WRITING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST: SERVICE-LEARNING AND THE WRITING CLASSROOM

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Contents

Reconceiving Scholarship in the Land Grant University: A Preface *5*
Patricia Lambert Stock

Writing and the Arts of Public Discourse: The Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University *7*
David D. Cooper and Laura Julier

The SLWP: Inventing Our Roles *15*
Sharon Thomas

The Service-Learning Center: A Link in the Chain *21*
Mary Edens

Community Service-Learning: Two Student Views
An Education Lived Is an Education Learned *23*
Joan Cripe
Mandatory Community Disservice *25*
Nathan Werner

SLWP Curriculum Materials *28*

SLWP Student Resource Packet *48*

Suggestions for Participating Agencies *61*

Moving Towards Collaboration *63*
Rocky Ray Beckett

A Portfolio of Student Projects *67*
Michigan Literacy, Inc.
Whitehills Health Care Center
Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children
Eaton-Clinton-Ingham Community Mental Health Board

"Ready for the Challenge": A Student Reflects on the Service-Learning Writing Project

Bibliography *80*
Martha D. Merrill

Reconceiving Scholarship in the Land Grant University: A Preface

Patricia Lambert Stock, Director of the Writing Center

In *Universities and the Future of America,* Derek Bok, former president of Harvard University, reopens the long-standing debate about the appropriate work of the academy when he argues that America's current economic and social problems should not only "be profoundly troubling to those who devote their lives to higher education," but should also provoke us to ask if "our universities are doing all that they can and should to help America surmount the obstacles that threaten to sap our economic strength and blight the lives of millions of our people." Finding both Cardinal Newman's image of a university unencumbered by worldly agenda and more utilitarian visions of the university wanting, Bok argues that the division between pure and instrumental inquiry in the university is exaggerated.

In a similar vein, in *An Aristocracy of Everyone: The Politics of Education and the Future of America,* Benjamin R. Barber, Professor of Political Science in Rutgers University, reopens the postmodern debate about the possibility for and potential of human beings to work together for their common good. Finding both Jean Paul Lyotard's denial of the possibility for human community and William Spanos' insistence on the totalitarian nature of all human communities wanting, Barber argues that productive human communities—while possible—depend upon the "extraordinary and rare contrivance[s] of cultivated imagination." Invoking Dewey, Jefferson, and Tocqueville, Barber indicates that citizens in societies that would be communities of cooperating individuals must learn to be free and cooperative. For Barber this learning is best realized within a dialectical model of education in schools that nurture democracy by teaching and practicing it.

In the Service-Learning Writing Project, David Cooper and Laura Julier have nurtured the balance between applied intellectual pursuits and the disinterested search for truth and meaning that Derek Bok believes to be the work of the university, and the civic mission that Benjamin Barber believes to be its guiding mandate. Together with students, colleagues, and members of the mid-Michigan community, Cooper and Julier realized the project in their unique versions of Michigan State University's experimental civic literacy course in introductory composition and public culture studies—Cooper in the course he entitled Public Life in America;

"It is possible to explore a subject out of a keen desire to understand it better, and a belief that such understanding may be of use to humankind, just as it is possible to understand oneself more deeply even while learning to practice a profession. One would suppose, therefore, that the true mission of universities would be to nurture a healthy balance between applied intellectual pursuits and the search for truth and meaning for their own sake."

—Derek Bok

"Where students use experience in the community as a basis for critical reflection in the classroom, and turn classroom reflection into a tool to examine the nature of democratic communities and the role of the citizen in them, there is an opportunity to teach liberty, to uncover the interdependence of self and other, to expose the intimate linkage between rights and responsibilities."

—Benjamin Barber

Julier in the one she entitled The Civic Tradition in America. As Cooper and Julier introduced their students to the discourses of the American civic tradition, they also engaged students in the work of public service institutions in the greater Lansing area, combining both into what Barber calls an education in liberty.

In this monograph, Cooper and Julier—together with their students, colleagues, and individuals whose agencies contributed to and benefited from their students' intellectual and practical work—tell us the story of the project. In so doing, they not only compose a chapter in the scholarship of teaching in the land grant university but also construct a rich model of teaching and learning that others who share Cooper and Julier's commitments and goals may adopt or adapt to fit their own institutional circumstances.

The Writing Center in Michigan State University is proud to publish David Cooper and Laura Julier's curriculum development resource guide, *Writing in the Public Interest: Service-Learning and the Writing Classroom*, as the first number in its *Curriculum in the Academy and the World Monograph Series.*

"Our institutions of higher learning might certainly take heed, not only by encouraging students to do ... service, but by helping them stop and mull over, through books and discussions, what they have heard and seen. This is the purpose, after all, of colleges and universities–to help one generation after another grow intellectually and morally through study and the self-scrutiny such study can sometimes prompt."
–Robert Coles

Writing and the Arts of Public Discourse: The Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University

David D. Cooper and Laura Julier

In general education writing classes sponsored by the Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University, students study and write about public life in America. They read representative works by those voices who have shaped the communitarian conscience of American civic culture—Jefferson, Jane Addams, Martin Luther King, Jr., John Dewey, Dorothy Day, among others. And students wrestle with topics that continue to energize debates over democratic values in America: civil rights versus civic responsibilities, the tyranny of the majority, and challenges to democratic citizenship such as chronic prejudice, persistent inequality, cynicism, and mass media distortion. Along with students in writing programs across the country inspired by a resurgent service-learning pedagogy, Michigan State students also take up major writing projects that meet the special needs of Lansing-area public service agencies—projects that have a direct impact on the lives of people in Mid-Michigan, the palm of the Mitten State. Student writers, for example, wrote a job seekers guide for a regional youth employment center that offers counseling for young persons their age who don't go to college and have trouble finding jobs. Another group worked on a new descriptive brochure for a non-profit organization that assists individuals with severe physical disabilities and their families. Other student teams drafted public service spots for a local TV station, a newsletter for refugees, and a fact-pack analysis of statistics on domestic violence in the Tri-County area.

Faculty and staff of the Service-Learning Writing Project, like our colleagues at Stanford University, the University of Minnesota, California Lutheran University, and elsewhere, believe that these community service writing projects help build and refine what Benjamin Barber considers "the literacy required to live in a civil society," along with the discourse skills necessary for university-level work. Ethically committed students—students engaged, that is to say, in meaningful practices of obligation to others—have greater opportunity, we've discovered, to develop as more proficient writers. As practices of commitment, service opportunities also carry a strong moral valence for students. Service assignments can be points of connection, as Robert Coles reminds us in his

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

"The literacy required to live in civil society, the competence to participate in democratic communities, the ability to think critically and act deliberately in a pluralistic world, the empathy that permits us to hear and thus to accommodate others, all involve skills that must be acquired."
—Benjamin Barber

book *The Call of Service*, between self and other, moral moments in teaching and learning that yield, Coles says, "an awareness of the moral complexity that informs the choices we consciously make, as well as those we unwittingly make.... [A]ll service is directly or indirectly ethical activity, a reply to a moral call within, one that answers a moral need in the world."

"The Service-Learning Writing Project ... is designed to advance the objectives of ... an ambitious writing-across-the-curriculum project housed in the new Writing Center.... We are already beginning to effect important changes in the academic culture as a result of this effort and have made significant progress in providing new opportunities for the development, including self-initiated development, of undergraduate students at Michigan State.... I am confident that the SLWP will not only advance the writing program at Michigan State but will also contribute fundamentally to the education in civic responsibility of the students who have the good fortune, and the good sense, to participate."
—John Eadie, Dean
College of Arts and Letters

"[T]he Service-Learning Writing Project ... create[s] a synergy of the best features of quality undergraduate education with civic commitment and volunteerism, enriching and transcending both.... Students who experience early in their educational careers the fulfillment of personal involvement in community outreach endeavors and who, simultaneously, are encouraged to develop analytical and rhetorical abilities will be well prepared as effective and able citizens and leaders throughout life."
—James C. Votruba,
Vice Provost for University Outreach

Doing and Learning

The Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP), founded in the fall of 1993, is a joint endeavor of Michigan State University's College of Arts and Letters, the Department of American Thought and Language, the Service-Learning Center, and the Writing Center. The SLWP's interdisciplinary American Thought and Language course— "Writing: Public Life in America"—partially fulfills the lower division General Education writing requirement for first-year students at MSU. The course unites challenging intellectual content, effective writing instruction, and community-based service-learning assignments into an innovative and humanistic educational experience in academic and field learning. Working through the SLWP, students become more effective writers and more thoughtful, critically literate citizens better equipped to meet the challenges and responsibilities of civic life.

With the assistance of a Federal Title B2 Higher Education Generation Grant awarded through the Michigan Campus Compact, a national initiative to promote public and community service sponsored by the Commission on National and Community Service, and continuation funding provided by the Corporation for National Service through its Serve and Learn Program, the Service-Learning Writing Project developed in three phases. During the spring of 1994, Phase I covered curriculum development and initial public service agency consultations. Phase II, a pilot implementation period, got underway in the fall of 1994 when the Project offered experimental versions of the new course, followed by Phase III, an intensive review/evaluation workshop conducted during the following spring.

During the next two years, the Project hopes to extend its reach into the following ancillary roles:

- Provide campus leadership for writing instruction and public service throughout the curriculum, especially in lower and upper division General Education writing requirements;
- Identify, support, nurture faculty and graduate students interested in service-learning and curriculum development;
- Support student groups that sponsor volunteer programs;
- Promote the connection between civic responsibility and undergraduate intellectual life throughout campus student services programs; and
- Continue to articulate interdepartmental goals and activities in writing instruction and community service at Michigan State University, especially between academic

departments, student services offices, college administrations, and university outreach programs.

Writing instruction in the context of service placements is being used in a growing number of undergraduate English classrooms nationwide. With the renewed impetus for national service coming from the Clinton administration, the future of the Service-Learning Writing Project at a premier land-grant institution such as Michigan State University appears bright indeed.

Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom

Many educators argue over the causes of declining social idealism among today's students. Few quarrel over its consequences. There is greater skepticism among young persons, most observers agree, over the possibilities for meaningful social change. Moral self-enclosure and uncritical self-awareness are on the rise. Widespread careerism undermines the importance of work as a calling in service to others. Meanwhile, students tend to view the university as a haven from the "real world," a place set apart from community life.

"We'll inherit the earth, but we don't want it."
– Paul Westerburg, Generation X songwriter

Diminished social idealism among students is closely tied, moreover, to a decline in moral literacy and, more generally, an erosion in the arts of civic rhetoric and informed public discourse that are indispensable to participatory democracy and vital to the civic humanism that sustains American democratic life.

Democracy: The Art of Public Discourse

Today's students are not, however, apathetic. Like most Americans, young people yearn to play active roles in community life. According to a 1992 Kettering Foundation survey, there are two roadblocks to effective citizen empowerment: (1) lack of knowledge and training that could help connect people with each other and to the powers that shape their lives, and (2) a dimmed belief that they can make a difference. While it is true, then, that the public's desire to get involved in democratic decision-making has never been greater, actual public participation in civic culture is in serious decline.

In an effort to better understand that decline and perhaps reverse it, the SLWP curriculum treats democracy itself as the art of public discourse. The democratic model, we believe, is essentially a rhetorical one: the dissemination of information, open and understandable to all, invites civil debate of important issues that, in turn, leads to credible decision-making by elected officials. Public discourse, writes Jay Rosen, "is the sort of talk a democracy needs . . . to illuminate our troubles and connect them to broader issues." Public discourse enables a democracy to sustain itself.

We have found, in fact, that democratic processes and rhetorical practices naturally converge in the writing classroom. The writing assignments and agency projects that we offer our students demand the same high level of critical awareness for student writers that democracies have always

"Not only does the university have a civic mission, the university is a civic mission, is civility itself, defined as the rules and conventions that permit a community to facilitate conversation and the kinds of discourse upon which all knowledge depends. On this model, learning is a social activity that can take place only within a discursive community bringing together reflection and experience."
—Benjamin Barber

asked of their citizens. As a rhetoric, democratic processes bring into sharp relief the importance of analytic methods that are the stock and trade of any language arts classroom—the same methods that citizens living in an information age need to disentangle opinion-making from public relations, the relevant from the trivial, truth from propaganda.

The Service-Learning Writing Project treats the writing classroom, in short, as a moral and civic venue, a place where moral sensibility, critical literacy, and the arts of public discourse, leavened by reflective learning, develop hand in hand. Research in language development and composition studies shows, in fact, that language proficiency, critical thinking and reading skills, moral reasoning, and historical and civic literacy develop symbiotically. Linguistic dexterity and virtuosity are now understood to be closely associated not only to cognitive development but to refinements in moral and ethical development as well.

SLWP: Pedagogical Foundations

The Service-Learning Writing Project seeks to develop curricula that advance four fundamental tenets of civic literacy:

1. *Rhetorical strategies made available to students through service-learning assignments support effective writing pedagogy* by: linking field work and formal academic research in innovative prewriting activities; giving students meaningful "real time" projects addressed to responsive and tangible audiences; inspiring greater dedication and commitment to task; providing collaborative learning and peer editing activities as part of the routine of academic inquiry; acknowledging independent student responsibility to generate and organize relevant ideas and to collect, use, and document concrete source materials; and by introducing cross-disciplinary innovation into writing topics that better prepare students for writing across the academic disciplines.

2. *Writing projects assigned to students in conjunction with community service placements advance higher order academic discourse skills,* including: the abilities to apply principles and generalizations to new problems and situations and think independently while incorporating others' opinions and perspectives; the refinement of analytic methods such as evaluating hypotheses or conclusions, distinguishing between fact and opinion, formulating critical questions; and the talents of critical empathy and examined self-reflection.

3. *The combination of writing for a public service agency and the intellectual experience gained through carefully studying primary cultural source materials is a particularly effective way of advancing civic education,* consistent with Michigan State University's land grant mission, which stresses: the cultivation of civic virtues; the historical, social, cultural foundations of civic republicanism in America; the moral content of citizenship in a democracy; the reciprocal nature of ethical obligation between citizen and state; the ideal of commitment

to service as a preeminent act of citizenship in a participatory democracy; the deeper awareness of diverse economic, social, and cultural groups that constitute a student's community; and the close ties between liberal arts values and career preparation as well as personal development.

4. *The Wingspread Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning* define service-learning as "service toward the common good combined with reflective learning" and stress structured, effective, well-supported, adequately monitored service-learning activities. According to The Wingspread Principles, "service, combined with learning, adds value to each and transforms both."

The Project further recognizes interdisciplinary learning as essential to developing civic discourse, moral thinking, and ethical reflection. Principles of interdisciplinary education help shape habits of heart and mind crucial to the Project's integrated goals: the development of critical discourse skills, the refinement of civic sensibility, and the promotion of individual ethical responsibility for the public good. Such principles, widely endorsed among interdisciplinary educators, include:

- **Integrative thinking skills are essential learning tools for all students and should be explicit outcomes of every academic program.**
- **All students should have repeated opportunities to seek common ground in interdisciplinary studies on controversial topics and issues.**
- **Those opportunities should be formally structured into General Education programs.**
- **Every student should participate in a collaborative learning enterprise that integrates individual performance and group accomplishment; and**
- **While differing in cultural heritages which are important to honor and celebrate, all human beings share a common humanity and dignity and are capable of transcending differences by engaging in civil discourse.**

Curriculum Guidelines for the SLWP

While particular readings and assignments may vary widely, any language arts course on the American civic tradition should probably situate the study of civic republicanism in American cultural history. Students need to examine primary historical source materials, documents, and literary expressions that, taken together as a core of rigorous interdisciplinary readings, constitute the historical conversation over public culture in America. Appropriate topics and themes for interdisciplinary exploration might include "The Social Contract," "Visions of the Public Good in America," "The Changing Community," "Citizenship in a Media Age," "Individuality and Social Responsibility," "Rights and Responsibilities," and "National Identity and Cultural Pluralism."

The course should invite students to debate, discuss, and

"Democracy begins in conversation."

–John Dewey

"How can we live with our differences without, as always heretofore, being driven by them to tear each other limb from limb?"
–Harold Isaacs

critically evaluate a uniquely American value system of civic commitment that is both uniform and mosaic, reflecting a multiplicity of cultural expressions and practices unmatched by any contemporary society, yet mediated by democratic principles and value-ideals embodied in American social and political institutions and the diverse traditions that sustain them. What does it mean, for example, to be a member of the communities in which we live and work—school and classroom, place of worship and workplace, neighborhood or nation? What does it mean to be a citizen in a democracy? How well do traditions of American citizenship serve the complex demands and increased diversity of civic life in America? What is the relationship between civil rights and civic responsibilities? What are the major challenges to democratic citizenship today? How well are the media—magazines, newspapers, TV—delivering information vital to effective citizen empowerment? What does "service" mean and what does it have to do with democratic citizenship?

