semester. Learning about previous students' work has reassured me that there is a whole world out there for writers to be involved in and so many areas in which we are needed. This approach to the class seems like a great way of keeping one foot in the real world instead of being sucked into the university bubble and away from the outside world.

learning combines community service and academic learning and combines real-world action with critical reflection (Rubin 307). To support funding for this kind of learning experience, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993. Thomas Huckin summarizes the definition of service-learning set forth by the act in the following way: "Service-Learning is a method by which students learn through active participation in thoughtfully organized service; is conducted in, and meets the needs of the community; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum; includes structured time for reflection and helps foster civic responsibility" (50).

Three Models of Service-Learning in Writing Courses

Service-learning programs were first developed for higher education in the 1960s and early 1970s, largely because of student activists' efforts. The approach emerged from the field of experiential education, which included internships and cooperatives used to give students hands-on, real-world experience in negotiating concepts that can't be taught effectively only in the classroom. Most of us have tried to learn something from a book and found little success until we could actually deploy our training in a real situation. Some experiential learning students work as paid interns, and others gain relevant experience and contacts in their fields by volunteering for local businesses or nonprofit agencies. A future civil engineer may offer to help build a new community park to learn about how major projects are completed. A student planning to be a social worker may spend time at a local domestic violence shelter to help others and to learn about what her or his future career may involve.

Although it certainly makes sense for students to take on projects directly related to their majors in internships, coops, and capstone courses, many students from a wide range of majors engage in service-learning in writing courses, too.

Writing teachers tend to use three basic models for this kind of work. The first and perhaps most common approach is to have students do nonwriting work for nonprofit agencies and write *about* this work, often in journals and on listserves. Much of the writing, then, is reflective and expressive, meaning that students mostly describe their thoughts and feelings about their experiences. In a course like this, students might also produce letters to the editor or other persuasive documents that address issues they've learned about through their service.

The second approach writing teachers have developed might be thought of as a more academic extension of the first. Students study literacy and schooling, environmental conservation, or some other theme, analyzing various related readings.

OTHER VOICES 1.A   Michael Moore

Michael Moore is pursuing a PhD in technical communication at Michigan Technological University. He has taught technical and professional writing courses with a service-learning emphasis for several years at MTU and at the University of Arizona.

I've never been a big fan of textbooks—neither as a student nor as a teacher, finding that they benefited me most when I was able to sell them back at the end of the term. But a textbook designed to promote and guide us through a service-learning curriculum?

This is encouraging.

My commitment to a service-learning curriculum is based on my understanding of *praxis,* a term and concept that encourages us to constantly reflect on our actions and on the effects that our actions have on others.

For example: education and community. We learn at school how to write, design, revise, analyze, persuade, revise again, and give presentations. If we invite members of the community in which we live, work, and learn to join us in that process, we can quickly and productively broaden our understanding of the effects our work can have.

Students in my composition, design, and technical communication courses that incorporate service-learning have collaborated with community members and agencies to research and write successful grants for a women's shelter, a senior-citizen agency, and a volunteer fire department; others have facilitated intergenerational writing groups between fourth graders and residents of a retirement home; others have worked in partnership with a social service agency to design and build interactive and informational websites that are accessible to a range of potential users.

"So what?" a rigorous and reflective student or teacher might ask. "Who benefits?" "What are the long-term implications of these activities?" "What kind of learning is this?"

Well, that series of questions is part our curriculum now. If we can answer some of those questions together, we'll have gone a long way toward understanding the productive effects of our communication, our responsibility and relationship with our communities, and some ideas about the ends of our education. I hope that you enjoy your exploration of these questions as you pursue your own service-learning projects.

The service that students perform (e.g., tutoring, instituting a recycling program) is also related to the theme but is not centered on writing. The writing that students produce in such a course is usually more academic and asks them to relate, in a term paper or similar assignment, the concepts in the readings to their service experiences to gain a fuller understanding of the theme. In both the first and second models, then, the writing the students do is mostly for themselves and their teachers.

The third model, and the one we advocate in this book, is sometimes called the Stanford model, as it was developed for some of Stanford University's first-year writing classes in the early 1980s. In fact, we first became interested in service-learning after hearing speakers from Stanford discuss the benefits of their approach. In the program we heard about, students mainly wrote *as* their community service rather than *about* it. The work they did for sponsoring organizations was writing. Instead of setting up campus recycling centers for a solid waste agency, for example, students might design informative pamphlets and flyers for the agency to distribute to campus groups and students. This type of writing is primarily public rather than expressive or academic. Such an approach also requires students to do some reflective writing, but this is not the primary focus of the course.

We contend that this third model is the most appropriate for a writing course, as it most clearly connects students' service to the concepts of the course. For a technical or professional writing course, these goals might include adjusting one's style for a range of technical and professional audiences, following the conventions of different genres, applying principles of visual design, and effectively collaborating with other writers. To apply these concepts, students need to be

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STUDENT VOICES 1.B   The Stanford Model

Kelly: The type of service-learning I find most appropriate is the Stanford model, which our class will be taking part in. In this model the emphasis is on the actual writing and creation of documents rather than completion of a work task. Basically, we are not only attempting to help the community, but also to expand our knowledge of technical and professional writing. One of the major upsides of service-learning is that all our hard work will not sit idle at the end of the semester or, worse yet, end up discarded. Hopefully someone will be able to enjoy the fruits of our labor.

Bryan: My view of service-learning is that it's yet another method by which to apply textbook logic to a "real world" situation. Service-learning is an interesting take on the standard "know your audience" approach. The fact that the class will aim its schoolwork to meet—or at least address—the needs of an organization almost guarantees that the classwork is applicable to a real-life situation. The benefits are greater when we practice the Stanford model—to write as the chosen community service rather than about it. Besides, I'm for any endeavor that allows me to network on school time. And I like the idea that this will help us to reflect critically on our work. As someone who has worked under daily deadlines for more than 10 years, I can attest to the lack of available free time needed to consider how my work has influenced me—much less the community.

engaged in technical or professional writing. We will now return to the example of the zoo group's work to explain the main features of a good service-learning project in technical or professional communication.

