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# Arriving at This Place: A Teacher's Journey to Fostering Sustainable International Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom

Ravyn L. McKee

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ARRIVING AT THIS PLACE: A TEACHER'S JOURNEY TO FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE  
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING IN THE WRITING CLASSROOM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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December 2016

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International service-learning scholars state the need for more research on sustainable service programs (Cushman, 2002), service programs that are reciprocal (Welch, 2002), and instructor and community member perspectives (D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009). As a result, I developed this study because I wanted to understand how sustainable international service-learning could be fostered through a redefinition of reciprocity, as well as a focus on locality. Because there has been less focus on teacher's experiences in the international service-learning classroom, I also wondered how my perspective as an international service-learning instructor is unique and how what I learned through this time might contribute to the field. As a result, my research questions for this dissertation study are as follows:

1. How did I evolve as a teacher over the course of this project?
2. How does my evolution speak to the larger field of service-learning?

Through a reflective inquiry of my own teaching experiences, as well as an analysis of different intersections of my life that contribute to my role as a teacher-scholar, I focus on what it means for an international service-learning course to be sustainable. As a result, this book is divided into a prologue and five chapters. Each chapter begins with a narrative intended to link my teaching, and life, experiences to international service-learning. The prologue through chapter three includes the significance of the research, the reasoning behind focusing on my own teaching practices, a discussion of my research questions, a thorough review of the relevant

literature, and a discussion of the methodology—all interwoven with narratives focusing on the importance of international service-learning in the writing classroom. These narratives also highlight how I have evolved as an instructor.

Chapter four aims to redefine reciprocity in order to encourage better relationships between service-learning programs and the community. Findings include the need for more diversity in the classroom and service sites, and the allowance for student resistance in order to encourage true reciprocity.

The next chapter presents a discussion on the role locality plays in international service-learning pedagogy and encourages readers to purposefully design service projects in conjunction with the local community in order for more sustainable programs.

Finally, this book concludes with an analysis of how I have evolved as an international service-learning instructor through my experiences in life, teaching, and writing this book.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
PROLOGUE	INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK .....	1
	What's The Issue .....	5
	Why I'm Writing This Book .....	8
	Why This Research is Important .....	11
	Methodology: Steps Toward Reflective Inquiry .....	14
	Partnering with the Indiana Community Garden.....	16
	Methodology.....	20
	Where I'm Going.....	23
I	A DESIRE TO TEACH INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING.....	27
	Background to My Journal Entry .....	29
	A Life-Changing Experience.....	31
	Diving Deeper Into International Service-Learning.....	39
	Where I'm Coming From .....	45
	Why a Focus on International Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom? .....	51
II	REFLECTIVE INQUIRY AS A MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING .....	56
	Learning to Conduct Rigorous, Academic Research .....	56
	Finding Reflective Inquiry .....	57
	The Value of Self-Reflective Teaching .....	65
	I am Both Researcher and Participant.....	80
	Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness .....	83
	Final Thoughts on Reflective Inquiry .....	84
III	A DESIRE TO PROMOTE GLOBAL AWARENESS AND ACTION: CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING THEORY AND PEDAGOGY .....	86
	Theoretical Foundations of Service-Learning .....	89
	Service-Learning in Composition and Second Language Teaching .....	103
	International Service-Learning Theory and Pedagogy.....	105
	Goals for International Service-Learning.....	107

Chapter		Page
	International service-learning as civic engagement.....	108
	International service-learning as transformative experience.....	109
	Critical reflection.....	111
	Nonreflective modes of learning .....	112
	Sustainability .....	113
	Issues in Current International Service-Learning Theory and Research.....	114
	The Label “Tourist” Versus Having a Tourist Gaze .....	114
	Tensions in Moving From Awareness to Action.....	116
	Why More Research is Necessary .....	117
	Sustainable International Service-Learning Programs.....	118
	Reciprocity through Care and Mutuality .....	120
	Sustainability and Locality .....	122
	How Can I Use This Literature to Understand My Journey .....	125
IV	A TEACHER’S QUEST FOR RECIPROCITY .....	127
	Learning to Care Through Suffering .....	130
	Reciprocity and Service-Learning.....	136
	Reciprocity in the Community Participation Workshop .....	140
	Reciprocity through Care .....	145
	Reciprocity through Mutuality .....	150
	When Your Best Intentions Turn into Utter Failure—Reciprocity Denied.....	154
	Suggestions for Implementing Successful Reciprocal Relationships in International Service Learning .....	160
	Focus on MORE Diversity in the Program .....	161
	Focus on Community-Level and Personal-Level Reciprocity .....	162
	Be Intentional .....	164
	Collaborate .....	165
	Help Students See Past the Service .....	166
	Encourage Student Resistance.....	168
	Final Thoughts on Reciprocity .....	169
V	THE ROLE OF LOCALITY IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING.....	170
	Choosing to Focus on Locality within the Community Participation Workshop.....	172
	Growing in My Understanding of Place.....	177

Chapter		Page
	Linking Locality and Sustainable International Service-Learning .....	186
	Place in Composition: The Role of Writing Focused on Locality .....	189
	When You Succeed and Fail at the Same Time .....	197
	Suggestions for Future Courses .....	198
	Final Thoughts on Locality .....	201
VI	BEING AND BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING TEACHER .....	202
	Learning from Experience .....	205
	Teaching Philosophy—11/2012 .....	207
	Philosophy of Teaching: Ravyn McKee .....	210
	When I See Progress .....	213
	A Teacher's Evolution .....	214
	Being and Becoming .....	221
	A Christian .....	222
	A Teacher-Scholar .....	223
	A Sustainable International Service-Learning Instructor .....	224
EPILOGUE	IS THIS REALLY THE END? .....	229
	Where Do I Go From Here? .....	230
	REFERENCES .....	234
	APPENDICES .....	249
	Appendix A- Community Participation Workshop Syllabus .....	249
	Appendix B- Rationale for Changes to the Course for Spring 2015 .....	253