Furthermore, the course should analyze the heritages and diverse "languages" that inform, complicate, and criticize the values of public commitment. Students should also be invited to explore values issues in their own lives and the relevance of those issues to American life generally, past, present, and future. Case studies of student-oriented groups dedicated to public service might be particularly valuable: e.g., the Peace Corps and VISTA, Students for Appalachia, COOL/Action, Teach for America, Habitat for Humanity, the City Year, AmeriCorp.

Above all, students need to question critically America's civic traditions in preparation for their own service-learning experiences. How, for example, have civic, religious, economic, and social traditions shaped moral life in America? In what ways do those values traditions help to ease, or perhaps even aggravate, the persistent tensions in American life between self-interest and civic duty, individualism and commitment to the common good, entitlements and responsibilities, individual rights and the social contract? What do Americans today value? How do current debates over values—abortion, Affirmative Action, hate speech codes, gays and lesbians in the military, Beavis and Butthead bashing, the Contract with America, the militia movement—reflect long-standing assumptions about how to order social life in America? How are today's communitarian values reflected, or indeed refracted, in the popular media, our educational standards, our role models, our rituals of self-governance, our vocational aspirations, and our tolerance for the growing diversity of American life?

Getting Into Action

Once students have entered the cultural conversation about civic duty, pluralism, and the moral claims of democratic citizenship, they will be ready to pursue—either individually or, preferably, in collaborative teams—a major writing project connected to a field placement in a community service agency arranged through the Service-Learning Center at Michigan

State, a division of Student Services. With the help of composition faculty and advanced writing consultants working in the Writing Center, students write a wide variety of documents such as news releases, funding proposals, brochures, editorials, or letters to legislators and constituency groups. Students may be assigned to collection of data, surveys of constituencies, or report writing. They may be asked to synthesize highly specialized information supplied by an agency and write it up for a general audience. They may be directed to prepare an entire newsletter including original research, writing the articles, and even doing layout. Typical service-learning assignments might find students:

- writing a series of articles for a non-profit environmental center's newsletter informing local residents of a new city ordinance covering trash pick-up and yard waste management policies;
- working for a local food bank, and researching procedures for leasing idle public properties for a community summer garden project, then writing a report on different strategies of short/long term land use, including the local auction of public land;
- developing brochures for a housing resources center, covering rights and responsibilities of landlords/tenants under Michigan's residential housing law;
- researching, conducting interviews, developing a standardized entry form, and writing entries for a comprehensive state-wide index sponsored by a state referral service, of self-help programs and 12 Step recovery groups.

Writing Rights

Our modest experiment over the last three years with a service-learning pedagogy yoked to a democratic/rhetorical model of writing instruction, along with our experience in placing more than one hundred writing students in over thirty public agency placements, leads us to some reflections and tentative working conclusions.

Through rigorous, real-time writing assignments and exercises, students actively participate in democratic processes and the arts of public discourse that communities use to debate controversial issues. Whether tracking through the state legislature a bill proposing cuts in adult education literacy services or adapting tenant information pamphlets to new laws governing tenant/landlord relations or reporting on a lively public hearing about proposed amendments to a municipal civil rights ordinance, student writers are initiated into dialogue and deliberation strategies for articulating and resolving differences and determining justice. Rather than receding into the background, civic values and democratic aspirations become central to our students' explorations of diversity, commitments to equity, and respect for the difficulties of resolving conflicts within a neighborhood, a community, or a nation

Moreover, through actual writing projects growing out of public service agency placements, students have extensive opportunities to practice public discourse and to engage in

constructive conversations over American pluralism, public life, and the common good. Those conversations include often contested and sometimes uncongenial spaces in the public sphere—AIDS awareness, drug abuse prevention, alcoholism, homelessness, teen pregnancy, domestic violence—and thereby promise to forge meaningful and lasting affirmations of civic reciprocity and ethical obligation for our students.

While conventional (and still too rare) community-service opportunities and internship programs stress the delivery of much-needed care or the important bridging of theory and practice, the justice-seeking assignments and placements sought out by the Service-Learning Writing Project focus more on bringing democracy to bear on groups for whom democracy has not worked well. We seek to immerse our students in the pursuits—sometimes successful, often frustrating, seldom triumphal—of equal opportunity and social justice sought by sectors of American civic culture traditionally under-enfranchised—the mentally impaired elderly, for example, or economically dislocated single mothers and their children. In other words, we seek to support stepping stones for those who slip between the cracks.

Finally, we adopt as a guiding principle the importance of using the language arts to educate our students in the values and deliberative practices of democracy. Our curriculum is an introduction—simultaneously intellectual and experiential—into the ways democracy works or fails to work for the sake of training our students to be more effective and articulate participants in the realization of democratic values.

Ties that Bind

The Service-Learning Writing Project is dedicated, in its own call to service, to present community needs and to a current generation anxious to reclaim its commitment to social justice and social need, to responsible—indeed passionate participation—in a just political order, and to a communal sense of shared destiny. At the same time, the Project recognizes its debt to a tradition of liberal learning that reaches back to classical civic republicanism and its claim that liberal education, according to Plato's Athenian Stranger, is "the education from childhood in virtue, that makes one desire and love to become a perfect citizen who knows how to rule and be ruled with justice."

"In an effort to shore up the moral and linguistic foundations of a learning experience that both encompasses and respects diversity, I have begun to explore with my students in a variety of classes the ways morality and language interact and change throughout traditions of American moral discourse and how those traditions–articulated in and through our national literature, our common speech, and, increasingly, our pluralistic 'second' languages–help us to think collectively about who we are and, more important perhaps, to choose meaningful, enlightened images of personal being and civic identity...."
–David D. Cooper

The Service-Learning Writing Project: Inventing Our Roles

Sharon Thomas, Associate Director of the Writing Center

A central goal of the Michigan State University Writing Center, established three years ago, has been to work with faculty and students to develop a culture of writing on our campus. We endeavor to accomplish this goal through the support we provide both to faculty as they work to integrate writing into their courses and to students as they work to compose their assignments for those courses. Along the way, we study what we are doing or, as Loren Barritt has pointed out in an article by the same name, we engage in "Practicing Research by Researching Practice." We frequently engage in these research activities by asking our Undergraduate Writing Consultants (UWCs) and Graduate Writing Consultants (GWCs), as well as student clients and faculty associated with the Writing Center, acting as informants, to describe particular significant events in their practice, to engage in what Patti Stock, Director of the Center, has come to call "investment writing," or writing that encourages students to invest themselves in the study at hand.

For example, one way we begin the course students take to prepare themselves to become UWCs is to ask those students to describe a significant composing event, to tell us about some writing they have done that was special to them in some way. We are interested in studying the experience of composing from the viewpoint of those who are engaging in the activity. In the spring of 1994, when we collected this investment writing from would-be writing consultants, we discovered that students consider as valuable, writing that provides opportunities for collaboration, that invites learning, that results in publication, and that brings about social change.

Not long after these future writing consultants reported their experiences to us, David Cooper, professor in the Department of American Thought and Language, approached the Writing Center with the suggestion that we become a partner in the Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP). Concerned as we always are to find opportunities for students to experience, first-hand, the power of writing, we were intrigued by the possibilities. This program, we believed, would allow students enrolled in a composition course to engage in the same types of writing our future writing consultants had already named as significant: students in the SLWP would have the opportunity to use writing to learn and

to collaborate on projects that would result in publication, and perhaps even social change.

During the summer of 1994, we met several times with the instructors in the project, as well as with representatives from the Service-Learning Center and local agencies. We developed a plan whereby the writing of each group of SLWP students would be supported by a UWC for the semester. Because we wished to study our role in the project from the viewpoint of the consultants, we asked them to reflect (either in writing or in a discussion format) on the experience—twice during the semester and, again, in February of the following semester.

When we began to study these reflections, we were not surprised to discover that the issues raised by our work in the project were ones we frequently grapple with in our work in the Writing Center: the usual host of everyday procedural problems and, more importantly, the complexities of collaboration.

Scheduling and Technical Support

Some of the procedural issues that emerged included difficulty meshing the schedules of three busy students and an even busier writing consultant, and limited access to technology such as desktop publishing programs necessary for the production of brochures and pamphlets. Our experience with other projects in which students (especially first-year students) must work together has taught us to use students' schedules and, on a large campus such as ours, housing locations as well, to form groups. We also request students set aside a regular meeting time early in the semester before other obligations and interests take precedence. We even set up student groups on e-mail to facilitate communication.

While desktop publishing programs are available in some locations on campus, access to such technology is limited and, in any event, not many of the writing consultants have expertise in these areas. Some suggested investigating other sources of technical support (both programs and personnel), including a determination of what was available at the agency itself. Producing a document on a software program unavailable to the agency, they reasoned, made future revision of the document by agency personnel difficult at best.

The challenges of scheduling and technology are typical of any new project and are probably the most easily resolved. The more difficult challenges fell into a completely different arena. Every time we asked the UWCs to write about or discuss this project, one question came up again and again: What was their role?

The Complexities of Collaboration

"My group has taken responsibility for their project and that is great, but I often debate whether or not I should jump in and 'prod' them to get things done when I see them falling behind."

In the course students take to prepare themselves to become UWCs, we stress their role as peer consultants engaged in a collaborative endeavor: students working together to negotiate an assignment. Consultations with their peers are primarily conversational. UWCs provide an audience for student writers. They listen to the writers' explanations of their

assignments and their responses to those assignments. They listen to the student writers read what they have written. They ask questions about parts of the developing composition that they don't understand, and they listen as the composers clarify their ideas for themselves. Completion of the writing assignments belongs to student writers. Writing consultants work to understand what student writers are trying to do and to support their efforts, but they do not take on responsibility that belongs to the writers themselves.

The SLWP added a new layer of complexity to this work. Providing support to a group attempting to produce, collaboratively, a piece for publication that needed to work in the world proved more complex for UWCs than providing assistance to a single client working to complete an assignment for a university class. Collaboration took on new dimensions for us. The collaborative nature of the endeavor included not only the collaboration between writing consultants and student clients (this time a group of clients) but, also, the collaboration of the members of the SLWP group with one another and with individuals in the agencies where they were working.

"One difficulty seems to be that [the students] were unable to divide up the project [as they might] in a research project. They can't do a single item without all having the same information and they don't know how to keep one another informed."

The writing consultants working in the SLWP frequently found themselves in unfamiliar roles. They were often looked to as authorities or supervisors, roles they try to avoid in their consultations in the Writing Center. In meetings, sometimes the contact person at the agency treated the writing consultant as spokesperson for the group. Other times, agency personnel proposed assignments to SLWP students that were unlikely to be completed in the time available. On these occasions, consultants felt called upon to become negotiators. Furthermore, the students discovered that to collaborate they needed to keep one another informed of their developing work, but they were not always able to do so.

The more complicated their consulting became, the more tempted writing consultants were to intervene. At the same time, they were uncomfortable about directing the work of their group in any way, because they felt such intervention was not suitable to the Writing Center's philosophy of consulting. They were reluctant to impose themselves on the group; yet, the pressure to produce a publishable piece for the area agency lent a new kind of urgency to their work.

Writing consultants, understanding their work as providing support but not doing writers' tasks for them, are skilled at asking for elaboration or for explanations of complexity. They are respectful of the fact that they are working with other teachers' students, and they are committed to leaving ownership of texts in the hands of the writers. What happens, though, if honoring such ownership means a particular agency's project is not completed on time? How can the writing consultant ask for elaboration or explanations of complexity if students fail to meet to discuss a project? If the students do not set up regular meetings to keep one another informed, should the writing consultants suggest or insist they do so? Should the writing consultants negotiate assignments with the agency or should they leave that to the students? How could the writing consultants determine the expectations of

"At first the students in my group seemed positive about the whole idea, but as the semester went on and the deadlines grew closer, they stopped working as a team."

the different agencies? If the group members are reluctant to put forth ideas or share drafts with one another, how should writing consultants respond? How can writing consultants help members of their groups build greater trust? If writing consultants do not hear from their group, should they call them, or wait?

As we began our work to answer the questions about collaboration that we were raising within the SLWP, we looked more carefully to the lessons about collaboration we were learning from our work in other projects in the university curriculum.

Lessons from Other Collaborative Projects

During the three years of the Writing Center's existence, we have participated in several new projects on campus, including a recently developed interdisciplinary, writing-intensive course in Arts and Humanities. In the second year of that project, we were able to hire writing consultants who had taken the course and who, consequently, could offer more informed support to students currently enrolled in that course. We were also about to have on hand not only the materials used for the course, but also a supply of American history reference materials.

In their reflections on the SLWP, writing consultants suggested we establish similar resources for this project as well. Files on the various agencies, they argued, could provide an introduction to the agency and its work and could also include information about the contact person and sample publications as well as names of writing consultants who had previously worked with the agency. In addition, they suggested that both students and writing consultants would be more committed to these projects if they could choose an agency whose work interested them. Finally, we will be able to hire writing consultants who have also been students in a service-learning writing course and will bring with them experience that will allow us to offer more informed support to students in the project.

Other settings from which we have drawn lessons include our work with international students. When our studies of our own practices revealed concerns in this area, we began to do some research. After considerable reading and in consultation with specialists in teaching English as a second language, we came to the conclusion that we could be more directive with ESL clients. Lacking the native speakers' ability that we depend upon for our style of consulting, these clients do sometimes benefit from direct teaching. By the same token, first-year students working together to produce a publishable text for a community agency may also need more direction than we customarily provide. As we build expertise with the writing projects in which students engage with area agencies, we may become less hesitant to intervene.

Our experiences with the SLWP have shown us, once again, how complicated consulting with students can be, how thin the line is between support and intervention, how few answers we have for so many questions, and how often we

must reinvent ourselves and our roles. When students come into the Writing Center with typical university writing assignments, often from courses our writing consultants have already taken, a certain kind of expertise and confidence is available. When, however, the students are in a course none of our consultants has taken; when they are working on assignments made by persons outside of the university; when they are, by necessity, working collaboratively; when they are working on authentic, real world writing that will be published; when they are working to learn about persons whose circumstances are different from their own; when they are, themselves, entering the public conversations of a democracy, possibly for the first time, they bring new challenges to a consultation. Certainly, as more and more colleges and universities invite students to engage in writing across disciplines and throughout their post-secondary experience, consultations like those in the SLWP will increase. Perhaps consultants should assume a more directive stance in relation to their clients. Certainly we will develop more materials on such projects to be housed in the Writing Center. Surely, we will continue to meet with faculty to talk about their expectations for these new learning initiatives. And, as we have done with this project, we will continue to meet, talk, and write among ourselves, to study what we should do as we invent new roles for ourselves. Unquestionably, we will continue to support writing projects such as this one as promising prototypes of the kinds of writing both students and faculty will find valuable in their work in the university and beyond.

"The group [I work with is] very enthusiastic about getting to interview the kids and Big Brothers and Big Sisters. They also seem to be approaching the whole assignment on a different level other than just thinking of it as graded work. They ... view it as a helpful project for the agency because they're ... promoting the Big Brother/Big Sister agency and possibly may be contributors in helping a child find a Big Brother or Big Sister."

"This group of writers ... [is] more confident than I expected them to be and it shows in their writings. Initially, they were intimidated but ... [they] adjust quickly."

"I was also glad to see ... students in the class realize that they were truly making a contribution to their community. I think that this program's strong point was the emphasis it put on community service, and the professionalism it fostered in those who served."

The Service-Learning Center: A Link in the Chain

Mary Edens, Director of the Service-Learning Center

The major functions of the Service-Learning Center (SLC), the Student Affairs arm of the Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University, are to inform and prepare all MSU students for career and civic involvement through community service. In 1994-95, the SLC coordinated nearly one thousand community agency placements for over 3,000 students. Proven benefits of community-linked educational experiences for students include greatly enhanced career exploration opportunities, skills development, curriculum enrichment, as well as values and moral development.

Since the philosophy of service-learning is based on meeting both the learning needs of students and a needed community service, the SLC connects the university, students, and community agencies, helping to recruit, train, orient, supervise, and evaluate student involvement in community organizations. Students are placed through the SLC for non-credit experiences as well as for credit internships through some academic departments. The SLC also provides support services for academic units and special curriculum initiatives like the cutting-edge SLWP by coordinating openings in community-based programs, and by interviewing and preparing students to find meaningful placements.