Attributes of a Service-Learning Project

First, *service-learning relates directly to course goals.* This is the main reason we advocate the Stanford model of writing technical or professional documents *as* service. Service-learning isn't an extra assignment tacked on to course requirements; it is a set of meaningful learning experiences that let students see academic concepts in action. The students who worked on the zoo project applied the strategies and concepts they studied in their class to each task they performed as part of their project. They analyzed their audiences and rhetorical situations (see Chapter Three), learned about genres of professional writing, applied writing and design principles, and revised their texts. In addition to implementing rhetoric and writing strategies, they learned how to identify and develop community connections and to work as a team to meet a series of deadlines.

Second, *service-learning addresses a need in the community.* Instead of being based on artificial scenarios or cases, service-learning assignments arise organically out of actual situations that call for some type of communication. As a nonprofit agency, the zoo didn't have a great deal of personpower available to produce new educational or marketing materials. The park's resources were primarily used to perform the conservation and education efforts that its public funding supported. Thus, the students' writing helped meet the organization's needs. More importantly, though, the students' work addressed larger community-level problems—lack of education about animals and their conservation as well as lack of awareness about a rich local resource and its programs.

We should explain here that we use the phrase *address a need in the community* rather than *meet a need in the community* to move away from the notion of the service-learner as a crusader who can simply march in and immediately handle an organizational or community problem. Arising out of specific historical circumstances, such problems are often quite complex and are not easily solved. This is why service-learning requires students to study the problem in its larger historical context, collaborate with both organization personnel and community members, and work within the organization's guidelines and constraints.

It's also important for students to respect the communities whose needs they are working to meet. When students are working with people in difficult situations such as homelessness, it can be tempting to succumb to what we call "the seduction of empathy." In other words, students might tell themselves that they know what it is to be homeless because they've spent some time in a shelter or they've done a great deal of research on the topic. Be sure to maintain a realistic attitude about this kind of experience, recognizing that no matter how much we are working to help another person or group of people, we can never fully understand another's life experience. We can, though, be supportive members of a community.

Third, *service-learning involves developing reciprocal relationships between the college or university and the communities in which it is embedded.* Although collaboration between colleges or universities and local community organizations makes sense in many ways, it often fails to happen simply because no one takes an initiative. Service-learning projects can provide that first contact that can lead to an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship. Through their successful work for the zoo, the students in the Writing for Business Professionals course opened the door for future students to collaborate on zoo writing projects or even serve as writing interns there.

We have learned from experience just how crucial it is to ensure that the course–organization relationship is reciprocal. It is all too easy for students to become involved with projects that are simply too large or involve too much non-writing work (Huckin 55). It can also be easy for an organization to spend too much time supervising student groups or not obtain usable work from students. Service-learning projects should incorporate the goals and values of both the course and the sponsoring organization. This is why we will carefully guide you through the process of negotiating your service-learning project with your teacher and a contact person from the organization.

Linda Flower and her colleagues at the Community Literacy Center in Pittsburgh point to another important reciprocal relationship—that of the writers and the larger community. Student writers may not only need to negotiate their tasks and texts with their sponsoring organization; they may also need to collaborate with the community members their texts will reach. This enables those who are "served" to become more active contributors to the writing and to the larger community problem it addresses (107). The zoo project students solicited community members' feedback about the purposes, content, and design of their promotional texts.

Finally, *service-learning involves critical reflection on the student's part.* When pursuing school and workplace projects, we are often in such a rush to meet deadlines that we don't take time to reflect critically on how our work has shaped us as thinking and feeling people. As Chris Anson explains, "Theories of service-learning value reflection for helping to create the connection between academic coursework and the immediate social, political, and interpersonal experiences of community-based activities" (167). The practical nature of most technical and professional communication makes it easy to overlook the values associated with it and the effects enabled by it. Yet, good service-learning work is more than rhetorically effective—it is also ethical and beneficial to the community.

The students who worked on the zoo project spent time writing and talking about how their service-learning experiences (e.g., inventing, writing, collaborating) affected them. For example, students reflected on the process of negotiating the features of the texts with each other, zoo personnel, and prospective readers. Each student had to think about her or his development as both a writer and a group member and about her or his values as both a writing consultant and a local community citizen. Students had to work together to move from individual reflection to group deliberation to find solutions to challenges they faced.

What Service-Learning Is and Isn't

Even after reviewing the main components of a service-learning project, you may find it difficult to envision just what kinds of activities might fall into this category. Because service-learning will be a required part of a course for most of you, it is important that you understand the kinds of activities in which you will likely be participating. At this point, you may want to review some of the sample student projects in the book's appendixes to obtain more concrete ideas about possible projects.

Some of you may choose to do general volunteer work for an organization (or agency, we use these terms interchangeably) with which you've connected to get a feel for the organization's values, learn about the clientele, or better understand its services. Others may believe very strongly in the cause your agency addresses and may choose to augment your work as writers with other kinds of service. It's important that we clarify up front, however, that the model we suggest here will not *require* you to become volunteers or advocates. Rather, we invite you to become, in a sense, unpaid writing consultants for your selected organization.

To clarify what that role entails, in this section we will provide some specific examples of the kinds of duties that would and would not be appropriate as part of a service-learning project. Some examples of activities that would *not*, in and of themselves, constitute service-learning according to our model include:

- Performing original research for the organization—interviewing clients, testing water samples, and so on.
- Doing clerical work for the agency—filing, answering telephones, or stuffing envelopes.
- Providing technology training or support for agency representatives— teaching them to use computer software or backing up their data files.
- Engaging in client services—taking care of children or driving a van for an outing.
- Dealing with such custodial duties as mowing lawns or cleaning kitchens.

Although these kinds of activities are probably not related to the major goals of your writing course, they could be transformed into activities that are. More communication-oriented service-learning assignments might involve the following:

- Writing up or editing descriptions of the agency's research or service activities in annual reports, grant proposals, research summaries, and so on.
- Compiling a manual for clerical volunteers in the agency. Nonprofit agencies especially tend to have high turnover among office workers. A clearly written manual that provides staff members with easily accessible guidelines for standard procedures would make this situation easier to handle.
- Designing training materials for the use of office equipment. Even experienced agency employees may be unfamiliar with recently donated or purchased computer hardware and software, copying machines, or

audio/video equipment. Again, clear instructions for using these tools could alleviate office stresses and help to increase office productivity.

- Producing client services materials like brochures, newsletters, and websites. Like the students who worked for the zoo in the example at the beginning of this chapter, you may work with an agency whose staff members simply don't have the time to produce marketing materials.

The key to the Stanford model for service-learning that we mentioned above is *focusing on writing as the service you provide to the agency*. This is the type of project we'll encourage you to develop in the chapters that follow. This is not to say that such a project will not require you to engage in any nonwriting activities, however, just that these activities should be directly connected to the writing. Perhaps even more than most other types of writing assignments, service-learning tasks require research, collaboration, and project management.

As part of their work for the zoological park, the students mentioned above had to complete the following nonwriting activities:

- Each writer visited the park on at least one occasion. Some of the members made site visits every week or two during the period in which they were producing documents. On these visits the students explored the park and got a feel for what it had to offer and in what areas it needed to improve. This allowed the students to develop a sense of the agency's values and needs, which made writing on their behalf more possible.
- The students talked with agency representatives, learning about the organization's goals and priorities. Because they recognized the importance of cooperation on the project, they did a lot of listening. They took notes and reviewed them together.
- They studied the zoo's existing promotional and educational materials. They paid attention to the design and content of these documents and considered what such features might suggest about the zoo's attitude toward outreach. They also studied the promotional material for other similar parks in the area, gathering ideas about effective and ineffective marketing strategies.
- They researched their audience. In Central Florida, home of Mickey Mouse and Shamu, residents and tourists have many entertainment options. These students spent time examining the reasons why people choose to visit the zoo, what they feel it represents in their community, and so on. This helped them to identify the kinds of materials they would produce and the messages they wanted to convey.
- They researched logistical considerations such as cost of printing and the availability of web space.
- They collaborated on all phases of the project. Throughout the semester the students divided up the work involved—writing and nonwriting. They took turns leading and recording the results of meetings. They stayed in touch via email to keep all the group members aware of project progress.

Like many of you, the students mentioned above had no special training in working for a local organization. They drew on their common interests and worked as local intellectual activists to become more effective and reflective civic writers and to help solve a community problem. In the chapters that follow and in the appendixes of sample projects, you will learn about the experiences of many students who have produced texts for nonprofit agencies, businesses, and campus groups as part of their work for technical and professional writing courses. You will learn about the kinds of documents they produced, the challenges they faced, and the ways in which you can draw on their experiences to pursue your own successful service-learning project.

Activities

1. Visit the following websites to develop a sense of how others in writing studies and higher education more generally have defined service-learning. What do they specify as service-learning's main components and characteristics? How, in particular, do they seem to define "reflection" as a component?

American Association for Higher Education	http://www.aahe.org
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse	http://www.servicelearning.org
Campus Compact	http://www.compact.org
Bentley College	ecampus.bentley.edu
National Council of Teachers of English	http://www.ncte.org/service

2. Go to the website of the National Council of Teachers of English, and follow the links to composition programs that use service-learning in professional and technical writing courses. In addition, read Thomas Huckin's article "Technical Writing and Community Service." Compare the ways in which these courses incorporate service-learning. Do they have students write *about* their service experiences, write about the *topic* of their experiences, write *as* their service experiences, or some combination of the three? Make a list of the kinds of service-learning assignments they include.

3. Search your campus website for references to service-learning. Find out if your school is part of the Campus Compact, a national organization of university presidents who are committed to supporting service-learning and related activities. Make a list of instructors whose websites or syllabi refer to service-learning. Interview one or more of these teachers to learn about their interests in service-learning and their reasons for using it as a teaching tool.

4. Conduct an informal survey among friends and acquaintances about their first responses to the term *service-learning*. See what kinds of associations people have with this word and what they imagine a course that integrates it might involve. Compare your findings about other people's impressions with your own sense of the two separate terms (*service* and *learning*) that make up the term.

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Chapter

2

Service-Learning in Technical and Professional Communication

When most people hear the phrase *technical and professional communication* they probably imagine indecipherable instructions for using a VCR or an impersonal form letter from a business. In both academia and in the workplace, people have a range of ideas about how these terms connect with each other. Some people consider professional communication to be an umbrella term and think of technical writing as one subcategory among others, like legal or medical writing. Others consider technical communication to be the primary term and see professional writing, which might include tasks such as creating memos and letters, to be one part of technical communication. Still others think of technical and professional communication as separate but closely related areas of study that emphasize somewhat different concerns. Technical writing can be thought of as more oriented toward producing texts that convey scientific or technological information. This might include instructions for using a tool or a report on the findings in a scientific experiment. Professional writing can be thought of as more related to organizational communication, with more emphasis on interpersonal correspondence than on conveying complex data. This might include something like a business's annual report or a memo evaluating an employee's performance. In any case, we believe that service-learning is an appropriate approach for teaching this range of skills. The samples and assignments you'll see throughout this book will come from both types of classes. Your instructor may focus on one or the other approach more narrowly, but the two have many characteristics in common, and these will be the focus of the book.

Mary Lay and her coauthors define technical communication as ". . . applied communication, communication designed to perform specific tasks or help the audience solve specific problems" (10). Technical and professional writers act as audience advocates; they are often liaisons between engineers or physicians or CEOs or other technical specialists and lay audiences. Technical and professional writing, therefore, are *audience centered,* or designed to address audience needs. They are also *subject oriented*; that is, their primary purpose is to convey information.

Throughout this book, you'll read about the projects of many writing students who have designed a wide range of technical and professional texts including letters, résumés, reports, proposals, instructions, brochures, and informational websites.

In this chapter, we'll discuss ways in which service-learning can help you to develop as a technical or professional writer. As we present some of the advantages of this approach for the students, collaborating agencies, and colleges involved, we'll invite you into a professional conversation about some of the most complex questions and challenges facing the field today. We'll explain some of the benefits of the service-learning approach and provide an overview of the three kinds of sites where service-learning can take place within our model. To begin, we'll introduce you to one student project that will allow us to ground our discussion in a concrete scenario.

When police lieutenant Bill Wood was assigned to produce a service-learning project for a graduate class in professional writing, it didn't take him long to choose a focus. Several years before, when he was in school and didn't have children of his own, Bill had served as a Big Brother to a boy in his area. The experience meant a lot to him and his Little Brother, and in subsequent years he had often thought about ways in which he might be able to contribute once again to the agency's worthwhile program. He contacted the group and learned that although most of the young girls needing an adult friend were already assigned to someone, there was a waiting list of more than 90 boys in the area who wanted and needed a Big Brother; there just weren't enough volunteers available to work with them. Clearly, the agency was facing a recruitment crisis. Remembering how gratifying his own experience was for him as a young man, Bill set out to acquire funding for a recruitment campaign targeted at undergraduate students at his university. He researched costs for publicity venues like billboards, movie theater slide shows, and newspaper ads. He negotiated discounted costs for each of these services and designed promotional materials for each medium based on the agency's existing recruitment approach. Then he wrote a grant proposal for submission to a local civic foundation to fund the campaign.