The administrative functions of the SLC seek to insure, above all, a safe and civil learning environment for students working and learning in the community, and to facilitate the academic success and retention of MSU students while promoting their social and personal development. SLC-sponsored activities also help build community within diversity at Michigan State. Those students who take advantage of opportunities to learn about another culture through programs like International Interactions report significant increases in their ability to understand, appreciate, and work with different people. Students also recognize that their perception of the "world" may indeed be different from others'.

Getting Personal

At a large public university, opportunities to engage in service projects go a long way to personalize the otherwise anonymous feel of the university experience. Whether serving in soup kitchens, building a Habitat house, tutoring, or working with young children in shelters, students create bonds of friendship and commitment that last throughout their colle-

What Is Service-Learning?
The concept of service-learning refers to service opportunities which enable students to integrate academic work with community service. As a resource center and support service for students and academic units, Michigan State University's Service-Learning Center (SLC) develops the local community placements and assists students in program selection.

Why Volunteer?
Quality community experiences provide students with opportunities to:

- help others
- apply their skills and knowledge
- develop leadership skills
- communicate with different populations
- explore career options
- gain experience
- learn civic responsibility
- help solve problems
- gain exposure to cultural and economic differences
- explore values or ethical issues
- apply research and problem-solving skills

giate careers.

An interesting and welcome by-product of student involvement in community life is a renewed commitment among SLC students to local campus life and campus initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all MSU students, including initiatives that promote community and address issues such as safety, hunger, and health.

Learning by Joining in

Service-learning is a unique form of experiential education that requires students' active involvement in public issues and community needs. To that end, the SLC crafts placement positions in which students provide direct services to youth, assist non-profit organizations with administrative and financial support, serve as advocates or mentors, research issues and develop policy. Many service-learning placements are integrated with university courses. Some courses, like those sponsored by the SLWP, grant General Education credit for academic work undertaken with a direct service component. In 1994-95, those positions spanned the following areas:

- pre-professional internships and field work
- education, special education, youth mentors, and pre-school programs
- health and nutrition
- student leadership initiatives
- human services and mental health
- state and national government internships

Getting Closer, Together

Careful, thoughtful, and structured reflection on the part of students makes service work a dynamic educational process. For that reason alone, the SLC celebrates its partnership with the SLWP and applauds its efforts to enhance students' critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills. To create a context for one's academic effort and ethical enrichment is what most of reflection is about. Understanding the relationships between individual aspirations and the needs of other groups, cities, nations, and cultures requires thought and discussion made possible by the curriculum materials and initiatives devised by SLWP faculty and staff. If we are to successfully reach beyond our individual actions to look for solutions or changes that will improve our communities, our campuses and ourselves, we must deliberately pair action with reflection in such creative ways. After all, "Visions, like objects in the distance, get clearer as we move toward them."

What Are Placements Like?

Undergraduate and graduate students are placed in programs available through the Service-Learning Center. Programs require different time commitments and levels of skill. Students participate in the following settings:

- schools and community centers
- hospitals, clinics, and veterinary clinics
- museums, theaters, nature centers, and galleries
- associations and non-profit organizations
- city and state government
- youth organizations, churches, pre-school centers
- shelters, group and residential homes, soup kitchens
- business offices and televisions studios
- nursing homes and senior centers
- correctional facilities and courts
- recreation centers, gyms, and playgrounds

Community Service-Learning: Two Student Views

An Education Lived Is an Education Learned

Joan Cripe

Joan Cripe is a sophomore at MSU majoring in political science and pre-law. She plans to attend law school and work in legislative administration. She currently lives in Bellevue, Michigan.

What could Lindsay and I have possibly imagined sitting in a writing classroom on the first day of school? Four weeks later we took on an investigative assignment for Michigan Literacy, Inc. Instead of agonizing through the sixth draft of a boring essay on Ben Franklin, we were at the state capitol reporting on a raucous senate budget hearing. Writing classes like the one Lindsay and I enrolled in as freshmen at Michigan State University incorporate conventional classroom work with real life situations which call upon the practical application of course knowledge. By actually interacting with senators we had only seen on television, we found that service-learning provides an exceptional alternative to students otherwise sentenced to serve educational time in the bondage of a classroom.

Allen Wutzdorff, Executive Director of the National Society for Experiential Education, firmly supports service learning programs like ours at MSU. He defends mandatory service education programs in his essay, "Moving in from the Margins." "Community service, when combined with an intentional program of learning," Wutzdorff believes, "not only assists the community, but also creates a critical mass of citizens who have a positive attitude toward service, are more knowledgeable about societal problems and issues, and are experienced in skills necessary for effective service."

Wutzdorff further supports his case with four points linking service-learning to basic education. First, service-learning motivates students by integrating "real world" situations with conventional classroom-based subjects. Second, students apply a great amount of knowledge when they deal with the situational demands of the service experience. Furthermore, students encounter and overcome obstacles, which immensely help their ability to solve actual problems. "Students experience problems from multiple perspectives," Wutzdorff concludes, "and move beyond simplistic views of the issues involved." Students can better understand others and their diverse views. Above all else, Wutzdorff believes, "Students are simply better prepared to meet the challenges of a changing society."

Stanford University student Jeremy Taylor also supports classroom-based community service programs. He has participated in Stanford's Community Service Writing Program

and presents his arguments in a thoughtful and persuasive essay, "Service-Learning: Education with a Purpose." Taylor vigorously defends service-learning. "The successful integration of a service-learning curriculum," he argues, "demonstrates that civic responsibility is fundamental to the advancement of society."

Taylor offers various explanations for the benefits service-learning bestows upon students. He agrees with Wutzdorff. Combining classroom work with community projects enables students to see the practical applications of their knowledge. By becoming active participants in their learning outcomes, Taylor insists, students do not feel like passive bystanders in education. Community service increases students' motivation to learn. He adds, "Students who participate. . . develop a more positive attitude towards others as well as a higher sense of self esteem." Furthermore, this increase in self esteem, Taylor believes, is attributed to the experiential knowledge one gains through service. Unlike the conventional classroom knowledge that evaporates as soon as a test is over, service-learning provides durable and lasting knowledge. "I would not trade my 'real life' experiences while working on this project for any other kind of essay assignment. Through my interaction with the organization and its members, I feel that in a subtle way, this project has prepared me to participate more effectively in society."

Despite the numerous ways service-learning benefits university students, some critics challenge its validity. Foes believe that service is a freewill offering drastically different from the performance of a civic obligation. Some even justify their position by citing the case of U.S. v. Seeger. In this 1965 Supreme Court case, Seeger claimed that due to his religious belief he should not be drafted into the Army. The court upheld his claim and Seeger was not drafted to serve. Opponents of service-learning therefore interpret the court's decision as encompassing any student forced to perform a service for a university requirement.

But isn't there an overwhelming difference between risking your life in the deadly jungles of Vietnam and supervising a gym area for underprivileged children? Service-learning doesn't impose dangerous involuntary servitude, but instead emphasizes expanding the student's personal learning horizons.

Opposers further argue that service-learning exploits cheap labor. In turn, the labor of volunteers represents an opportunity cost, time that students could spend in other more useful ways. But what is truly more beneficial than actual hands-on experience in the "real world"? What better program than service-learning could benefit community projects that are in need of volunteers? Students take an active role while participating in service programs. Isn't that vastly more beneficial to society than the time students spend blinking through classroom lectures on Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*?

As a student interested in furthering my education while serving my community, I gladly support mandatory class-

room-based community service. I believe that if students aren't required to participate in community activities, many would never experience the vital "real world" application of their knowledge. Service creates more well-rounded students like Jeremy and Lindsay who, instead of hibernating in a classroom, enter into the working world. Furthermore, work experience is one of the most vital elements in a graduate's qualifications when applying for a job. Service-learning greatly enhances a student's resume. It attests to his or her experience in the workplace. Service-learning helps students' career decisions and provides them a way to "try out" their life-goals.

Service-learning provides vital experience that complements traditional classroom-based learning. In such a diverse and constantly changing world, shouldn't we welcome this new resource in education? Service programs should be applauded for offering my generation the opportunity for innovative "real world" participation before we have to work at life-long commitments. Without a service experience, we are robbed of a vital piece of our education. Especially with skyrocketing tuition, shouldn't we be offered the opportunity to apply our knowledge outside of the boundaries of the classroom?

Like most peers in my Service-Learning Writing Project class, I can readily attest to Taylor's statement, "Classrooms are filled with students asking questions such as 'Why do I need to learn this?' and 'When am I ever going to use that?' Participating in service-learning experiences in the 'real world' helps students to begin to find some answers to these challenging questions."

Mandatory Community Disservice

Nathan Werner

Community service is a highly valued commodity, but is becoming increasingly controversial because of the growing call to include mandatory service in educational course work. To some, the argument for community service rests on the clear cut foundation of moral values and responsible citizenship. To others, the moral arguments are less clear. A growing majority of Americans nonetheless insist that moral values arising from community service must be encouraged, indeed promoted among today's slacker generation.

Those who propose compulsory community service as a duty of citizenship have many arguments that seem to support their view. Some supporters claim, for example, that service confronts students with the actual application of newly learned knowledge to real world situations and requires students to examine day-to-day problems from multiple perspectives. Such skills supposedly cannot be developed as highly within conventional school confines and are thought to be achievable only through practical application that comes with service. These complex problem-solving skills supposedly will lead to a higher rate of knowledge retention, a better understanding of community problems, and an increased sense of realism in the learning process.

These claims might all seem fairly believable. They may even be good arguments for requiring community service. Upon close examination, however, the claims lose creditability.

The supporters claim that doing community service gives

What these do-gooder adults don't realize, however, is that mandatory community service raises the specter of forcing students to perform public service as a prerequisite of graduation. This easy answer to the perceived problem of enhancing volunteer work creates a series of nettlesome problems that undercut the core arguments of those who favor obligatory service.

students a higher sense of accomplishment and boosts self esteem. Does raking leaves in a park or painting worn out buildings really boost student self esteem? A feeling of accomplishment and an increased level of self esteem cannot come from mandates to do forced labor. Instead, these feelings must arise from each student's prevailing value system learned through cultural acquisition, parental training, religious instruction, and long exposure to powerful role models. Besides, if students do not value the opportunity to do community service, they will waste time seeking feelings of accomplishment and self-esteem cut off from the contexts of culture, tribe, family, church, etc.

By implementing mandatory service in the university curriculum, students lose precious time to complete their scholastic studies. But even worse, there is a blurring of the roles that students and professors traditionally hold. Presently, faculty are seen as givers of knowledge. Proposed mandatory service would turn them into mere supervisors of laborers. To take the educational role out of teaching is a great disservice to the profession. Concurrently, students would no longer seek teachers as sources of information, but view them as bosses or managers.

The proposition that mandatory service programs save money is also a fallacy; actually, such programs drain our tax dollars. The cost of community service is a "hidden cost," tangled in paper work, bureaucratic procedures, and time spent away from more productive tasks. If private organizations implement voluntary service programs, tax dollars would be reallocated to more effective areas and taxes would decrease, thereby benefiting the private sector, service industries, and home owners. Once the domain of local service organizations and churches, mandating service in public education cuts into philanthropy's traditional area of expertise. Moreover, mandatory service undermines citizens' faith in these organizations as vital providers of social charity and civic service.

Obligatory community service also robs America of jobs. As the number of positions allocated to required service programs increases, the number of paid positions must necessarily decrease. This exploitation of involuntary labor causes severe problems in an economy seeking to create additional jobs for its workers. With the shortage of employment in today's job market, every job counts. Transforming even a fraction of those jobs into unpaid and part-time volunteer work only aggravates the unemployment situation.

Further consequences for mandatory service deal with the effect it has upon the actual providers of service. What formerly was an act of kindness, giving feelings of pride and accomplishment in return, now becomes merely a project to finish. Any feeling of genuine concern for those being cared for will be lost.

Subsequently, as students begin to do service on a required basis they will feel as though they have exhausted their duty to society. They might not continue further with service in their lives and careers. A life-long commitment to service is essential to keep the volunteer sector vibrant and

alive. As the majority of service providers become students with little experience or real interest in providing needed work, quality and efficiency of volunteer service will also decline, leading to an erosion of overall productivity.

But not only does the devaluing of services include the providers, it also demeans receivers. Those in need of service expect care from people dedicated to the outcome of their work. Under the mandatory service project, the beneficiaries of service become objects, a means to an end, a way to achieve a goal. Making service mandatory uncouples a genuine altruism on the part of students from the service task at hand. Any real-time human problems encountered along the way may be seen as speed-bumps on the road to a college degree, not as real life problems facing real and often suffering human beings.

There is an even more basic premise in the argument against mandatory community service: mandatory service is involuntary servitude plain and simple. In fact, the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights contain language that clearly underscores the difference between service and servitude. Specifically, the Thirteenth Amendment states, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." To implement a curriculum with mandatory community service flies directly in the face of the amendment, unless students are treated as criminals fit for punishment. Without a trial, indictment, or even a judicial hearing, supporters run the risk of sentencing our children to an unconstitutional act.

In the next millennium, America needs to consider seriously where it is going to place the priorities of service ideals. Will we continue to push the concept of mandatory service, creating a resentment among students and citizens towards charity? Or will America leave the question of service and obligation where it belongs: in the private, moral realm?

In a word: mandatory service is a disservice to all.

Nathan Werner is a sophomore at MSU studying psychology and music. He was reared in Michigan, but looks forward to attending graduate school somewhere out of state.

Service-Learning Writing Project Curriculum Materials

American Thought and Language at Michigan State

The Department of American Thought and Language prepares students for effective writing in various contexts, including academic, professional, personal, and public. The department recognizes that writing is an essential component of a student's intellectual endeavor linked to other aspects of communication such as reading, evaluating, reasoning, and speaking about specific subject matters. The Department of American Thought and Language therefore emphasizes development of students' discourse skills in courses with American heritage content, stressing interdisciplinary and culturally diverse themes and readings as well as introducing students to literary, historical, social, political, and moral perspectives that seek to establish a coherent overview of American society and its place in the global community.

ATL 150: Public Life in America
The Service-Learning Writing Project
Spring 1995

Professor David D. Cooper

Course Description

"Apathy is dead," declared President Clinton in a recent policy address on National Service. Most American citizens today, it would seem, yearn to play active roles in public and community life. According to a 1992 Kettering Foundation survey, however, there are two roadblocks to effective citizen participation: (1) lack of knowledge and training that could help connect people with each other and to the powers that shape their lives, and (2) a dimmed belief that they can make a difference. While it is true, then, that the public's desire to get involved in democratic decision-making has never been greater, actual public participation in democratic government—local, municipal, national—is in serious decline.

ATL 150—"Writing: Public Life in America"—will examine reasons for that decline and explore ways to reverse it. Readings, writing assignments, discussions, and actual public service placements will confront us with basic questions about the struggle for a revitalized public sphere. What does it mean, for example, to be a member of the communities in which we live and work—school and classroom, place of worship and workplace, neighborhood or nation? What does it mean to be a citizen in a democracy? How well do traditions of American citizenship serve the complex demands and increased diversity of civic life in America? What is the relationship between civil rights and civic responsibilities? What are the major challenges to democratic citizenship today? How well are the media—magazines, newspapers, TV—delivering information vital to effective citizenship? What does "service" mean and what does it have to do with democratic citizenship?

We will discuss, debate, evaluate, and write about such questions with the help of diverse readings. In addition, students in this special section of ATL 150 sponsored by the SLWP will benefit from hands-on experiences in various Lansing-area public and community service agencies. Options for students' placements this semester include (1) working individually or with a team of students on a writing project for a non-profit agency, or (2) writing an essay based on volunteer work with a local public service organization. Students' service experiences are carefully monitored by ATL

faculty and the staff of the Service-Learning Center.

Course Format, Aims, and Objectives

ATL 150 follows a seminar and workshop model emphasizing the development of independent thinking as well as collaborative learning processes. Assignments for class preparation and daily discussion, analysis, evaluation, and critique of readings stress constant refinement and routine practice of varied writing activities, including outlining, paragraphing, peer-editing, essay and report writing and revision, leading class discussion, drafting discussion questions, developing group proposals and conducting group research, etc. Our overall objective is to strengthen the following critical competencies:

Critical Reading
- √ identifying central ideas, issues, problems of a text
- √ synthesizing and reconstructing an argument
- √ determining relevant information

Critical Thinking
- √ evaluating hypotheses or conclusions
- √ distinguishing between fact and opinion
- √ formulating appropriate questions
- √ incorporating others' opinions and perspectives

Development of Critical Writing Skills
- √ defining audience
- √ generating and organizing ideas
- √ drafting, revising, and editing for standard usage
- √ using and documenting sources
- √ researching library materials

Performance Evaluation

Students are required to attend all classes, participate in class activities, and complete all assigned work. Work submitted for evaluation is graded on a four-point scale in accordance with common standards adopted by the faculty of American Thought and Language consistent with the policies of Michigan State University. Each assignment has an evaluation ranking—I, II, or III—determined by the amount of time and work it takes to complete the assignment and its relative importance to other assignments. Final grades are calculated by averaging assignments at each rank and weighting them as follows:

Level I Assignments	=	60% of Final Grade
Level II Assignments	=	30% of Final Grade
Level III Assignments	=	10% of Final Grade

Work submitted by study groups—subject to the same ranking system—receive common evaluations. Each member of a study group receives the same grade for an assignment

submitted for evaluation on behalf of the study group.