The project Bill worked on captures many of the advantages of service-learning for technical and professional writing. Because it emerged out of his own commitments and provided a service to his community, the project gave Bill a chance to develop both as a citizen and as a professional. As a professional writer, Bill learned about the document production process by researching local publicity services and their costs. The project also enabled him to learn style, arrangement, and design conventions of several professional genres. He wrote a compelling narrative and put together a budget for the proposal. He designed and manipulated graphics for inclusion in the promotional materials. In addition, the community connections he made helped him to be a better police officer, and of course his work will benefit future Big and Little Brothers in the area.

Service and Shared Benefits

In the case of Bill Wood and Big Brothers/Big Sisters, it is clear that everyone involved benefited. Robert Coles, a Harvard University professor of child psychiatry, suggests that this shared benefit is critical to meaningful service activities.

OTHER VOICES 2.A   Bill Wood

Bill Wood is a lieutenant in the Orlando, Florida, Police Department. He is pursuing a master's degree in technical communication at the University of Central Florida.

One of the advantages of undertaking a service-learning project is that it is a win-win situation for both students and community alike. The student becomes immersed in a real-world scenario that usually contains unexpected real-world twists and turns. And the community benefits because the student makes a civic commitment to better his or her environs. The student also learns to write in a style the real world requires as opposed to what the instructor mandates in the classroom. In my opinion this instills a world of confidence in the student looking to enhance his or her writing skills. Hopefully, the service-learning project will see its fruition, but in any case the student and the community organization both learn and grow from the process.

I think one of the most critical elements to consider in choosing a service-learning project is to find one that intrigues you. You will dive into the endeavor with much more enthusiasm if it has special meaning, as opposed to having one assigned to you by the instructor. Several years ago, before I had kids of my own, I was a Big Brother in Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Inc., so my choice was easy. This was an organization I could identify with and knew something about. I knew they depended a great deal on outside funding for their survival. Anything I could do to enhance the buoyancy of the organization through creating fundraising documents was very gratifying for me.

Coles is well known for his work with student community service programs and has guided many interns through the experience of working for the first time with people in need. In *The Call of Service,* Coles explains that the key to service is a mutually beneficial relationship between the server and the served. To engage in effective and meaningful service, Coles maintains, the person who offers her or his time and energy and effort to a cause must recognize the benefits received from that involvement.

In other words, it is critical that you approach whatever service-learning project you develop expecting to gain valuable experience and training as well as offering useful services to an agency that needs the help. This perspective is particularly useful for you as technical and professional writing students because most of you hope to gain immediately applicable practical knowledge that will benefit you in current or future jobs.

An effective service-learning program is valuable for the students, the sponsoring agency or organization, and the students' college or university. Here are just some of the benefits to students, agencies, and colleges.

Benefits to Students

Students have an opportunity to apply professional writing principles and subject-area knowledge in nonacademic situations related to their professional and civic interests. We have already discussed how well-designed service-learning projects can help students learn and apply writing, design, collaboration, and project-management

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STUDENT VOICES 2.A   What Do We Get from Service-Learning?

Anne: I was excited when I found out that our class would be working for nonprofit agencies through our writing. I have been a volunteer at a children's charity for a long time, and this assignment gave me a new way to work for a cause I believe in.

Jamie: The very first day of my writing class, I left feeling very confused. I went home thinking—what in the world does professional writing have to do with service-learning (which I had never heard of previously)?!? Actually the combining of the two annoyed me. I thought that the organization was just using the class to do their work. A day or two later, the subject sort of intrigued me. Then, after I learned more, I changed my mind—I discovered that the class benefits as much as or more than the organization. This agency representative was taking out time to help us learn, and she was actually trusting us with major projects.

Cathy: When I first heard about this project, I was afraid that local private businesses wanted to reap the benefits of students working for free. The important part that I had been overlooking was that we would be receiving benefits as well. These benefits take the nontangible form of experience and the tangible form of contacts we may be able to rely on in the future.

Holly: On the very first day of this class, all I could think of was "what have I gotten myself into?" I was only supposed to be here for a general requirement. The whole concept of service-learning seemed confusing to me. I could not understand what a professional writing class had to do with community service work. I had expected that this class would be like my English Comp One and Two classes where everyone did their own research papers and that was it. I definitely received the shock of my life with this course. But I also learned about designing documents, working with a team, and making presentations. I made good connections with a nonprofit agency and improved my writing.

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strategies. Technical writing teacher Thomas Huckin, in "Technical Writing and Community Service," has also pointed to these benefits to students.

But Bill's experience suggests that such projects can also help students develop as professionals more generally. As an advanced student in a technical or professional subject, you have access to the latest knowledge and trends in your field of study. If designed with your interests in mind, service-learning projects can enable you to test and further internalize that knowledge by applying it outside the classroom.

Gregory Wickliff, a technical communication professor from the University of North Carolina, has surveyed college graduates who worked on commissioned projects with local businesses and government agencies as students in technical writing courses. The respondents expressed appreciation for this opportunity, suggesting that although they might not always use the full range of their professional training in such projects, they did get a chance to see how their training did or did not apply to projects in the field (189). This opportunity to explore how your academic background will interface with work tasks is one of the most important benefits of service-learning.

Students are able to interact with real-world audiences, getting feedback on their work from agency representatives and community members. It's one thing to practice writing letters, reports, proposals, surveys, instructions, and other professional and technical documents as a part of canned assignments or hypothetical scenarios. It's an entirely different and more meaningful experience to produce documents that will be read by actual audiences beyond the classroom. Though receiving and using feedback from teachers and classmates is certainly crucial to your training as a writer, it can't replace the opportunity to work with readers who will actually *use* the texts you're producing. For some projects, you may even be able to see the final, published version in use by the end of the semester.