Required Books

HH: Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Harper and Row, 1986)
ED: Benjamin Barber and Richard M. Battistoni (eds.), *Education for Democracy* (Kendall/Hunt, 1993)
MV: "Rethinking Democracy: Citizenship in the Media Age." *Media & Values*, Number 58, Spring 1992
WC: Ann Watters and Marjorie Ford (eds.), *Writing for Change: A Community Reader* (McGraw-Hill, 1995)
PAC: "The Service-Learning Writing Project: Resource Packet." Course packet.
For Reference: Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference* (St. Martin's, 1989)

Writing Assignments

Week 1 Assignment (Level I)

Interview your roommate (or close friend, family member, etc.). Sketch out for him or her brief portraits of the four individuals introduced in *Habits of the Heart*, Chapter 1, "The Pursuit of Happiness" (pp. 3-20). Of these four individuals, whose "value system" best approximates your roommate's own commitments, aspirations, purposes, ideas of success, happiness, etc.? Don't settle for superficial responses. Probe beneath the surface for reasons your roommate identifies with one of these individuals. Explain those reasons in a 2-page, typed (double spaced) report.

Week 2 Assignment (Level II)
Sentence Outline:
***Habits of the Heart* Chap. 2, "Culture and Character: The Historical Conversation"**

Instructions:

Work together in your study group to complete the following sections of the sentence outline (handout):
Study Group #1: The Biblical Tradition (pp. 28-30)
Study Group #2: The Republican Tradition (pp. 30-31)
Study Group #3: Utilitarian Individualism (pp. 32-33)
Study Group #4: Expressive Individualism (pp. 33-35)
Study Group #5: Thesis Statement: a 3 or 4 sentence summary of the various traditions based on pp. 27-28.

It is very important that each study group write accurate entries for their section of the sentence outline. Don't rush. Your next essay assignment will be based on the completed sentence outline. Any group that fails to record accurate entries will be responsible for lower grades for the entire class on the next essay. So please take time to craft your entries precisely. Examine the entries already provided as models for filling in your own section. Write complete sentences. Evaluations of each study group's section will be based on two

Reading Assignments and Discussion Topics

Week 1
Walt Whitman, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" (handout)
Robert Frost, "Mending Wall" (handout)
Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again" (handout)

I. Foundations, Heritages, and Languages of Commitment in America

"The Pursuit of Happiness," HH pp. 3-26

Week 2
"Culture and Character: The Historical Conversation," HH pp. 27-35

II. The Call of Citizenship

Week 3

The School and the University

Benjamin Barber, "The Civic Mission of the University," ED pp. 449-455
Edward Bloustein, "Community Service: A New Requirement for the Educated Person," ED pp. 461-466
Michael Moffatt, "Community," ED pp. 497-499
Dinesh D'Souza, "Illiberal Education," ED pp. 503-511
Michael Morris, "Educating Citizens for a Multicultural Society," ED pp. 521-526

Neighborhood and Nation

Jane Addams, "Civic Cooperation," ED pp. 547-553
Martin Luther King, Jr., "On Being a Good Neighbor," ED pp. 555-562

Week 4

The World

Benjamin Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld," ED pp. 593-601
Howard Frederick, "Around the World: Television Campaigning Varies Widely," MV pp. 18-20

Rights and Responsibilities

Allen Wutzdorff,"Moving in from the Margins," ED pp. 197-199
Bruce Chapman, "A Virus Attacks the Volunteer Sector," ED pp. 437-442
Jeremy Taylor, "Service Learning: Education with a Purpose," WC pp. 193-198

III. Democracy, Citizenship, and Service

Week 5

Citizenship and Democratic Community

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Selections from ***The Social Contract***, ED pp. 25-32

criteria: accuracy and clarity. Be clear, accurate, and precise.

When your study group is finished, hand in the final draft of your section of the outline to Study Group #5. In addition to writing a thesis statement, Study Group #5 will be responsible for typing a final version of the complete outline and making 25 copies for distribution in class.

Week 3 Assignment (Level I)

Expand your interview report to include an analysis of your interviewee that takes into account the cultural traditions we studied last week and summarized in the collaborative sentence outline. Incorporate into your expanded draft sufficient information from the sentence outline.

Consider, for example, which tradition (Biblical, Republican, Utilitarian Individualism, Expressive Individualism) best informs your interviewee's responses to your descriptions of Brian, Joe, Margaret, and Wayne. How is a particular tradition reflected in the choice your interviewee makes when asked to identify with one of these individuals? Be sure to analyze and evaluate your interviewee's "values vocabulary" as you expand your draft.

Also, carefully revise and edit your initial interview report and the expanded draft. Make changes based on mechanical, structural, and stylistic concerns, as suggested by the questions on the Editing Checklist attached to your last essay. Format: 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced.

Week 4 Assignment (Level I)

According to Allen Wutzdorff ("Moving in from the Margins") and Jeremy Taylor ("Service-Learning: Education with a Purpose"), what are the benefits of classroom-based community service programs? In your judgment, should such service programs be mandatory or voluntary? Carefully develop your own position, but be sure to present a balanced argument that includes both sides of this debate, including the strong views of Bruce Chapman ("A Virus Attacks the Volunteer Sector").

Be sure to use the Editing Checklist attached to your last essay to review and revise your new essay before handing it in. Format: 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced.

Week 5 Assignment (Level III)

Rousseau's "Social Contract" is essentially a binding agreement between the individual and the community as a whole, or what he calls "the body politic." The Social Contract can be thought of as a formal pledge. "If we discard from the social compact," Rousseau says, "what is not of its essence, we shall find that it reduces itself to the following terms":

"I,_____, put my person and all my power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and, in its sovereign corporate capacity, I will receive and respect each

member as an indivisible part of the body politic."
Carefully rewrite Rousseau's Social Contract into a formal pledge that your roommate will readily understand. (Definitions: "sovereign" means "supreme," "indisputable," "potent"; "indivisible" means "not capable of being separated or divided into parts.")

Study Group Requirements

Each study group will be in complete charge of one class hour on the Wednesday assigned in the syllabus, Part III, "Democracy, Citizenship, and Service: Study Group Bibliographies." Study group classroom responsibilities include:

Study Group Bibliographies

• From your study group bibliography in the syllabus, select a reading assignment for the other students;

• Make a brief presentation to class highlighting the reading's relevance to your study group theme;

• Stimulate full discussion of the reading with the rest of the class;

• For a Level II writing assignment, give the class a question based on your study group's reading. Written responses, limited to one typed page, are due the following Friday.

In addition to conducting a class session, each study group must submit the following documentation:

1. Reading Synopsis A study group probably will not ask the class to read all the reading selections on its syllabus bibliography. However, each group is required to read and study its bibliography in full and submit a written reading summary (typed double-spaced) not to exceed 8 pages. Level I evaluation.

2. Library Self-Guided Tour Each study group must complete the MSU Main Library Self-Guided Tour and take the quiz included in the Tour booklet. Level III evaluation.

3. Author Bibliography Each study group is required to select an author from its syllabus bibliography. Write a one-paragraph biographical portrait of that author. Attach a formal bibliography of that author's writings. For the bibliography format, follow the directions and guidelines in Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference,* pp. 180-185. Level I evaluation.

Bibliography: Study Group #1

John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," WC pp. 89-92
Jacqueline Rouse, "A New First Lady," WC pp. 92-99
Bess Kennedy, "Summer of Success," WC pp. 103-108
Desmond Morris, "Altruistic Behavior," WC pp. 108-113
Toni Cade Bambara, "My Man Bovanne," WC pp. 117-122
William F. Buckley, Jr., "A Call to Arms," WC pp. 125-133

Week 6

Citizenship, Morality, and Responsibility

Aristotle, "The Politics," ED pp. 135-138

Bibliography: Study Group #2

Robert Coles, "Privileged Ones: Problem Child," WC pp. 14-24

Marian Wright Edelman, "A Family Legacy," WC pp. 24-30

Shirley Brice Heath and Milbrey McLaughlin, "Community Organizations as Family," WC pp. 40-47

James Q. Wilson, "The Family Values Debate," WC pp. 59-73

Richard Stolz, "Domestic Violence: Confronting Myths of Masculinity," WC pp. 73-81

Week 7

Challenges to Democratic Citizenship--Prejudice, Difference, and Inequality

Jonathan Kozol, "Savage Inequalities," ED pp. 293-303

Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," WC pp. 231-238

Shelby Steele, "I'm Black, You're White, Who's Innocent?" WC pp. 263-270

Bibliography: Study Group #3

Studs Terkel, "Mike LeFevre: Who Built the Pyramids?" WC pp. 209-216

Martin Espada, "Jorge the Church Janitor Finally Quits," WC p. 219

Ronald Takaki, "Breaking Silences: Community of Memory," WC pp. 219-232

Peter Marin, "Helping and Hating the Homeless," WC pp. 270-283

Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," WC pp. 285-299

Week 8

Challenges to Democratic Citizenship--The Tyranny of the Majority

The Bill of Rights and Amendments XIII, XIV, XV of the United States Constitution, WC pp. 329-334

Bibliography: Study Group #4

Benjamin Barber, "The Reconstruction of Rights," ED pp. 352-359

Herman Melville, excerpt from ***Billy Budd***, ED pp. 361-370

Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery," ED pp. 371-377

Gobitis v. Minersville School District and Korematsu v. U.S., ED pp. 379-385

Week 6 Assignment (Level III)

In "The Politics," Aristotle claims that "good citizenship" requires "an experience of ruling as well as of being ruled." In light of Aristotle's claim, do you consider yourself a "good citizen"? Describe a situation in which you "ruled" or had authority to make decisions over others. Did that experience give you a better appreciation of "being ruled" by others and, according to Aristotle, make you a better citizen? Why or why not?

Week 7 Assignment (Level III)

You may recall Dinesh D'Souza ("Illiberal Education") mentioning a rise of undergraduate bigotry on American campuses. At the University of Michigan, for example, a series of racist incidents and sexually degrading remarks about women prompted the administration to adopt new policies, including preferential treatment for minority students and faculty, and censorship regulations outlawing any speech on campus offensive to victimized groups such as "persons of color, women, and homosexuals."

Did the University of Michigan administration do the right thing? Why or why not?

Incorporate into your answer the position staked out by either Audre Lorde or Shelby Steele in the following quotes.

"Certainly there are very real differences between us of race, age, and sex. But it is not those differences between us that are separating us. It is rather our refusal to recognize those differences, and to examine the distortions [of power] which result from . . . them and their effects upon human behavior and expectation [including:] Racism, . . . Sexism, . . . Ageism. Heterosexism. Elitism. Classism."

"[I]n this society, race must not be a source of advantage or disadvantage for anyone. This is fundamentally a moral position, one that seeks to breach the corrupt union of race and power with principles of fairness and human equality: if all men are created equal, then racial difference cannot sanction power. . . . [O]nly a moral power based on enduring principles of justice, equality, and freedom could offset the lower impulse in man to exploit race as a means to power."

Week 8 Assignment (Level III)

Section 1 of the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution reads (fill in): "Neither slavery nor _____ _____, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

The 13th Amendment has been cited recently by students and parents opposing mandatory community service programs in public schools. Write out a short argument in support of their position. In particular, what specific provision in the 13th Amendment best supports their case?

Week 10 Assignment (Level III)

If Thoreau lived in Omelas, how would he react as a responsible citizen to the situation depicted by Le Guin in her story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"? Would Thoreau remain among the townsfolk? Or would he be among those few individuals who quietly walk away from Omelas? Incorporate into your answer (1) a precise definition of citizenship according to Thoreau and (2) a key quotation from "Civil Disobedience."

Week 11 Assignment (Level II)
Polling and Public Opinion

In his essay "Making Politics Work," Jay Rosen defines "public discourse" as "the sort of talk a democracy needs . . . to illuminate our troubles and connect them to broader issues." Public discourse, more specifically, is "open and understandable to all." It "deals with major problems affecting society." It is "conducted in a civil fashion." Above all, public discourse "protects private and intimate matters from the glare of the public realm."

Public discourse, then, is crucial to the democratic model we have been studying: dissemination of information, public debate of issues, and decision-making by elected officials.

Polling has become a popular source of information gathering. Public debate of controversial issues and decision-making often rely on information tallied from public opinion polls.

Assignment Design and conduct a public opinion poll to help the Lansing Human Relations Board decide whether to recommend to the City Council adoption of an ordinance banning discrimination against people based on sexual orientation. (See "Residents debate rights law.") Keeping in mind Jay Rosen's characteristics of "public discourse," carefully design with your study group four questions that can be answered "Yes," "No," or "Don't Know."

Split up. Walk around campus. Find at least 2 students, and conduct your poll. Come back to class and tally your answers with others in your study group.

Based on your polling results, write a memo to the Human Relations Board. Advise them. What decision should they make regarding the proposed ordinance to ban discrimination against people based on sexual orientation?

Week 12 Assignment (Level I)
Polling and Public Opinion—Follow-Up

1. As a pollster, what kinds of assumptions about discrimination against people based on sexual orientation did you make prior to formulating your polling questions?

2. In what ways are those assumptions reflected in your polling questions?

3. By rephrasing your polling questions, could you have got-

Week 9
SPRING BREAK

Week 10
Challenges to Democratic Citizenship--To Serve or Not to Serve
Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," ED pp. 417-423

Bibliography: Study Group #5

Ayn Rand, from ***The Fountainhead***, ED pp. 405-410
U.S. v. Seeger, ED pp. 413-416
Henry David Thoreau, "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience," ED pp. 397-404
Frances Wilkinson, "The Gay Cadet," ED pp. 425-435
"Communities of Memory," HH pp. 152-162 and "Private and Public," p. 163

IV. Citizenship in a Media Age

Week 11
The Democratic Model
Clay Jenkinson, "From Milton to Media: Information Flow in a Free Society," MV pp. 3-6

Polling and Public Opinion
Jay Rosen, "Making Politics Work: Journalists and the Public Share Responsibility," MV pp. 10-12
Hannah Arendt, "The Public Realm," ED pp. 59-65

Week 12
News and Information: Are They Opposites? and Shopping Headlines
Frances Moore Lappé and Paul Martin DuBois, "Brave New World: Rediscovering Democratic Media," MV pp. 7-9

Photo Opportunities: PR or Politics?
Wally Bowen, "Not a Bang, But a Whimper: Citizens Want to Participate But the Media's Roar Drowns Out Their Voices," MV pp. 15-17

V. Public Service Agency Writing Projects

Weeks 13, 14, 15
Writing Workshops

Week 16
VI. Reflection, Evaluation, and Review

ten different responses from the students you polled? Select one of your polling questions. Rephrase it. What response is the new question likely to evoke? Explain how the new question works to evoke those different responses.

4. What is sacrificed when polls replace other kinds of public opinion in political debate?

You now have the option to revise your original memorandum to Lansing's Human Relations Board

ATL 150: The Civic Tradition in America
The Service-Learning Writing Project
Fall 1994

Professor Laura Julier

Course description

There are several aims of this course. The first is to create an intensive seminar in which to explore the idea of community service, in both contemporary culture and the history of the United States. The second is to develop critical thinking, writing, and reading by repeated close analyses of language and ideas. The third is to work on writing projects which serve the particular audiences and needs of a community agency.

Writing

During the first half of the semester, you will write weekly papers. Two papers will be based on material from the library. The purpose of these is to help you become familiar with the resources of the university's research library, and to think critically about the uses of researched material. During the last portion of the semester, you will work intensively with your collaborative group to complete a writing project for a non-profit community agency.

In all the writing you do this semester, whether for the class or for the larger community as audience, you will not be writing in a vacuum. That is to say, the ideas with which you will be wrestling—sometimes in order to find and develop your own position about them—all have a history. Others have contributed to the development of those ideas. In the academic writing you do, you will take your place in a shared, scholarly conversation about ideas. You will have to consider your own ideas in light of others'language and thinking. In either case, I will expect you to appropriately acknowledge and document those other thinkers, whether a published writer from another century or someone in class, and to give credit where it is due for help in developing your ideas and work.

Community service

A major component of this course requires active involvement with a community service agency during the semester. At the beginning of the term, you will visit, interview, and get to know this agency and its staff. As the term progresses, you will also be doing research about this agency, its history, and its place in the community. During the second half of the term, you'll be working in a group to produce writing for the

agency. All of this will require independence and initiative on your part: you'll have to travel to the agency, arrange to meet with and interview professionals and volunteers working with the agency, and determine how to meet the needs of the agency in your writing.

Discussion and preparation

I will run this course as a seminar, a set-up that may be new to you, and which you will not likely encounter again until junior or senior level courses in your major. Course work will require daily preparation and active participation, which will constitute a major portion of your grade.

Collaboration

Much of the work you do in this course will be in groups. Collaborative work requires you to pay equal attention to two things: being responsible for your share, and holding others accountable for their share. Part of the work I will evaluate for your final course grade will be the growth of your collaborative skills.

Critical thinking

I will ask you to probe, analyze, and question constantly. I will be asking you to pay close attention to language, which may seem to some of you like being overly picky. We will spend the semester developing these close analytical skills so that they may become second nature to you as you write, read, and think in the other areas of study you take up, both within and beyond the university.

Workshopping

Each week, we will collectively read and respond to writing by members of the class. Each person will have writing workshopped by the class at least once during the semester. I'll expect you to be able to read carefully and respectfully. But I'll expect you to go beyond the superficial in your response to your peers' ideas, and to ask probing, substantive questions. I'll expect you to develop an understanding of the difference between response and evaluation, and between analysis and judgment.

Texts

- ***Education for Democracy,* Barber and Battistoni, eds.**
- ***A Pocket Manual of Style,* Diana Hacker**
- **Service-Learning Writing Project Resource Packet**

- **Loose leaf paper—not a spiral notebook.**
- **Two portfolios or folders in which to keep your written work for the semester. You must keep all your work—if it's not there, I cannot grade it.**

Absences

We cannot "make up" for your absence from our discussions, and you cannot "make up" for what the class did together. That's the reason for this attendance policy. Failure to attend

class, whether excused or unexcused, will lower your final grade. I realize that emergencies arise, so you will have three "free" absences. Save them. More than three (3) absences lowers your grade by .5. More than six (6) results in automatic failure of the course. If you know ahead of time that you will not be in class, please tell me. If you miss class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed and being prepared for the next class. Use the phone or e-mail.

Papers

The way in which you present your ideas and words to readers matters. This is true whether you are presenting your work to the public on behalf of the agency with which you work, or presenting it to the class. I expect you to give care to the presentation of final versions of your manuscripts. Type everything, with a print quality which will make a clear photocopy, leaving margins on all sides. Number each page. Put your name, date, and class number and section on the top of the first page. Title each manuscript. Keep a copy of everything you turn in. Take the time to proofread carefully.

Reflective commentaries

This is an integral part of each paper. After you have finished typing and printing the paper, slowly and carefully re-read it. Write to me about the following: what do you see that you like? what do you wish you had done differently? what would you add if you had more time? what exactly do you want my response to? what did you struggle over? what choices did you think you had, and why did you make the ones you did? what did you hear from other readers (writing consultants, peers, group members, agency staff) that caused you to change things in the writing, or to think differently about what you had to say? The longer and more detailed this is, the better! This is how you demonstrate to me your awareness of your writing process and of your audience, your ability to analyze language, and your use of other readers to get feedback. An assignment is not complete if it is not accompanied by a commentary.

Evaluation

I will not put a grade on individual papers (for reasons I will explain in class). At midterm and at the end of the term, you will submit a folder with all the work you have done thus far, and I will evaluate that work, along with your contribution to class discussion. I will evaluate it as a whole, though you will have the chance to direct how I review it. I know, however, that you need to be able to gauge yourself. So you may ask me to evaluate your work with a grade at any time during the term. But you must first make an appointment, and bring your entire folder of work, having reviewed it yourself, and be ready to tell me how you evaluate your own work according to the criteria handed out in class.

You must complete all parts of the course in order to receive a passing grade. Each of the following will weigh one-third

(33%) of your final grade:

(1) Participation in discussions and being prepared for the class's work each day. I evaluate how well you are able to think along with others. This means that I expect you to develop the scholarly habits of acknowledging the words and ideas of other thinkers, and incorporating the work of other thinkers into your own writing. I expect careful attention to language, when you read and when you write.

I evaluate how well you develop in your ability to work with others. Most American schooling does not teach us how to work collaboratively, and therefore these are skills to be learned and practiced. I expect you to be thoughtful about how you collaborate, try new strategies, and consult with others about ways to work better. I expect you to reflect on this and articulate your self-assessments in the reflective commentaries, in progress reports, and in conferences with me.

(2) The agency project portfolio. You will have a series of forms (including evaluation of your contribution to the collaborative work of the group) to complete as you work on the project, some of which are to be filled out as a group, and some to be completed on your own.

(3) All other papers, including the library research, and reflective commentaries (see above).

Sequence of Readings

Week 1
Getting Started: Generating Ideas, Using Details

Writing Assignments

Assignment Sequence #1

A. Please take the time to write for us about your experience doing community service, or as a volunteer, or as a social activist. What did you do? Why did you do it? What value did it have for you? How did you choose this particular form of service? What do you think you took away from it?

B. Find three different dictionaries. Be sure they are from different publishers and have different publication dates. Then look up the following words in each one:

service	**serve**
servant	**community**
volunteer	**activism (or activist)**

Write down the title, publisher, and publication date of each dictionary, and under each word note anything that stands out for you, especially differences in meanings between words and between dictionaries that seem significant or thought-provoking to you.

C. Interview your roommate, family member, or close friend. Ask this person the same set of questions in A (above). Also ask your interviewee to tell you what comes to mind when he or she thinks about service or serving, and community.

Week 2
Entering the Conversation: Reading and Responding to Early Drafts

Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party," ***Education for Democracy***

Robert Coles, Introduction to ***The Call of Service***

Assignment #2

In the "Introduction" to *The Call of Service,* Robert Coles tells a story (of sorts) about the ways in which he had come to understand the "nature and satisfactions" (xiii) of the activities we have been calling service. He does this, he says, by "drawing upon a life's observations and experiences; upon interviews with and reflections by people who have been [his] teachers; and upon thirty years of 'field work'as a teacher and as a volunteer" (xxvi). This story he tells is not organized chronologically (although he does often tell us what happened before or after something else); rather it is a story that weaves various strands of ideas and language. The strands are often associated with a particular individual—his father, for instance, or Dorothy Day—but Coles is not trying to link each individual with one particular way of thinking or one set of terms. Instead, his purpose is to try to think more complexly about these kinds of activities and to look more carefully at this idea than is commonly done. So in this introduction to his book, Coles describes a variety of perspectives on service, presenting them and exploring them.

As you re-read Coles' "Introduction," first determine what he is saying. How does he attempt to define service? What are some of the positions about the work of service that he reflects upon? As you re-read, you should locate statements and passages that identify the substance of his thinking and the insights or questions that he ponders.

Please write a paper in which you enter into a dialogue with the ideas and positions in Coles' text. Do the kinds of attitudes about service which he describes have anything to say about the kinds of activities and motives that you have observed and/or written about? What do you think Coles would say about the examples and experiences you have been thinking about, listening to in class discussions and interviews, and have experienced yourself? What do you think he would say to Laura, the young woman in "The Garden Party"?

Consider this paper one for which you will take the time not only to write more fully, but also to attend to the presentation of your manuscript (see "Papers" on the syllabus). You must also do a Reflective Commentary (see syllabus) for this paper.

Week 3
Finding and Developing a Position

Robert Coles, "Kinds of Service," chapter 2 in ***The Call of Service***

Assignment #3
As we proceed with our collective investigation of the ideas of service and community, it's important to find out what we each bring to the discussion. I have thus asked you to begin a process of exploring your own past learning and experience, to find out where your thinking is right now. You have done some associative thinking, explored your own past experiences, listened to others share their ideas and experiences, and even done a kind of research by looking to see what some authorities about language have to say about the meanings

and uses of the words by which we sometimes convey this idea of service.

By repeatedly taking time to stop and put down on paper your ideas, you have begun to draft a more detailed and complex consideration of the ideas of service and community than you had when you came into class the first day.

So now I would like you to produce an essay in which you explore the idea of service, and what kinds of meanings it has come to have for you at this point in your study. What does it mean to be of service? Is that different than serving? What motivations are there for choosing to serve, and choosing whom to serve? What is the purpose of serving? What values or guidelines motivate people who serve? How do obligation and choice shape your ideas about service?

These are just a few of the many issues that have come up in our discussions so far. You do not need to address or attempt to "answer" all or any of them. I offer them as ways to begin or to be challenged. You should let your own thinking set the direction, scope, and depth or extent of your writing. Draw on all the sources you have turned to in the past few days. The key here is to explore. This means that you will not settle for "answers," and you will note and pursue contradictions, not in order to reduce or resolve those contradictions but in order to raise questions which will lead to further investigation and more complex thinking.

Week 4
Bringing Other Voices into the Conversation

Hannah Arendt, "The Public Realm," ***Education for Democracy***

Robert Bellah, selections from ***Habits of the Heart***

Daniel Kemmis, "Barn Raising," ***Education for Democracy***

Alexis de Tocqueville, "Of the Use Which the Americans Make of Public Associations in Civil Life," ***Education for Democracy***

Assignment #4
This week we have considered the various positions of Tocqueville, Arendt, Bellah, and Kemmis as they think about the value of community, or a shared common life. What is its purpose? What good is it? Why ought we to value it?

In this paper, I would like you to reflect on and analyze your own "practice" (to use Kemmis' term) and your own share in the public sphere of a common, communal, community life. Be specific and detailed, and use the language of your fellow thinkers to describe and analyze your experience.

How do the language and the perspectives of each writer help you to understand and think about your experiences? How do you end up viewing your experiences in light of what you understand these writers to be saying? Are there ways in which one writer's language or ideas present a challenge to another's?

I will assess this paper based on how well you integrate the language and ideas of these writers with your own thinking; how well you correctly acknowledge and punctuate the language of others; as well as how deeply you push yourself to wrestle with these issues.

Week 5
Library Instruction: Reference Materials

Wendy Kaminer, selections from ***Women Volunteering***

Material from a variety of reference works on the following: Dorothy Day, Mother Mary Jones, Sojourner Truth, Mary McLeod Bethune, Jane Addams, Margaret Sanger, Ida B. Wells, Susan B. Anthony

Assignment #5: Using Library Reference Materials

You have, by now, heard me say often enough that as a university-educated person, you should be approaching texts by asking questions about them, rather than as if you are a sponge mindlessly absorbing and accepting what you're told. That is your purpose with this next assignment. This paper asks you to critically analyze the treatment of one of these social activists in at least three different biographical reference works.

As a group, you will first locate at least five biographical reference books which include an entry on this person. Read them comparatively. Determine which three give you an interesting range with which to work. You may choose the same three as the others in your group, or not, but you should all have at least one in common. You may, if you want, deal with more than three.

Your job in the paper is to analyze how the choices which the writer/editors have made create a representation of this person. Examine and consider the following in each: the choice of details (what's included and what's omitted); the choice of language (judgment words, tone, adjectives); choices in ordering and arranging the details; the focus of the reference book in which it appears; and the type of entry (refer to the information given you by the Reference Librarian's presentation). Especially consider what assumptions about gender roles seem to be made in these texts, using the insights from Kaminer's chapters.

In this paper, your job is not to re-tell this person's life. Your job is to focus on the texts as pieces of writing which someone created for readers who want information. Does the entry encourage you as a reader to unthinkingly accept what it says as "fact"? Does it let you know the sources of what it tells you? Does it let you know that there are disputes or differing positions on this person's life and work? How? Remember you are not a sponge—you are thinking about the texts, questioning them, probing.

Here are some warnings and guidelines when doing this assignment:

• Copy down all the information you'll need to create the Works Cited page the very first time you look at a book. If you don't, you will waste time having to backtrack.

• When you photocopy items, be sure to write on the back of the page the full bibliographic information of the book from which you copied it.

• You'll need to document reference books like any other book, with complete information. Review Hacker, pp. 83-97.

• I will make no allowances and have no sympathy if in the final version of your paper you omit bibliographic information

Week 6
Library Instruction: Periodical Indexes

or tell me you couldn't find it again.

Assignment #6: Using Periodical Indexes
You have used the biographical reference books to search for information about one woman's life and work. Now you are going to search for a different kind of source about her work. You will be looking at the various indexes created for finding articles which have been published in different kinds of periodicals.

In the course of this assignment, you will (1) search out what has been written about (and also by) this woman; and (2) learn how to determine whether the MSU libraries actually own the periodicals in which the articles appear. You will not have to find or read the articles. Assignment #6 has two parts.

I. After the hour of instruction by the Reference Librarian, you will begin to create a list of 4 - 6 articles by or about this woman's work.

In the same groups you used for #5, search through at least one index in each of the following categories:
- **—Index to general readership periodicals**
- **—Index for journals in a scholarly, specialized field (make a reasonable choice about which ones, depending on your subject)**
- **—Index of periodicals for non-mainstream concerns or readers**
- **—Index to newspapers**

Note: The entire group must work together with each kind of index, but you may divide up the work <u>within</u> each index by taking (for example) five volumes each.

You may not find anything in some of the indexes, or you may decide that what you find is not something you would actually use for a paper you might do on this woman's work. After you have searched in each of the indexes, choose 4 - 6 to use for your list. These must be articles in periodicals, and they must be ones that you believe would be potentially useful to go find and read. Choose which articles to put on the list by reasoning with your group.

II. You will format this list as a Works Cited page. We will discuss the rules and logic for doing this, so carefully study Hacker, pp. 83-98, and bring to class any questions you have. Important note: The order of information which appears in an index citation is not the same as the order or kind of information in the Works Cited citation. They have different purposes and therefore are presented differently!

Weeks 7
Library Research

Assignment #7: Using Periodical Indexes to Research an Issue
In the course of this assignment, you will (1) use the informa-

tion you have about the various periodical indexes in the MSU Main Library; (2) begin with a research subject or question and end by identifying specific articles you decide are useful for your project; and (3) learn how to get your hands on the actual articles. Assignment #7 has several steps.

I. Determine with your group an issue that is relevant to the work you are doing for the agency project. The project may not require research, but we are using our class to learn more about the work of the agency and the issues with which it deals. You've been learning about that by hands-on experience, and by writing for the agency. Now you will begin to find out what others have written about this issue. You must (a) identify which subject headings you will begin your search with, and which kinds of periodicals you expect to find appropriate material in; (b) explain this to me before you take the next step.

II. Use the indexes to identify 7 - 10 articles which you have reasoned (with your group) are likely to be worth looking at if you were starting to work on a paper about this issue. You will turn this list into a typed Works Cited page.

III. Write a step-by-step narrative explaining the thinking and search process you went through to create the list. When you write this, choose the steps wisely—I don't want to read the trivial steps or the mistakes, unless you learned from them. You should include what you did and why. It should explain why you chose each article—that is, why you thought it might prove useful for you to spend the time to track it down and read it for the paper. Your reason should be more than merely a summary of the item's title. Consider the type of periodical it appears in; consider how each choice complements the others; consider if you know anything about the writer. Write clearly. Each person will turn in their own Works Cited page and narrative.

This assignment will be evaluated on:

- **mechanical correctness of the Works Cited page;**
- **whether your list of Works Cited shows me you searched intelligently, used the library's resources correctly, and that you looked for a range of sources and perspectives;**
- **whether your step-by-step narrative is clear enough to demonstrate that you fully understand the resources you used to get the items listed.**

Week 8
Developing a Position, Continued

Assignment #8

The selections we've read this week represent a variety of positions on the current debate about national service. They raise some of the same issues with which we have been wrestling in this first half of the semester:

When does service serve the self and when does it serve the community?

What are the implications if community service is manda-

Selections from ***Education for Democracy:***

President Wm. J. Clinton, "National Service" and "Address on National Service, March 1, 1993";
Jon Van Til, "Here Comes National Service";
Shirley Sagawa, "Historical Background: An Overview";
Donald J. Eberly, "Toward National Service as an Institution";
Theodore M. Hesburgh, "Educating for Service";
Allen Wutzdorff, "Moving in from the Margins";
Jack Calhoun, "Youth Service: Pervasive, Local, Empowered, Positively Driven, Personally Invested";
Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, "Making Service-Learning the Center of the Debate on School Reform";
Ira Harkevy, "Community Service and the Transformation of the American University"

Weeks 9, 10, 11, 12
Workshop Agency Projects

Week 13
Thanksgiving break

Week 14
Connecting Reflection and Practice

Martin Luther King, Jr., "On Being a Good Neighbor," ***Education for Democracy***

tory? if it is voluntary?