A group of students working on a sex education campaign geared toward at-risk teenage girls learned about this benefit through their experience. They carefully applied basic principles of effective document design when drafting early versions of their brochure and posters. When they presented the materials to members of their target audience, however, their young readers set them straight about a number of problems, including inappropriate vocabulary and false assumptions about the audience's knowledge.

Many technical and professional writers gather feedback through more systematic usability tests, tests that assess how members of the target audience actually use the document in a typical setting. Such tests can entail interviews, observations, and recorded transcripts of users articulating their thoughts as they go along. In designing an online tutorial for a web text editor, a group of advanced professional writing students at the University of Florida conducted two rounds of such tests; in the process they found places where novice users needed more detailed explanations and examples. Chapter Seven, "Executing Your Project," and Chapter Nine, "Evaluating Your Project," will elaborate on strategies for assessing your work's relevance to readers.

Students learn to manage major projects, balancing varied responsibilities and roles. Whether you work on your project individually or as part of a team, service-learning will require you to take on a number of roles. You will be a student, a writer, a document designer, a consultant, and a collaborator. At times, your collaboration will require you to take the reins as a leader. At other times, you will need to negotiate with people who have more power than yourself. Service-learning projects typically involve seeing a project through from the invention stage to the final production stage. The collaboration, leadership, and project management skills you apply will be crucial to your future success in school and the workplace. Indeed, many university programs in engineering, business, and other areas include entire courses dedicated to teaching such skills, allowing students to understand processes as well as facts.

Connections among the parts of a learning process are explored in a book called *Knowing and Being*. Here, philosopher Michael Polanyi offers a model of thinking that distinguishes two ways people come to understand ideas or processes—**focal** and **subsidiary.** When we look at a process from a focal perspective, we zoom in on one particular step or piece of the picture. When we take

a subsidiary perspective, we consider how the pieces fit together as a whole. For example, one group of Melody's students decided to take on the challenge of creating a web page promoting a family film series sponsored by a business networking group. None of the students had created a web page before, so they had to learn the related concepts from a range of angles.

This group of students knew that they wanted to use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) or HTML editing program to design their page. They knew that they could apply previous experience with other document design software to this process to do things like cutting and pasting images into a document and putting the pieces together to create a page that was aesthetically pleasing and informative. They learned how to use an uploading feature to transfer the information from a document file to a website, but when they viewed the document online, it looked quite different from what they saw on their editing screen.

Though they were able to accomplish every part of the process to this point by following step-by-step instructions, they were unable to correct problems they faced in the upload phase until they developed a sense of the larger process of web publishing. Until they understood that the image they saw on the WYSIWIG screen was communicated through a coding language that could be manipulated by the software they were using, for example, they weren't able to go into the source of the file and make minor corrections to its appearance. On the other hand, if they had not gone through the individual steps of designing a page, the code would have probably meant very little to them. They had to see this process in two ways—as a series of steps to be completed one-by-one *and* as a big picture, a process that would not work unless all of its parts worked together.

This model of focal and subsidiary knowledge applies to service-learning in technical and professional communication more broadly. Most of us can complete a class assignment that is presented to us in the form of a series of steps and individual pieces, but we may find it difficult to see how each of the assignments we do for a class fits into the big picture of a work context. We may understand what our textbooks, professor, and peers say makes for an effective letter of inquiry, for example, but unless we have an opportunity to follow the life cycle of the text, we will very likely miss some important considerations in the process of creating it.

As we mentioned in Chapter One, a service-learning project will require you to perform a range of duties and engage in a variety of activities. You may sometimes do research, write first drafts, revise other students' texts, or take notes during meetings. While engaging in all of these smaller activities, you will also need to keep an eye on the grand scheme.

Students are faced with "real" ethical dilemmas similar to those they'll confront in their careers.   Expanding technologies make it possible for humans to do new things every day—we are discovering new medical treatments, creating new computer applications, developing new agricultural techniques. Ethical problems are a predictable byproduct of these kinds of developments. New information technologies may threaten someone's right to privacy. Advancements in medical research like genetic engineering might allow future generations to

do away with individuality as we understand it. Technological knowledge brings with it significant responsibility.

In an effort to develop new pedagogies for teaching the ethical implications of this responsibility, technical writing scholars such as Sam Dragga, Cezar Ornatowski, and Gregory Clark have studied ways in which the ethical systems of student writers are similar to and/or divergent from those held by practitioners in the field. Though each of these researchers asks a different set of questions to reach his conclusions, they agree that writing classes should address the kinds of concrete ethical concerns that students will face on the job. With its twin emphases on workplace writing and critical reflection, service-learning invites deliberation about such concerns.

As we will discuss in Chapter Eight, service-learning projects can also lead students to face ethically complex situations that require them to negotiate sets of competing values. Most students will encounter some kind of ethical dilemma during the course of this project, whether it has to do with dealing with a problem group member or struggling with a questionable or confusing policy or practice at your cooperating agency. The greatest benefit of tackling such issues in this context is that you have the support and counsel of your instructor, group members, and other classmates. Also, because reflection is such an important component of this kind of service-learning work, you will have many opportunities to stop and think through your decision-making processes; this will enable you to make explicit the kinds of implicit values that guide your behavior.

Students make professional connections with community leaders and develop writing portfolios suitable for use in job searches. A service-learning project often requires that a student work with the managers, officers, or board members of the organizations they are serving. These leaders are sometimes potential employers who will look favorably on students who demonstrate a consistent commitment to their organization and the community it serves. This kind of work suggests that you can see yourself as a team member and citizen.

Many college students in engineering, business, pre-medicine, and other technical fields assume that their jobs will not entail much writing, but testimony from advanced professionals consistently suggests that this is not the case. Respondents to a survey of engineering alumni at the University of California, Berkeley listed technical writing as the second most important subject, after management practices, that students could take in school (in Olsen and Huckin 5). Another survey of 1,400 members of professional organizations in various disciplines (e.g., chemistry, engineering, psychology, and business management) found that the average respondent spends almost 50 percent of her/his time doing some kind of writing (in Lay et al. 4). Service-learning projects typically involve several genres of writing, including at least one complicated genre, such as a proposal, annual report, or newsletter. Documents that are published by the organization and used by actual readers make especially impressive additions to a writing portfolio. Being able to illustrate your collaboration and project management skills through concrete examples will make your job application materials and

interviews more memorable to prospective employers. Thus, a service-learning project can help you generate a set of texts that showcase your skills as a writer/document designer as well as your commitment to civic action.