What are the implications if it is compensated (either by money or by some other goods, such as college course credits or loan credit)?

What is the purpose of community service? to promote responsible citizenship? to develop positive character in youth? to reform higher education by connecting classroom learning to hands-on experience in the community and workplace? to solve community problems? to change society?

Choose two of the above sets of questions. Use the readings for this week to derive and articulate a case for both sides of each question. Write a paper in which you move from the argument or disagreement framed by these readings to a clear position of your own based on your experience and your reading thus far this semester.

Assignment #9

Option I

Katherine Mansfield's short story, "The Garden Party," and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s interpretation of the biblical story of the Good Samaritan—as well as some of the experiences of people about which Coles writes—all suggest in one way or another that real service is not going to make us comfortable, or necessarily result in others being grateful to us for whatever service we render. In fact, it can be very uncomfortable because it leads us to encounter people from whom our culture usually keeps us separate, and in that way, it challenges some of our assumptions about people.

Although we started this semester by reading a story about a very concrete experience in "The Garden Party," our readings for the rest of the first half of the semester about the overall concept of service were by and large theoretical and philosophical. In the second half of the semester, however, you had hands-on, concrete experience working with and for a community service agency. And now, in this last week of the semester, you have read public figures talking about other practical programs of national and local community service. This paper option gives you a chance to re-evaluate your ideas about service from the beginning of the semester by looking at your experiences, and by thinking about them in the context of congressional legislation and a movement in higher education reform.

I'd like you to write a paper in which you pull all of these perspectives together. First, re-read all the notes you wrote on the readings in the first half of the semester; also re-read assignments #1, 2, 3, and 4. Use the ideas about national ser-

vice addressed by the readings from these last two weeks, and your experience with the community agency with which you worked, to analyze and re-evaluate what you said in those papers. You may find that these readings also cause you to re-evaluate your experience with the agency.

Option II
Assume you are going to write a research paper on community or national service, focusing on one particular aspect or angle of community and national service that was raised in our final week's reading and in-class discussion. Create a Works Cited page, and as with assignment #7, write a step-by-step narrative about the search process as well as your rationale for the choices in the Works Cited page.

Week 15
Presentations, Evaluations, Closure

The Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University Student Resource Packet

A Note to Students

In your American Thought and Language 150 class this semester you will be studying and writing about "Public Life in America." You will also be assigned a major writing project that meets the special needs of a Lansing-area public service agency. That's what makes your SLWP-sponsored ATL section unique and challenging. You will work on a writing project that makes a real difference for a real audience. Your writing project will have a direct impact on the lives of people in our local community.

You might be asked, for example, to write public service announcements (PSAs) for a Tri-County youth employment center that offers counselling for young persons your age who don't go to college and are having trouble finding a job. You might work on a new descriptive brochure for a non-profit organization that assists individuals with severe physical disabilities and their families. You might be assigned to write public service "spots" for a local TV station. Or a newsletter for refugees. Or a "Fact-Pack" analysis of statistics on domestic violence in our community.

The faculty and staff of the Service-Learning Writing Project believe that community service writing assignments such as these help build and refine what Benjamin Barber calls "the literacy required to live in a civil society," along with the discourse skills necessary for university-level work.

This "Resource Packet" includes guidelines, forms, checklists, and worksheets which will help you organize, expedite, and evaluate your service-learning writing project.

On behalf of the participating community agencies, the Service-Learning Center, the Department of American Thought and Language, the Writing Center, and the College of Arts and Letters, we extend to you a warm welcome to the Service-Learning Writing Project. And we invite you to join us in "Bringing MSU Students and the Community Together through Education."

David D. Cooper
Laura Julier

SLWP Student Resource Packet: Contents

Participating Community Agencies, 1994-95	***50***
Guidelines for Student Writers	***51***
Writing Project Proposal Form	***53***
Writing Project Agreement Form	***54***
Audience Assessment Worksheet	***55***
Writing Project Progress Update Form	***56***
Writing Project Portfolio Checklist	***57***
Joint Project Evaluation Form	***58***
Confidential Reflection Form	***59***
Confidential Review of the Collaborative Process Form	***60***

The Service-Learning Writing Project gratefully acknowledges the Community Service Writing Project, Stanford University, for providing assistance, advice, and material support.

Service-Learning Writing Project: Participating Community Agencies

Michigan Self-Help Clearinghouse

The Black Child and Family Institute

MSU's Service-Learning Center

Impression 5 Science Museum

Housing Resource Center

MSU's Healthy U Communications Group

Michigan Capitol Girl Scout Council

Whitehills Health Care Center

Economic Crisis Center

Council Against Domestic Assault

Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Greater Lansing, Inc.

Youth Development Corporation

United Cerebral Palsy of Lansing

Gateway Community Services

Ingham-Clinton-Eaton Counties Senior Mental Health Services

Michigan Literacy, Inc.

Michigan Women's Historical Museum and Hall of Fame

Lansing Area Rotating Sanctuary

Mid-Michigan Clothesline Project

MSU State Walk

The MSU Sexual Assault Hotline

The Service-Learning Writing Project: Guidelines for Student Writers

1. Before contacting your agency, organize your study group. Exchange phone numbers, e-mail and campus addresses. Compare class and work schedules.

- **When and where are best times for all study group members to meet?**
- **How will you schedule your initial agency contact?**
- **What transportation arrangements will you make?**

2. Call the contact person at the agency as soon as possible. Identify yourself as a writer with the Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP) at Michigan State University. Request an appointment for a meeting. Find a time when every member of the study group can be present. If the contact person isn't in when you call, be polite but persistent. Ask when he or she will return, leave a message, and call again the same day.

- **Who will make the first phone call to the agency?**
- **What questions should you be prepared to ask?**

3. If you don't have a car and are unable to carpool with others for your meeting with the agency, find another way to get there. CATA bus tokens are available for SLWP students. Sign-up for tokens at the Service-Learning Center, Room 27, Student Services Building. Tell your instructor if your transportation arrangements are interfering with your writing assignment. He or she may be able to find alternative ways to get you there.

4. Before the first visit to your assigned agency, carefully review the "Service-Learning Writing Project Proposal" form, the "Service-Learning Writing Project Agreement," and the one-page "Position Description" of your agency assignment prepared by the Service-Learning Center. Your initial meeting with the contact person is very important. It may be your only chance to talk with him or her face to face to clarify your assignment. Use the meeting to learn exactly what will be expected of you and to work out an assignment that will satisfy both the agency's needs and your instructor's requirements.

- **To whom at the agency will you be responsible? Contact person? Other agency staff?**
- **What kind of document is needed? Who will read it? How will it be used? How long should it be? What format should it be in?**
- **How will you get the information you need? From your own field work? MSU's library system? The agency's library? Interviews?**
- **How long will it take to complete the project? Can you**

and your contact person make a reasonable estimate?

- When is the deadline for your "Progress Update"?
- When can you show someone at the agency your first draft? When will the final copy be due? When will it be printed in its final form?
- How should you get your document to the agency? By hand-carrying it? Mail? Electronic transfer?

You may find it useful to examine other documents in your agency's files that you can use as models for your own project.

5. While you're working on the agency project, ATL class sessions and instructors' office hours will be devoted to presentations and discussions of each study group's in-progress work. Use these important workshops wisely. Your instructor, the other student-writers and writing consultants in the Writing Center are valuable resources for suggestion, feedback, and constructive critique.

- What practical snags are you running into?
- What specific writing problems are you having?
- Is your writing—diction, style, tone—suitable for its intended audience? (See "Audience Assessment Worksheet")
- What new insights, discoveries, or problem situations have arisen related to your service-learning experience?

6. If your document is to be professionally printed—if it's a newsletter article or brochure, for example—be sure to ask for copies. You'll need one for your study group portfolio (see "Guidelines for SLWP Portfolios"), one for your instructor, and one for the SLWP office files.

7. The Service-Learning Writing Project is an opportunity for you to learn not only about writing for new audiences but also about some important work that committed professionals are doing in the community. Don't be shy. The more you engage with the people at the agency the more you can learn.

8. Be professional and responsible in all your dealings with the agency. If you need more help or more information, call the contact person as soon as possible. Do not delay. Do not do your work at the last minute. Do not ask for an extension. As student-writers, you represent both the SLWP and Michigan State University. Remember that you are writing for a professional agency. Staff members at public service agencies are often overworked; they may not return your calls promptly, or their deadlines may not be convenient. Please be flexible, courteous, and persistent.

Adapted, with permission, from
The Community Service Writing Project, Stanford University

Service-Learning Writing Project: Project Proposal

Instructions for Students
Fill out this form during your first meeting with the agency contact person. When completed, give one copy to the contact person and your ATL instructor. Keep a copy for your SLWP Portfolio. Type or print clearly.

Date _____
Organization _____
Contact person _____ **phone** _____
Student writers 1. _____ **phone** _____
2. _____ **phone** _____
3. _____ **phone** _____

ATL instructor _____ **phone** _____
ATL course/semester/year _____

1. Briefly describe the kind of document to be written (audience, purpose, topic, length):

2. How will the document be used (printed in newsletter, distributed to the public, kept for agency's internal use)?

3. How will the writers get the information they need (MSU's library system, the agency's library/files, interviews, etc.)?

4. How often will the student writers and contact person confer?

5. Deadlines: For "Progress Update" _____
For Rough Draft _____
For Final Copy _____

Service-Learning Writing Project: Project Agreement

Instructions for Students
Fill out this form (typed only) shortly after your first meeting with the agency contact person. When completed and signed, give one copy to the contact person and your ATL instructor. Keep a copy for your SLWP Portfolio.

Date _____
Organization _____
Contact person _____ **phone** _____
Student Writers 1. _____ **phone** _____
2. _____ **phone** _____
3. _____ **phone** _____

ATL instructor _____ **phone** _____
ATL course/semester/year _____

Project Parameters
1. **Subject/Topic for project:**

2. **Brief outline of project:**

3. **Estimated length of project:**

4. **Goals for project:**

5. **Audience for project:**

6. **Project format (typed hard copy? computer disk? other?):**

Project Time Requirements
1. **Estimated time needed for research:**

2. **Schedule for study group meetings:**

3. **Schedule for conferences with agency contact person:**

Project Deadlines
For "Progress Update" _____
For Rough Draft _____
For Final Copy _____

Signatures

Student Writer _____
Student Writer _____
Student Writer _____
Agency Representative _____
ATL Instructor _____

Service-Learning Writing Project: Audience Assessment Worksheet

Instructions for Students

Collaborate with your study group peers in response to the following important questions about your community writing project audience. Type or print clearly.

1. How large is the audience?

2. How diverse is the audience? What is their gender, age, economic, political, and social background? What distinguishes them as a group?

3. What values do we share with the audience?

4. How are our values different from those of the audience?

5. Will the audience be interested in the subject? Why?

6. How will learning about the subject benefit the audience?

7. How can we engage readers' interest in the subject?

8. What background knowledge does the audience need in order to understand the issues covered in the document? Will any technical or complex words or concepts need to be defined or explained?

9. Do we need to learn more to reach out to the audience effectively and to explain the subject more convincingly?

10. How can we anticipate objections that the audience may have to the information, approach, or point of view of our document?

Service-Learning Writing Project: Progress Update

Instructions for Students
Fill out this form (by deadline stipulated on Agreement form) and give one copy to your agency contact person and your ATL instructor. Keep a copy for your SLWP Portfolio. Type or print clearly.

Date _____
Organization _____
Contact person _____ **phone** _____
Student Writers **1.** _____
2. _____
3. _____

ATL instructor _____
ATL course/semester/year _____

Brief outline of your Project:

1. **Your progress to date: What have you completed?**

   What is in progress?

   What remains to be assigned or completed?

2. **Have any problems surfaced? Describe:**

3. **Your plan for dealing with problems or obstacles:**

   What material resources do you need to complete the project?

   What institutional resources do you need? (From your instructor? the Writing Center? the Service-Learning Center? other study groups?)

   What can your agency do to help?

   How can your study group be organized more efficiently?

4. **What do you need to do to meet your deadlines?**

Service-Learning Writing Project: Project Portfolio Checklist

Instructions for Students

Use this form as a checklist to help organize your Project Portfolio. You may present your Portfolio in any number of attractive formats: box, three-ring binder, files, folder, etc. Include in the Portfolio the following items, in order:

I. Planning your writing project

1. **SLWP Proposal Form**
2. **SLWP Agreement Form**
3. **Audience Assessment Worksheet**

II. Working on your writing project

1. **Research materials: bibliographies, brochures, interview notes, letters, etc.**
2. **Progress Update Form**
3. **Rough draft(s)**
4. **Final draft**
5. **Final Copy (if printed in a newsletter, etc.)**

III. Evaluating your writing project

1. **Study Group Project Evaluation Form**

IV. Other items to include in the portfolio that will help document your service-learning writing project? If so, list them here:

Service-Learning Writing Project: Joint Project Evaluation

Instructions for Students
After filling out this form, give one copy to your agency contact person and your ATL instructor. Keep a copy for your SLWP Portfolio. Type or print clearly.

Date _____
Organization _____
Contact person _____
Student Writers 1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

ATL instructor _____
ATL course/semester/year _____

1. Give a brief history of your project: what you wrote, the joys and trials of the project, critical incidents during its preparation, etc.

2. Do you feel that the piece you wrote will be useful to the agency? In what ways? Or why not?

3. What did you find most worthwhile about the project? Did it provide you with new educational experiences and/or learning tools?

4. What did you learn about writing that you might not have learned in a conventional classroom?

5. What advice do you have for future SLWP student writers?

6. What suggestions can you offer to improve the Service-Learning Writing Project?

Service-Learning Writing Project: Confidential Reflection Worksheet

Note to students
This evaluation form is confidential. It will only be read by your ATLinstructor. Do not include it in your SLWP Portfolio.

Your Name _____
Organization _____
Agency Contact Person _____
Student Writers 1. _____
2. _____
ATL Instructor _____

1. How did your SLWP experience contrast with your previous classroom and writing experiences? In what ways, if any, have your educational values and expectations been changed or altered?

2. What did you learn about the importance of communicating with new audiences while completing this project?

3. What did you learn about working collaboratively? What insights have you gained into the value of discussing experiences, ideas, and strategies? What difficulties did you encounter?

4. What did you learn about yourself—your personal values, your cultural values, your responsibilities as a member of your campus, your community, as a citizen of our country?

5. What did you learn about the social issues that your agency was working to change and improve?

6. In what ways did the reading, writing, and discussions that you did for class help you to understand the issues and the people you were working with at your agency?

7. Would you choose to be involved in a similar type of project in the future? Why or why not?

8. What particular strengths did you contribute to your study group?

9. What did the other study group members contribute? How would you assess their contributions?

Service-Learning Writing Project: Confidential Review of the Collaborative Process

Note to students
This evaluation form is confidential. It will be read only by your ATL instructor. Do not include it in your SLWP Project Portfolio.

Your name _____
Student writers: **1.** _____
2. _____

Your ATL instructor _____

1. In what specific ways did you contribute to the work of your group on the writing project?

2. What do you think were your strengths in working collaboratively?

3. In what areas of your collaborative work do you think you learned the most this semester?

4. What do you think other members of your group would say about your strengths in working collaboratively?

5. What part of working collaboratively do you think you most need to develop or improve?

6. What do you think other members of your group would say you could do better in working collaboratively?

7. What did the other group members contribute to the collaborative work you did?

8. Were you and your colleagues able to accomplish something in your work together that you would not have been able to accomplish alone? If so, tell me about it.

The Service-Learning Writing Project at Michigan State University: Suggestions for Participating Agencies

1. Student writers assigned to your agency are responsible for arranging an initial meeting with a contact person. The Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP) provides each student team with a set of forms designed to clarify and expedite their agency writing projects.

Project Proposal: **Filled out and signed during the initial meeting, this form helps students and contact persons lay out the strategic details of writing assignments.**

Service-Learning Writing Project Agreement: **A formal agreement for services to your agency filled out by students, and signed by students, faculty, and agency representative.**

Progress Update: **Submitted mid-way through the project term, this form helps all parties—agency contact persons, students, faculty, project staff—to identify and rectify any problems.**

Agency Follow-Up Report: **Completed by contact persons, this short report form helps faculty and Service-Learning Center staff review and improve community-based writing projects sponsored by the SLWP.**

2. Take advantage of your first meeting with the student writers to lay the groundwork. You will probably want to clarify such matters as these:

What kind of document do you want the students to write? Who will read it? How will it be used? How long should it be? (If possible, supply the students with a model or a sample from your agency files.)