Benefits to Cooperating Agencies

Cooperating agencies receive assistance with writing projects critical to their operations.   As we've mentioned before, many of the nonprofit agencies, businesses, and campus organizations you'll be working with in this class simply don't have the workforce or rhetorical expertise to create the documents they need. At the very least, sponsoring organizations get solid drafts of documents that they can modify to meet their changing needs. We have found that sponsoring agencies almost always appreciate the fresh perspectives students bring to projects. At best, agencies receive texts that they can immediately use to accomplish their missions. Beyond getting help with urgently needed written or online products, agency personnel have a chance to shift from the writer to the supervisor role.

Agencies also have an unusual opportunity to see themselves from a different perspective through the writing that students perform. Students may identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that organizations have not considered. If students misinterpret missions or activities based on information and materials the agency provides, agency workers may reconsider and revise those documents. Revision of these materials may be a useful task for service-learning students.

STUDENT VOICES 2.B   What Makes Service-Learning Work?

Laura: What I found especially important as I started to explore service-learning is the emphasis on this type of learning/work as symbiotic. We (the students) get great experience and an opportunity to build our portfolios, and they (the client or organization) get some much-needed help. What could be better? And oh yeah, we get the opportunity to support a cause we believe in but may not always have the time or energy to support. Doing work like this, helping out someone (or thing) that can't always help itself (due to time, money, resource, etc., restrictions) makes me feel good about myself too.

Geri: I think that the most useful part of this project will be making valuable contacts in our fields of interest. After undergraduate school, I realized (too late, unfortunately) that I missed numerous opportunities to volunteer for projects that would have put me in a position to get to know people who would be able to help me find a job once I graduated. I thought that it was unimportant to devote time to internships and the like while I was earning my degree, because money was such a big issue in my day-to-day life at the time—BIG MISTAKE! Sure, bills had to be paid, and I had to eat, buy gasoline, and so on. But once I had finished my course of study, I was completely unprepared for the task of finding my first "real" job. I didn't know anyone (or much of anyTHING) about what I had been preparing for four long years to do. Now that I'm older and somewhat wiser, I see the value in this project, and I really do appreciate the opportunity!

Two University of Central Florida Organizational Communication majors who were writing documents for a youth mentoring program in their area knew from their previous involvement that the all-volunteer staff had barely enough resources to provide a proposed tutoring and counseling service for children in the low-income, high-crime area. Though superhuman effort on the part of several volunteers had made it possible for the agency to begin the program, they needed more materials and supplies to meet the growing need. The two students wrote letters to local businesses requesting donations of craft supplies, educational materials, snacks, and other items critical to the group's work. They wrote and designed fact sheets and brochures to send along with the letters, highlighting the organization's previous accomplishments and goals for the future. Their efforts paid off in material ways—a struggling group was able to expand its services and to reach out to more children in the community.

Even when they do not result in such success, service-learning projects can still benefit the sponsoring agency. In a Penn State technical writing class students worked in groups to write grant proposals for the local AIDS Project. Although only one out of five proposals was actually revised and used successfully by the agency, the executive director was thankful that the project forced her to clarify the agency's goals and needs.

Cooperating agencies make contacts with college representatives, increasing their access to resources and their profiles in the community.   Even though they may have offices geographically close to local universities, many of the agencies you target for your projects won't have active cooperative relationships with anyone at your school. Developing these relationships can help the agencies with outreach and raising community support for their work.

When five Environmental Science students at the University of Arizona started to work with a conservation group to develop educational materials for school-age children, they expected to use their cutting-edge insights on water conservation and ecology to help the Friends of the Santa Cruz River group produce an accurate and engaging website and brochure for use with young students. Once they became involved with the project, they realized how valuable it was for their community, and they began to promote it among their professors and classmates. Soon the program was attracting volunteers from the university and garnering praise, which allowed the agency to draw on the expertise of the larger school community.

Cooperating agencies have the opportunity to connect with students who might someday offer other kinds of support for their work.   In our experience, many of the students who begin to work with local organizations as part of a service-learning project return after the project is over to continue offering their services and support. A service-learning project gives the agency an opportunity to win your loyalty and commitment for the future. If you become involved with an agency now, you may return in the future to volunteer your time or to donate your money.

A group of students in a summer course designed fundraising materials such as brochures and posters for a nonprofit organization that provides teachers at low-income schools with such supplies as paper, pencils, craft items, and so forth. The students selected this organization primarily because their professor had

already established a relationship with the marketing director and the students needed a ready-made project to get their work done in the short summer term. When she learned about the important services the agency offers by spending time in its 5,000-square-foot warehouse and talking with teachers who came to get materials, one student realized that this was a process she wanted to be part of on a long-term basis. When the summer ended, she became a regular volunteer at the store and found ways to connect her work there with her goals in later coursework.

Benefits to Colleges

Colleges develop community ties and reputations of commitment to service.   Changes in community values affect everyone, including universities. Most contemporary American universities are in a position to reimagine their roles in their towns and cities, repositioning themselves with greater connection to the businesses, public schools, and nonprofit agencies in their areas. Service-learning provides an excellent forum for this kind of outreach, giving a school well-trained and supervised ambassadors to the community who provide meaningful service.

In "Partners in Inquiry: A Logic for Community Outreach," Linda Flower briefly describes the history of the relationship between what she calls "town and gown"—the community and the university. Flower points out that many universities have traditionally held elitist attitudes toward the communities around them, reinforcing the image of institutions of higher education as "ivory towers." She underscores the idea that colleges must approach their community work with a spirit of inquiry; that is, they must view the well-being of the community as inextricably tied to that of the institution, and must strive to connect the two agendas.

When their student representatives engage in service-learning, universities are often more likely to be viewed as connected with and concerned about the community. A university that is perceived this way is more likely to be in a position to have a positive impact on the community. This can create a long-term, mutually beneficial relationship.

Colleges develop stronger writing faculty through increased field experience for teachers.   Your writing teacher may have a solid background in your field, whether it's engineering or business or social work, but many of us have focused our training on learning strategies and theories for teaching writing and on developing our knowledge of rhetorical studies. By working with students and agency representatives, teachers, too, can learn about writing conventions and strategies in a wide range of subjects and fields.