How are the students to find the information they need? You may want them to do research in the MSU library or elsewhere; feel free to make that request. Or perhaps you'll supply them with the names and phone numbers of some people to contact for an interview.

When do you want to see a draft of the document? Can you take time to give valuable feedback and suggestions for revision? When will a final copy be required? (It is important

"I am pleased with the fine piece produced by Joan and Lindsay for the MLI newsletter. This is the first time we have ever published anything that could be construed as an opinion piece, and I hope it will incite others to comment on relevant issues in the future. Their article is also especially fitting for this issue focusing on literacy and women."

—Donna M. Audette, Executive Director
Michigan Literacy, Inc.

"Three students in the project worked on updating and revising our 'Guide to Employment.' This 42 page guide is used individually and with groups of 16 to 21 year olds we are helping attain employment.... It is important that the book be geared to the reading level of most of our clients. Each client gets a workbook to use and keep for further help.... The students ... worked well independently and required what I expected as far as supervision.... We were pleased in how they used classmates to test some of their ideas and the research they did to provide new insights. They did an excellent job and ... [s]taff only made changes which were minor...."

—John Tucker, Executive Director
Youth Development Corporation

"I also enjoyed working with the students on the ... article ... published in the UCP of Michigan newsletter.... [They] produced an excellent article requiring very minor changes or correction. It was a pleasure working with [the students]."

—Judy Widder, Director of Programs and Services
United Cerebral Palsy Association of Michigan, Inc.

"The students worked very well.... They were faced with many new people to contact and a very busy time in the agency for all program directors.... The two brochures ... completed by the students were well done. Their writing skills were great and they developed the material in the way that I asked them to.... I was very happy with the way the assignment was finished. I now have two brochures that can be duplicated for two of my child welfare programs and they contain all the information that the program directors asked for."

–Nancy K. Zaleski, Associate Development Director
Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children

"This was an outstanding opportunity for freshmen students to practice skills that are so essential in the workplace. I watched the students assigned to our agency develop a team, learn how to negotiate with one another, develop an action plan for the project, and give and receive constructive feedback.

"The communication skills that were practiced in my student group far exceeded the initial writing assignment. In order to complete the project, the students needed to make calls, conduct interviews, research a variety of topics, and produce a product as a team. This was an excellent opportunity for the students and a great assistance to our agency....

"The students were very invested in producing quality articles for our newsletter. In working with them I was able to hear them talk about assignments they had in other classes: their focus was always the due date. In this project they focused on the quality of their product and the agency's needs.... It is so neat to see student[s] 'catch fire' as they explore a topic or idea that they have never considered before. This type of experience makes learning exciting and meaningful while promoting citizenship and societal awareness."

–Georgia Davidson, Assistant Director
Service-Learning Center

for students to have clear deadlines that fall before the end of the semester.)

3. Consider how you can best inform students about your organization. The students will have seen the one-page "Position Description" prepared by the Service-Learning Center at MSU describing your agency and its writing needs. That's all students know about you. You may want to supply more information about your agency's mission, constituency, and history.

4. Students find this assignment satisfying because it gives them a chance to do some meaningful writing that serves not only themselves but someone else in a community on or off campus. Students like knowing that their work matters. Please be explicit about how you will use their work, and explain its value to your organization.

5. While exact class schedules vary with each instructor, students usually work most intensively on their agency projects for 3-5 weeks during the last third of the semester. Student writers are working, then, within a fairly tight timeframe. It is their responsibility, however, to keep on top of the work. We stress that students must be reliable and professional when representing the SLWP and MSU to the community. Still, they may need some nudging from you. You might, for example, ask them to call you on a regular basis to give you progress reports and to raise any questions they've encountered, or simply to ask for help.

6. Feel free to call the students' instructor. We welcome your concerns.

7. If the students' work appears in print, please send copies to the writers (and a few extra copies for their instructor). We'd appreciate a copy too. Mail it to:

The Service-Learning Writing Project
Department of American Thought and Language
Michigan State University
235 Ernst Bessey Hall
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1033

Adapted, with permission, from
The Community Service Writing Project, Stanford University

Moving Towards Collaboration

Rocky Ray Beckett
Deputy Director of the Economic Crisis Center

The Economic Crisis Center (ECC) is one of ten emergency homeless shelters in the Lansing area. Each shelter is unique in the services and facilities it provides. By working together in the shelter providers' network most homeless individuals and families have shelter and some basic needs met in times of crisis. Our mission at the ECC is to serve homeless families and women, and to "provide a safe and supportive living environment which promotes dignity, self-worth, and independence."

In the fall of 1994, the ECC participated in a collaborative writing project with the Service-Learning Writing Project (SLWP) at Michigan State University. In keeping with our mission, the partnership provided a working connection between college students and families experiencing homelessness. When speaking of dignity, self-worth, and independence we are speaking, after all, of relationships between people. Solutions to homelessness are not simply "one-way" hand-outs or single individuals picking themselves up by the bootstraps. For individuals to feel worthy they must be treated with dignity; for a family to be independent it must have opportunity along with responsibility. Thus the people who are not homeless, but who donate time, money, and personal items to the ECC are important not only because they keep the organization running, but because they are learning and building relationships with people they normally would not meet. Facing new experiences, finding similarities, creating understanding and building community are vital to ending homelessness. The SLWP is an excellent opportunity to build such "two-way" streets by increasing students' abilities to work in collaboration with others, especially in problem solving, and teaching good writing skills and demonstrating the power of communicating well.

These challenges are confronted every day as our organization carries out its mission. Lansing has a network of shelter providers, but we still struggle with families that move from shelter to shelter without gaining stability, and people with special needs like physical or mental illness who cannot find help. Agencies like ours have to move beyond networking and build collaborative relationships with shared missions and goals to solve difficult social problems. We have to resolve issues like client confidentiality and create a seamless continuum of services so people do not fall through the cracks.

Success will come through pursuing meaningful collaboration and more effective communication between service organizations. Community service organizations and our society suffer from too many "turf battles." People would rather do it their way than spend time to find common ground.

Today's social problems are multi-dimensional and require multi-faceted solutions. Thus, people and organizations have to become more effective in their social relations. The problem is not always lack of resources or involvement; sometimes an agency's internal organization or short-sighted self-interest are the problems. Organizations that have healthy communication, visionary leadership, synergy among members, and inclusive mission statements will be good problem solvers. Preparing ourselves and future generations to meet problems with genuine and effective skills in collaboration and communication will keep the solutions to today's problems within society's reach.

In addition to these social benefits, I had hoped SLWP students would complete a number of writing assignments to benefit the ECC. As an orientation, students were required to volunteer for ten hours at the shelter and write a short reflection on their experience. The three main assignments were a volunteer brochure, several articles for a volunteer newsletter, and a paper about homelessness in the greater Lansing area involving research and personal interviews.

The four students working with the ECC were able to complete the orientation assignment and the newsletter articles satisfactorily. However, the brochure created an obstacle, and the research project was not even started. The latter was not a surprise because it was a large assignment, but the lack of progress on the brochure was at times frustrating.

Upon reflection, the student group and our organization had the same problems seen in society as a whole. First, the students handled individual assignments with varying success, but had a difficult time organizing, planning, and collaborating on a joint project. For instance, they were a very diverse group but they did not transcend their differences quickly enough to use their diversity as an asset. They struggled with differences and seemed to be moving towards a better working relationship, but they never approached a more synergistic attitude.

Second, the staff made assumptions and had expectations that hindered our ability to communicate our needs and anticipate problems. Primarily, we assumed students would have better writing skills and be more self-directed. The students required more direct supervision and specific directions about proper grammar, content, and how to address the audience. When originally discussing the assignments they seemed to be overwhelmed and did not know where to start. The inability to get started and the lack of knowledge about technical resources, like desktop publishing for a brochure, seemed to be obstacles. Toward the end of the semester some of these obstacles were being overcome, but not in time to complete the volunteer brochure.

Finally, the time constraint of one semester proved to be

a problem for the ECC's writing projects. The student group made progress during the semester, but with a full year the projects would have been completed and the students would have furthered their working skills in both collaboration and communication.

Realizing that this was a pilot project for everyone, not only the students, the SLWP was a success. The problems that developed were to be expected and will be overcome by experience from the initial project. Our organization and communities are struggling to develop skills in collaboration and communication to solve problems; we must allow and expect SLWP students to struggle too, and hope that we can learn to work together more effectively and create the synergy necessary to solve today's problems. Our staff, professors, and other professionals are now better prepared to communicate with each other, handle obstacles, and lead the students through their writing projects. Finally, to use the sixteen week semester more effectively, a clearer initial understanding of student skills combined with technical support that helps students gain confidence and a fast start would increase the effectiveness and final outcomes of writing projects.

I would not hesitate to involve the ECC with a future SLWP. The service-learning philosophy has important contributions to make to academic life, and publications are effective ways to empower students. My motivation for working with the SLWP in the first place was my commitment to the importance of teaching college students skills in collaboration and communication to solve immediate and pressing community problems.

A Portfolio of Student Projects

- **Michigan Literacy, Inc.:**
  An Editorial

- **Whitehills Health Care Center:**
  A Newsletter Article

- **Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children:**
  Two Informational Brochures

- **Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Mental Health Board:**
  A Pamphlet

"Ready for the Challenge": A Student Reflects on the Service-Learning Writing Project
by Lashawnda Jackson

Michigan Literacy, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of the literacy skills of Michigan citizenry through the effective efforts of volunteers.

"We wrote an article for a special edition of LITFlash devoted to Women and Literacy.... [Our article] is the first editorial ever ... published in the magazine. It informed readers about relevant Senate and House bills and ... current issues surrounding reforms.

"We were required to interview a senator and a Michigan House representative concerning adult education reforms.

"Writing and revising was fun and enjoyable.... We learned how to interview and quote properly [and] how to write persuasively with direction toward a specific audience ... other than our professor."

New Jobs Commission Is Bad News for Adult Education in Michigan

by Joan Cripe and Lindsay Ferlin

Shelly, a busy 35 year old wife and dedicated mother of two, never found the time to graduate from high school. Now that both of her children are grown and have moved away, Shelly wants to return to school and earn her diploma. Completing her high school education is a very important goal in her life. Shelly's story is not uncommon in Michigan where adult education programs offer people like her a second chance at educational advancement and career success.

Governor John Engler holds a very different view about the importance of adult education in Shelly's life and its place in Michigan's public arena. He sees adult education as a matter of personal enrichment, and not the business of the state or a basic entitlement of citizenship. He believes that state dollars should be allocated for jobs programs, not adult education.

Engler proposes new legislation that threatens tested programs used for educating state citizens over the age of 25. Currently, Michigan pays $3500 per student regardless of age for adult education. Engler's new proposal takes all money from adult education and shifts it over to a new "Jobs Commission." Under Engler's plan, the Jobs Commission will grant money to private companies and corporations to create employee education programs. General Motors, for example, could receive state tax dollars by offering math classes to further develop employees' math skills.

But how do citizens enroll in these classes? People over 25 seeking to further their education would already have to be working for a company such as General Motors to even be eligible for Adult Ed classes. Then employees would have to be specially invited to attend an education program offered and approved by the company.

What company, one might reasonably ask, would hire a person like Shelly in the first place without a high school diploma? The Jobs Commission plan leaves precious few opportunities for adult citizens without diplomas who still seek to better themselves through education.

How do supporters of Engler's new plan justify these new attacks against adult education? Some legislators feel the problem lies with individual school districts that reallocate funds earmarked for Adult Ed. They believe many schools transfer state money purposely targeted for adult education into general funds, which can then be misallocated for anything from textbooks to cheerleading skirts.

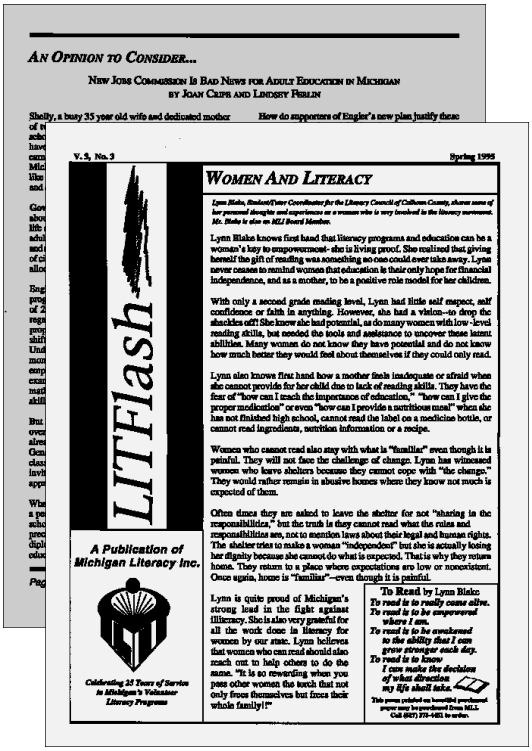
The majority of Michigan's congressional leaders tentatively support Engler's new Jobs Commission. Many senators, including Senator Leon Stille, endorse Engler's idea; however, the arbitrary cut-off age for earning a diploma still

troubles them. "What happens to an individual [such as Shelly]," asks Senator Stille, "who has not landed a job? She slips through the cracks and is left with no options. I find that unfair."

So what does the shift of public funds to the private sector mean for volunteers of such organizations as Michigan Literacy, Inc.? The unfortunate result is more adults in need of help. More demands are put on volunteers. Existing programs are stressed. It is difficult to find, train, and keep committed volunteers. Engler's Jobs Commission, as a result, taxes already understaffed non-profit organizations.

Is John Engler's Jobs Commission really an employment boon to the people of Michigan? With the focus on jobs rather than on education, it's hard to escape the irony: illiteracy in Michigan is likely to increase, causing even higher unemployment rates.

[An editorial for LITFlash, 3.3 (Spring 1995), The Newsletter of Michigan Literacy, Inc.]



AN OPINION TO CONSIDER...

NEW JOBS COMMISSION IS BAD NEWS FOR ADULT EDUCATION IN MICHIGAN
BY JOAN CRIPS AND LINDSEY FERLIN

Shelly, a busy 35 year old wife and dedicated mother

How do supporters of Engler's new plan justify these

V. 3, No. 3 Spring 1995

LITFlash

A Publication of Michigan Literacy Inc.

Celebrating 25 Years of Service in Michigan's Volunteer Literacy Programs

WOMEN AND LITERACY

Lynn Blake, Student/Tutor Coordinator for the Literacy Council of Calhoun County, shares some of her personal thoughts and experiences as a woman who is very involved in the literacy movement. Ms. Blake is also an MLI Board Member.

Lynn Blake knows first hand that literacy programs and education can be a woman's key to empowerment- she is living proof. She realized that giving herself the gift of reading was something no one could ever take away. Lynn never ceases to remind women that education is their only hope for financial independence, and as a mother, to be a positive role model for her children.

With only a second grade reading level, Lynn had little self respect, self confidence or faith in anything. However, she had a vision--to drop the shackles off! She knew she had potential, as do many women with low-level reading skills, but needed the tools and assistance to uncover these latent abilities. Many women do not know they have potential and do not know how much better they would feel about themselves if they could only read.

Lynn also knows first hand how a mother feels inadequate or afraid when she cannot provide for her child due to lack of reading skills. They have the fear of "how can I teach the importance of education," "how can I give the proper medication" or even "how can I provide a nutritious meal" when she has not finished high school, cannot read the label on a medicine bottle, or cannot read ingredients, nutrition information or a recipe.

Women who cannot read also stay with what is "familiar" even though it is painful. They will not face the challenge of change. Lynn has witnessed women who leave shelters because they cannot cope with "the change." They would rather remain in abusive homes where they know not much is expected of them.

Often times they are asked to leave the shelter for not "sharing in the responsibilities," but the truth is they cannot read what the rules and responsibilities are, not to mention laws about their legal and human rights. The shelter tries to make a woman "independent" but she is actually losing her dignity because she cannot do what is expected. That is why they return home. They return to a place where expectations are low or nonexistent. Once again, home is "familiar"--even though it is painful.

Lynn is quite proud of Michigan's strong lead in the fight against illiteracy. She is also very grateful for all the work done in literacy for women by our state. Lynn believes that women who can read should also reach out to help others to do the same. "It is so rewarding when you pass other women the torch that not only frees themselves but frees their whole family!!"

To Read by Lynn Blake
To read is to really come alive.
To read is to be empowered
where I am.
To read is to be awakened
to the ability that I can
grow stronger each day.
To read is to know
I can make the decision
of what direction
my life shall take.

This poem printed on beautiful purchased paper may be purchased from MLI. Call (517) 373-1821 to order.

Whitehills Health Care Center is a skilled nursing facility for residents requiring 24 hour care, with a 115 bed capacity offering speech, occupational and physical therapies.

"What I wrote for Whitehills was an article that will be included in their monthly newsletter on the environment at Whitehills and how residents' rights are maintained. [My goal was] to inform residents and their families, but also people who are looking to put their loved ones in there.... What I found most worthwhile about the project was the fact that I got to meet so many wonderful people. I saw how hard it is for a facility to try and keep everyone happy. One thing I learned was how to form a questionnaire and how to interview to get answers from people."

Whitehills: A Home Away from Home

by Tommie Cook

As a freshman at MSU, one of my general education requirements is a writing course called American Thought and Language. In this class, I am required to write for an agency in order to experience working with the outside community. When I was assigned to Whitehills Heath Care Center I was unsure about my knowledge or experience working with this kind of facility. After my first visit, I was curious how the residents felt about the environment at Whitehills and if their rights were protected and granted. The rights that I was most interested in were privacy, residents voicing their opinions, and the quality of the staff. I finally decided to find the answers by interviewing the residents myself.

In order to research residents' views, I needed to develop a questionnaire survey that would help me learn how residents perceived the protection of their rights as well as their overall feelings about Whitehills. It was late fall when I sat in the Activities Director's office, asking one of the residents how they felt about the quality of the staff. Many of the residents shared similar answers. The majority said that the staff was very educated, warm-hearted and they always watch what the residents eat to make sure they're not jeopardizing their health. One of the residents said, "They won't let me eat more bacon and sausage than I'm allowed." Others said the staff were friendly, and are always encouraging them to remain strong and get better. One man told me that he was upset with two of the techs and he let them know. After hearing of his unhappiness, one of the techs attempted to become better friends with him and regain his friendship. This only proved to me that the staff is hard working, and would do almost anything to make the residents happy.

In response to questions about privacy, I was told that there was a lot for a place that was so group oriented and busy. One resident said that the staff usually knows what they have in their rooms, only because health safety laws require them to know. Other examples of privacy were that the staff always knocks before entering the rooms, and the employees will not discuss what's going on with the other residents' privacy. After seeing how much activity went on in the center, I was impressed with the amount of privacy the residents received.

The majority of the residents responded to questions about their quality of life by talking about the fact that they must sacrifice the things that mean a lot to them to get the continuous care they need. They also said that they've done so many wonderful things in their lives, then all of a sudden they are confined to one place and need everyday care. I couldn't see how people who have lived full lives and possibly

raised children were now accepting the fact that they have certain restrictions on places they can go. As two residents told me, though, "You have to ask permission because if you can go anywhere, you don't have to be here." Many miss not having their families around, driving their cars, seeing their friends, and having their independence.

I asked each of the residents why they chose Whitehills, and many of them told me that their families traveled to a number of different health care centers and found that Whitehills was the best. The families felt that the rooms were larger, cleaner, odorless, and in a good location. The residents said that even though Whitehills was so big, the center tries to make everyone happy. They try to put people in the rooms they want, and try to offer a variety of activities. I talked to a man who didn't really need to be in Whitehills, but he wanted to be with his wife, so the center allowed it. Another key feature was the Residents' Council, which is there for the residents to change certain things and voice their complaints. The president of the Council told me that they try to solve the problems when they are small so they don't turn into mountains. The advice she gives every resident is that they must accept the things they cannot change, like the rules and regulations, but stay and fight for the things they can.

After my several visits to Whitehills and my experience interviewing the residents and watching the staff work, I have come to the conclusion that Whitehills offers superior care and concern for its residents. They try to accommodate the needs of the residents as well as the staff and try to assure the families that their loved ones will be well cared for. In the state of Michigan, all health care centers must maintain certain rights, such as privacy, religion, room assignments, and the right for residents to voice their opinions. After looking over the law, I feel that Whitehills meets all the standards and needs of its residents. I would be comfortable sending any one of my family members there, and I'm sure they would develop new friendships in a positive environment.

Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children is a Lansing-based social services agency which sponsors 13 different programs, including services for refugees and children.

"Our task was to create and revise informational brochures with a consistent format for a number of programs under the auspices of Catholic Social Services. This involved contacting program directors, and learning about their services.... All of us had our own creative ideas on formatting, but with our limited time, not all suggested combinations could be tried. Ideas were voted on and compromises were made.... We hope that people in need of services provided by these agencies, after reading the brochures, will not hesitate to seek help."

—Jeremy Raben, Berna Oszoy, Kim Anderson

Ballentine Stepping Stones

Helping homeless mothers take a step in a new direction.

Stepping Stones Mission

To provide safe, structured transitional housing and social services to assist homeless mothers and their children toward social, emotional, and economic well-being.

A Transition to Independent Living

Ballentine Stepping Stones provides transitional housing that leads the way from homelessness to independent living. Programs designed to improve self-esteem and encourage economic self-sufficiency will help break the common cycle of poverty and abuse.

Located in Lansing, Stepping Stones has 16 furnished apartments for homeless mothers aged 17 years and older and their children.

Families move in for stays of up to two years. During their stay they are involved in various programs designed to help them develop parenting and living skills, further their education, acquire vocational training, home-making and budgeting skills, career planning, marketable job skills and nutritional and personal wellness.

Services Provided

- **Licensed child care on site**
- **Furnished apartment**
- **Aid to access other collateral services which may offer assistance**
- **Case management services on site: Aid in developing and working towards goals**
- **Training Programs:**
  Vocational Training
  Parental and living skills
  Home-making and budgeting skills
  Career Planning
- **Assistance in establishing permanent housing after completion of program.**

An ongoing case management program is available to ensure a new, rewarding and productive life for those who live at Stepping Stones.

It is hoped that this experience within a transitional setting fosters a positive family relationship conducive to the personal growth and stability of mother and child.

Admission Criteria

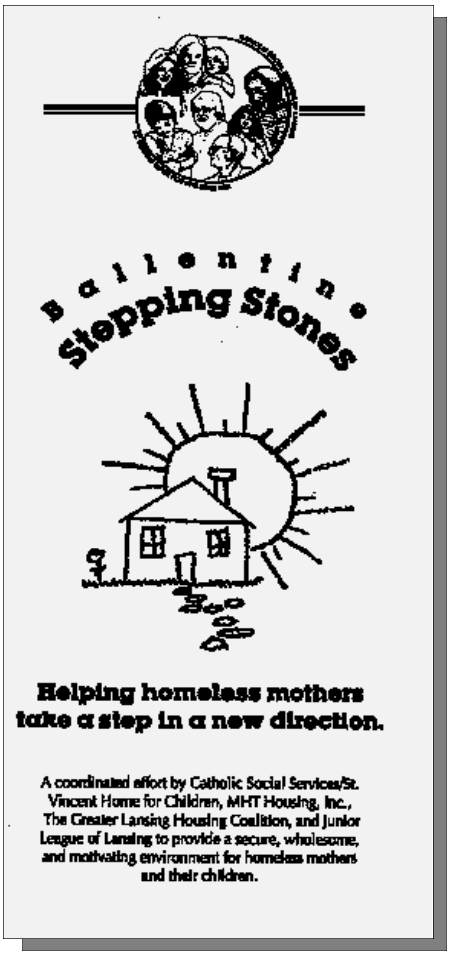
The Ballentine Stepping Stones program is open to homeless mothers age 17 and older and their children who:

- **wish to stabilize their lives**
- **are willing to make plans and achieve goals leading to independent living and stability**
- **are willing to comply with the programs' structure.**

Ballentine Stepping Stones is a coordinated effort by Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children, MHT Housing, Inc., The Greater Lansing Housing Coalition, and Junior League of Lansing to provide a secure, wholesome, and motivating environment for homeless mothers and their children.

Three-quarters of the children in single-parent families live in poverty some time during their first 10 years.

For more information:
Ballentine Stepping Stones
825 N. Pennsylvania Avenue
Suite #1
Lansing, MI 48906
517/485-4644
TDD 800/649-3777



Pregnancy Counseling Services is another program of Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children

Pregnancy Counseling Services

Serving People of All Faith, Races and Ages

Counseling ...

Bringing a child into the world is a major task. It is easy to get confused and upset trying to making parenting decisions. Counseling offers assistance in the decision making and planning process for you and your child. For some parents, the choice will be to place their child in an adoptive home. For others, the decision will be to parent. Either way, counseling services are available to assist you.

Adoption Plans ...

Catholic Social Services is a state-licensed child placement agency, able to place children in adoptive homes. The agency maintains a list of approved adoptive families from which you can select or we can work with you on other adoptive options.

The counselor will discuss with you agency adoption procedures and the legal process involved in adoption. In addition, the counselor will help you sort out your thoughts and feelings relative to the adoption process.

Parenting Your Child ...

The counselor will discuss with you the development of your parenting plan for your child and will help identify community resources that can be of assistance to you and your child. The counselor will assist you in sorting out your thoughts and feelings relating to yourself and your child.

Our Services Are Offered to ...

- **Mothers—are counseled on their options and are given information on how to access resources for them and their children.**

- **Fathers—a counselor is available to fathers as well as mothers. Questions can be answered and particular situations will be discussed.**

- **The couple facing an unplanned pregnancy—options and information on how to proceed with the chosen option are discussed.**

- **The family—counseling is offered to every member of the family because pregnancy affects the family as a whole.**

Pregnancy Counseling Is ...

- **A professional and confidential service.**
- **Counseling designed to assist with decision making.**
- **Someone trained to listen objectively and assist you in dealing with the stresses and conflicts related to your particular situation.**

Whether in or out of marriage, pregnancy can occur when people are least prepared for it. Individuals, their families, and couples can work with a professionally trained counselor who offers support and assistance in coping with the unplanned pregnancy.

Making an Appointment ...

Call the agency to make an appointment with a counselor: 8:30 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

During your scheduled meeting, the counselor assists you in making your own decision.

We will talk with you about ...

you, your family, your parenting options, your baby's future, and your feelings. A counselor is available to meet with you on a weekly basis or as needed, both before and after the birth of your child.

Catholic Social Services/St. Vincent Home for Children
A Family and Child Welfare Agency
2800 W. Willow
Lansing, Michigan 48917
517/323-4734

Pregnancy Counseling is a free and confidential service.

Older Adult Services, a division of the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Counties, Michigan, Community Mental Health Board, provides a variety of mental health services to older citizens in the Lansing area.

"We designed a brochure describing programs provided by the Older Adult Services. The brochure [highlights] informative and descriptive qualities which the agency needed for a new cluster of programs called Senior Connections."

"[After] several meetings in which we discussed revisions and ideas for improvement, [we wrote] several different drafts of the brochure, working in the Writing Center."

"The project was a 'hands on' learning writing assignment. We gained better writing skills. Working in a group provided the experience to look at things through different perspectives.... The limited space of the brochure made us condense all our information and word it as efficiently as possible."

–Matt Conley, Dan Lord, Rachelle Munro

Senior Connections

Mission Statement

We believe that all our clients have the right to personal dignity, independence, and a quality community life. We are dedicated to assisting clients with the enhancement of their mental health and ensuring they maintain connections to community, family, and friends.

Senior Connections is a branch of the Clinton-Eaton-Ingham Community Health/Community Support Services/Older Adult Services agency. This program offers a number of different services designed to provide care and support to persons 55 years of age or older who experience more persistent and/or serious mental health conditions. Senior Connections offers the following services:

Case Management and Psychiatric Services

The primary focus is to provide case management services to older adults who experience a serious and/or persistent mental illness. Services consist of maintaining clients'overall well being, and linking to other resources and counseling. In addition to a team of social workers, the program also includes a psychiatrist and two psychiatric nurses specialized in geriatric care.

Golden Connection Center

This program offers a variety of therapeutic activities to older adults who experience a serious and/or persistent mental illness. The program is offered from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and serves a hot luncheon to the participants. Members in the program actively participate in program planning and offer mutual support. A group of senior volunteers assists the staff with daily activities.

Green Meadows

This program is a six bed residential group home that provides 24 hour care for individuals who experience serious mental illness. It offers a full therapeutic program to enable residents to function as independently as possible. A complete staff, including a psychiatrist, nurse, activity therapist, and social worker provides a wide range of services to meet each individual's needs.

Counseling Services for Homebound Persons 55 Years or Older

This service provides short term counseling to older homebound adults who experience depression, anxiety, and obsessive/compulsive disorder, or severe loneliness. Self referrals as well as referrals from other agencies are accepted. A face to face assessment is done within two weeks of the referral date. If a client qualifies for counseling services, there may be a short waiting period before services can be rendered on a

regular basis.

Referrals for these services should be made to:
CSS Senior Connections Program
Lansing, MI
phone 347-6000 ext. 551

Fees are assessed on a sliding scale basis. Medicare, Medicaid, and other insurances accepted.

In addition to the described program, the Older Adult Services provides nursing home mental health services. For more information about these programs call: 778-9002.

SENIOR CONNECTIONS

We believe that all our clients have the right to personal dignity, independence, and a quality community life. We are dedicated to assisting clients with the enhancement of their mental health and ensuring they maintain connections to community, family, and friends.

"This project was one of the first ones in which I truly [saw] the value and exact identity of the audience.... I think this project furthered my views about education. The value of open dialogue and multiple viewpoints is quite an important thing to possess.... I learned that by pooling our strong points and de-emphasizing our weaknesses our group could accomplish things that I couldn't do by myself. I also learned that I need to compromise better and listen completely to others' ideas."

"This project was very helpful because I learned how to work with people and put our differences aside."

"At first I thought of getting our work published as no big deal, but once I actually saw the newsletter I was very proud of myself and reality really set in that people are actually going to read what I wrote."

"The SLWP let me take part in the 'real world,'writing to please an audience rather than a single 'authority.' I am going to expect more out of future writing classes because of this."

"Involvement with this particular agency, the Black Child and Family Institute, was a definite tool in helping me further explore American culture."

"This class has given me an idea of community service, and because of it I'm going to continue volunteering."

"As individuals working together as a group, we share similar views on what we have learned about writing in this classroom. We believe that in a conventional classroom there would be emphasis on essay writing. This ATL section, however, brings out different aspects of writing and learning. Future SLWP student writers should go into the project with the expectation of learning and developing writing skills for a larger and more diverse audience. Future writers should also be reminded not to fear the responsibility, but to learn how to deal with it and realize that as they move through life, future jobs or experiences within and outside the community will be easier to face because of this experience."

"Ready for the Challenge": A Student Reflects on the Service-Learning Writing Project

By Lashawnda Jackson

As we reach the end of this project, a few things come to mind. We really accomplished something! We accomplished a task that seemed so overwhelming when first introduced to the class. Hesitation and intimidation were just a few of the emotions felt regarding this Service-Learning Writing Project. Just the thought of working for an agency is enough to make one question her or his own writing ability. Despite these feelings we were ready for the challenge. What steps were taken that enabled us to successfully complete our writing project? What was the outcome of the collaborative working experience? What was obtained from this overall experience, including the writing that was required for the class?

The Youth Development Corporation is an organization designed to help youth obtain jobs. These youths, ranging in age from 10 to 21, receive guidance from counselors whose job is to make sure the clients follow the proper procedures it takes to acquire a job. The clients are given the *Guide to Employment* which explores many areas such as how to format a resume, fill out a job application, what to do at an interview, and many other key factors. Our contact person, John Tucker, assigned us the task to revise the *Guide*. He didn't give us specific criteria for it. We were free to change what we felt needed to be changed. Sounds easy, right? Not at all! This meant that we had to make crucial decisions on our own.

The first thing the group did, besides speaking with people from the agency, was to divide the packet amongst the three of us. Each person received a section to revise which was later rotated so that each person had input into the revision of the whole. After this, we made a group presentation to the class in hopes of receiving useful feedback about visuals, organization, and proper structure of a personal data worksheet. Many of the ideas we got from the class became very useful in some of the decision making because it gave us a better understanding of an audience's perspective. Finally we had to put everything together. Although it wasn't required by the agency to have the new packet typed, we thought it would give a more professional look. Now it's up to the agency. Their printers will produce the final copy of the *Guide*.

A lot must be emphasized about what we learned through the Service-Learning Writing Project. We felt it was a good experience because we learned about writing to an audience and about collaborative work. It gets difficult, but it pays off in the end. We hope to look back on this experience and see how it has been beneficial for future learning and future careers.

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