One of the main complaints raised by some of the ethics scholars referred to earlier is the gap between the values and knowledge of teachers and those of workplace professionals. Gerald Savage has argued that if teachers want to be actively involved in ethics education, they need to be working not only with their students in classrooms, presenting theories and ideas about how one might proceed, but they also need to reach beyond this traditional boundary to learn from and potentially influence the cultures of these off-campus sites.

Certainly, one of our own strongest motivations for continuing to teach our technical and professional writing courses with a service-learning approach is

the great opportunity it provides us to learn about workplace writing and about a wide range of academic fields and social concerns. When our students design websites for our state Wildlife, Game, and Fish agency or create brochures designed to teach people how to avoid skin cancer, we don't simply teach document design and audience analysis. We also learn about the content areas the documents address, and we are exposed to new organizational cultures. Such opportunities help to make us better teachers and writers, which benefits our universities.

Colleges enrich their curricula through increased interdisciplinary ties. Although you may work on a service-learning project to fulfill requirements for just one class, most of you will draw upon knowledge from more than one discipline to complete your work. You may even choose to involve your professors and classmates from your major with a project. At many universities, service-learning projects are bringing faculty and students from a range of fields together to accomplish shared goals. One example of this would include an interdisciplinary community history project in process in Orlando, Florida. Students and teachers from several fields are working with local industry representatives to collect oral histories of the lives of residents of historic districts in the area. Computer science and digital media students and professors are designing the interface while writing and history teachers are collaborating to generate material. Together, these pieces will form a virtual tour of the area. This project will help to preserve the history of the community and provide training to students and faculty in a range of areas.

Challenges of Service-Learning

While we believe that a service-learning approach is an excellent tool for helping professional and technical communication students to develop their skills and portfolios, we also want to acknowledge some of the difficulties that can emerge with such projects. Throughout the chapters that follow, we'll offer a balanced perspective on the many challenges that come from working with real-world audiences and tasks by describing our students' experiences and solutions in difficult circumstances. We recommend that you start to think about these challenges before you begin your project so that you can make smart planning decisions that may help you to negotiate them.

One concern shared by many writing students is the possibility of a difference between the expectations of your agency contact person and those of your instructor. What will happen if your instructor has given you one set of criteria for evaluating an effective progress report, for example, and your contact person wants to see you do something entirely different? To prepare in advance for this kind of problem, start to keep a reflective journal early in your project. Be prepared to discuss the expectation gaps with your teacher and to demonstrate your strategies for bridging those gaps to her or him. If you find ways to explain why you make certain writing decisions, your instructor will likely be willing to work with you to solve your difficulties.

Another concern to consider is the period of adjustment you may have to go through when you begin to work with your agency. New employees and interns

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OTHER VOICES 2.B   Thomas Miller

Thomas P. Miller, Ph.D., is associate professor of English at the University of Arizona. His award-winning scholarship addresses technical and professional writing, histories of rhetoric, and the tradition of civic humanism.

Service-learning? The phrase seems obvious enough, rather commonplace, even innocuous to many of us in higher education. What's not to like? Everyone has heard about the need to "learn how to learn" and become a "life-long learner." "Service" has been invoked by everyone from professional politicians to venture capitalists to describe running the government and making a profit.

"Public servants" and the "service economy" may evoke the sort of cynicism that associates doing good with being a do-gooder, but broader civic and religious traditions can help us to renew our sense of the value of service as a means to learn from experiences more diverse than our own. Ancient doctrines of public duties and divine missions often value learning by doing in the assumption that we can come to know what to do by putting what we know to good use. Contemporary discussions of service-learning stress the reciprocal dynamics of learning from others by sharing what we know how to do.

Service-learning may be little more than just another trendy catchphrase unless we understand it to mean that service is a means to learn from others and not simply a means to give back to those less fortunate than ourselves. When approaching any service commitment, we need to begin by thinking of it as a learning opportunity if we are to discover what the situation and the people involved have to teach us. This stance has spiritual value as well as practical utility, for it defers judgment, invigorates our abilities to observe experience, and focuses our capacities on the possibilities of what is to be learned from the collaboration at hand. This stance empowers us to learn how to learn from others. Assuming it can help us to understand the most basic sense and highest possibility of "service-learning."

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often have to go through a process of learning an organization's rules and conventions to develop a good workplace comfort level. You may have to make several preliminary visits to your site to develop a rapport with your contact person and a strong sense of the agency's objectives. Build in time for this process as you plan your work for the semester. In the section below, we'll discuss types of sites where you may choose to do your service-learning. We'll consider possible benefits and challenges specific to each option.

Three Types of Sites
Appropriate for Service-Learning Work

Throughout this book, we will present examples of service-learning projects at three different types of sites—nonprofit and government agencies, local businesses, and campus organizations. Each of these types, we will explain, has distinct advantages and disadvantages. Your teacher may recommend or assign certain sites, but

if you choose one yourself, you will want to begin by considering these advantages and disadvantages along with your civic and professional interests.

Nonprofit Agencies

A number of the sample projects you've read about in these first two chapters took place in nonprofit agencies, and many of you may choose such sites for your work. A nonprofit agency might be a local organization sponsored by a private group or a government organization. You might work with a group such as Forever Wild, the wildlife rescue and recuperation organization in Tucson, Arizona, for which a group of students designed promotional materials and procedural manuals. This group was created by local citizens who were concerned about the welfare of the many injured animals in the desert.

A nonprofit agency might also be the local chapter of a national organization. You might work for the local chapter of the United Way, YMCA, American Cancer Society, or, like Bill Wood, Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Your responsibilities for a national organization may differ from those for a local one. Many national groups already have standardized promotional materials and other texts such as brochures, newsletters, and annual reports. For these agencies, you might produce materials related to a particular fundraising event or, as in Bill's case, an urgent local need for recruiting volunteers. One sample student project in the appendix of this book includes a grant proposal written for a regional chapter of Habitat for Humanity.

Finally, you might work for a government agency or program, such as a county commission or a solid waste authority. A group of University of Arizona students collaborated with a public school district to develop documents for a program that encouraged homeless teenagers to stay in school. In addition to recruitment materials, they produced evaluation instruments such as surveys and questionnaires to assess how well the district was meeting student needs. Another sample student project in the appendix is a volunteer training manual for the Alachua County, Florida, Humane Society.

One of the advantages of choosing a nonprofit agency, as these examples have begun to show, is the range of options. Whatever your values and civic interests, you should have little problem finding a nonprofit agency that shares them. Another reason projects with nonprofit agencies can be especially easy to find is that most nonprofits urgently need writing help. Most nonprofit agencies are underfunded, understaffed, and overworked; as a result, they usually have several writing projects sitting on the back burner. Staff members are usually eager to gain the assistance of advanced writing students. Indeed, students are often given important research and project coordination responsibilities. Nonprofit agencies also produce a broad range of professional texts, from promotional materials to internal organizational materials to service-related materials.

The eagerness of most nonprofit agencies can also be a disadvantage if you're not careful. Staff members might have a tendency to view you as a volunteer rather than as a writing consultant and, consequently, might try to give you responsibilities beyond the purview of the assignment. In addition, because staff

members are so busy with multiple tasks, they may not always provide close supervision or substantive feedback. Indeed, they may be hard to reach at times. Finally, the writing-intensive projects of nonprofit agencies must also conform to strict deadlines, costs, and other constraints, which will give you valuable project management experience but may also not allow for optimum invention and revision time.

Businesses

Doing service-learning for a business can be a tricky undertaking because, as you know from the criteria presented in Chapter One, a service-learning activity must address some kind of need in the community. In most cases, internships and other workplace-related programs provide students with professional experience and connections and provide businesses with inexpensive or even free labor. But there is a way to make working for a local business into a legitimate service-learning project. The key is a focus on outreach. Essentially, your role in such a project should be to serve as a liaison between the business and the community. You might do work for a business that offers a service to people in your area. To illustrate, a group of students worked with a private women's health clinic to promote a series of prenatal health workshops for economically disadvantaged women in Tucson, Arizona. The students produced a prenatal health manual for the workshops, helping the clinic channel its resources to community members in need.

Other examples of business-related projects include developing instructional materials to accompany science and engineering kits donated by companies to schools, designing brochures and entry forms for a company's charity golf tournament, and creating a web page where employees can find information about worthwhile local causes to which they can make tax-deductible donations.

Perhaps the most obvious advantage of working for a business is the professional experience you can gain. This type of project might be the closest to the work you will do when you obtain a job, and it will give you practice in learning a corporate culture. On an even more practical note, such a project might provide you with job contacts.

Like nonprofit agencies, businesses work under strict deadlines and standards. Although you might end up working on an important project, you might not have as much artistic freedom or responsibility as you would in another kind of project. Instead, your texts will need to conform tightly to the guidelines and ethos of the company. Many larger companies have detailed style manuals, for example. Your work will likely be supervised closely and edited thoroughly. This does not mean you will receive a lot of feedback or hand-holding, however. On the contrary, many business sponsors are not likely to provide feedback or encouragement. Because of their more complex priorities, business representatives may not be as invested in providing students with a positive learning experience as individuals from other kinds of organizations. This is not always the case, but it is something to keep in mind when you are choosing a project site.

Campus Organizations

The final type of site we'll highlight through examples in the following chapters is your own campus. Although projects with campus organizations may not seem particularly glamorous, they are probably more interesting and complex than you think, and they are everywhere. Our students have written and designed documents for the health center, the center for academic computing, university libraries, an applied research laboratory, and a host of student-run organizations. For example, a group of civil engineering students took on the task of proposing a new University of Arizona campus recycling program. They studied the school's current policies, researched other universities' approaches, and created a model designed to save the university money and lead to more recycling. In another technical writing class, groups of students produced print and online documentation for CourseTalk, interactive web discussion software available through Penn State's Center for Academic Computing. This project enabled students to learn about the technical communicator's role in new product development from performing a task analysis to conducting usability tests to aiding in final production decisions. Other possibilities for campus-based projects include working with the Early Childhood Education program to propose a campus daycare center or collaborating with campus police to design brochures and posters advertising sexual assault prevention workshops. The sample campus project in the appendixes includes promotional materials for a student-run dance marathon for children's charities.

This kind of project has several practical advantages. First, it's convenient. Perhaps you'd love to work with a nonprofit agency or business in your area but would have trouble getting there to collaborate with the representatives because of transportation or scheduling issues. Another advantage of a campus project is that it allows you to help a community of which you're a part and draw on expertise you already have. In some cases, you might design documents for use by students; as you are already a part of this audience, you would have an easy time analyzing it and getting feedback from it. Perhaps most importantly, we've found that sponsors at campus organizations are more likely to be concerned about your learning experience and therefore might more readily instruct and guide you over the course of the project. Although some campus projects may require you to follow strict deadlines, others may not, giving you more flexibility.

Campus projects have disadvantages as well. They often don't simulate a work situation as closely as an agency or business project does; therefore they might not allow you to develop as wide a range of experiences as those venues might. Because they take place on campus, these projects may not seem as impressive in your résumé or writing portfolio to future employees as others. When you work on campus with professors and other school employees, it may be more difficult to feel that you are breaking out of your standard student role. You may feel that you are not broadening your horizons as much as you might with another kind of project.

No matter what kind of organization you choose for your service-learning project, you will need to apply the basic principles of rhetoric and technical communication we will present in the next chapter. These ideas and definitions will apply to each writing task you face in your service-learning project. Above all, you will be reminded that as a writer, you have power and responsibilities. You will learn new ways to use these principles to create audience-oriented, subject-centered, and ethically sound documents.

Activities

1. Collect examples of technical and professional communication such as instructions, proposals, manuals, and correspondence. Find them in your mail, accompanying equipment or tools, on the World Wide Web, or in other places. Working with a small group of classmates, analyze the documents in terms of their audiences, their usefulness, and the ethical principles that underlie them.

2. Interview a professor or a practitioner in your academic field, focusing on questions related to writing. Ask her or him about conventions of writing in the field or about how much writing might be required during a typical workday or week. Collect general advice about writing as a professional, and share it with your classmates.

3. Write a journal entry in response to this chapter, highlighting ways in which you expect to benefit from working on a service-learning project, hesitations or concerns you have about the idea, and any leads you might have on possible projects or sponsoring agencies.

4. Explore some of the websites for national technical and professional communication organizations such as those below. Learn about publications, fields of research, and job opportunities:

Association for Business Communication	http://www.cohums.ohio-state.edu/english/organizations/abc
Association of Teachers of Technical Writing	http://www.attw.org
Society of Technical Communicators	http://www.stc.org
TECHWR/L	http://www.raycomm.com/techwhirl

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