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	The relationship between my key terms .....	44
2	The packets our class put together for the Community Garden's Seedling Project.....	140
3	The relationship between my key terms .....	182
4	A redefined relationship between my key terms .....	182
5	Beneficiaries of service-learning .....	194

## PROLOGUE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK

I've heard it said before that writing a book will either make you love your research more or make you aware that you really are not as interested in it as you thought. I warred with this potential dilemma for some time because, while I have been consistently interested in international service-learning, I also have a lot of other interests that, in my mind, could be even easier to write about. I struggled with narrowing down a topic and then struggled even more as I contemplated how I would find teachers to study who are using this type of pedagogy in their writing classes. Many service-learning scholars write about reciprocity, but very few, if any, write about the link between locality and writing, and this scared me because I did not want to have to pull strings to find commonalities between my subjects if they were not there. The more I tried to find international service-learning instructors implementing these theories—instructors I would also have access to—the more worried I became. Until, I learned, that as an international service-learning instructor myself, I could study my own practices and experiences. This gave me hope and courage, yet I still struggled with narrowing down my research questions. Eventually, I realized that I was not trying to study an international service-learning classroom because that topic is very prevalent within current research; I realized that I was attempting to study my own teaching experiences. As a result, I finally narrowed down my research questions to: 1. How did I evolve as a teacher within an international service-learning setting, and 2. How does/can my evolution contribute to the larger field of international service-learning?

Once I had my research questions nailed down, I had to ask myself: what makes someone a good teacher? Is it a willingness to become a life-long learner? A willingness to think critically about one's own practices and make changes as necessary? I think there is so much that goes into

developing as a good and effective teacher, and it is my opinion that one of the best things an instructor can do is be, as in my case, her own critic—learn from her successes, and even more so, her mistakes and failures. Learning from my teaching experiences became the goal of this book because I know that my experiences are invaluable to my continued growth as a teacher-scholar. However, getting to the meat of my findings was more difficult than I imagined it would be because it was not always easy to analyze my own evolution due to my desire to remain as unbiased as possible, and frankly, my discomfort with seeing so many mistakes I’ve made so clearly before me. Nevertheless, I finally decided to run with the idea of analyzing my own teaching evolution because those mistakes I now see are learning opportunities that I cannot afford to miss.

After I finally committed to analyzing my evolution as a teacher, I realized that in order to learn as much from the writing of this book as possible, I had to go beyond my comfort zone and truly be transparent with my teaching experiences and ideology. In an effort to be transparent, I used a reflective inquiry approach to study my own teaching practices. Now, one of the issues that I ran into with this study is: what is transparency and how will it help make this reflective inquiry approach to my study more “rigorous.” I ask both of these questions because I was afraid to commit to this study on my own teaching evolution because I wanted my work to be taken seriously. Peter Clough (2002) developed what he calls a “storying methodology” as an answer to the ‘crisis of representation’—how we as researchers represent ourselves and our work—as a means of encouraging “personal, moral and ethical responses to research experiences” (p. 6). Even more so, he proposes addressing the ‘crisis of representation’ “through fictional writing as a means of inquiry” (Badley, 2003, p. 442). Clough is discussing fiction as research while I focus on narrative analysis of my experiences, yet his alternative approach to

inquiry is one that I wanted to examine further. As I contemplated this idea of representation and my wanting to be taken seriously as a researcher, I again focused on the notion of transparency. What can transparency give my study? How do I achieve transparency in this study and is that even a necessary goal? I was eventually encouraged to go even further with my inquiry and study different intersections of my life in order to assess how they contributed to my role as teacher in a writing classroom. I loved the idea, but I still struggled with implementing my new research design because I was still trying to present this reflective study as a rigorous qualitative book. The idea of rigor kept coming up in my mind, and in order to meet that desire for rigor, I kept telling myself that transparency is the answer. However, transparency is also something that I created especially for this study. While I aimed to study my own teaching experiences and be as thorough as possible with my analysis, each narrative that I wrote was chosen for a reason. I wrote narratives that combined the contention among my lived experiences, my pedagogical practices, and the literature within my discipline. Therefore, as I continued to try to develop this idea of transparency, I noticed that I was having trouble doing so because I was still creating what I wanted my audience to see. It is extremely difficult to actually represent my true feelings to an audience that expects something from me. My audience expects this to be a study worthy of earning my doctorate from, and because of this pressure I was feeling, I thought that saying I was being transparent equated to rigorous research.

However, after reading Clough's work (and work by narrative inquirers), I realized that this research is rigorous, worthwhile, and necessary because focusing on lived experiences, pedagogical practices, and existing literature allows me to inquire further about what it means to be a teacher. Furthermore Clough states:

So, though the stories demonstrate the capacity of narrative to ‘stand alone, there remains still the need for argument around the place of language and meaning—if we are ever to reach the point where a story without the wrapping of justification, is all that is needed. However, for now, in this world of educational enquiry, stories (as a means of research report) are not yet allowed to stand alone. The case is still in process...therefore, such stories are still required to be justified, to be accompanied by their methodological apologia. Why? Because the authors of such stories are making serious claims about their validity in the arena of social and educational enquiry. Because the stories are not offered ‘simply’ as fiction—as in the case of the novel—but as representations of truth (p. 447).

So, while I know that my study is valuable and has the potential to contribute to the current body of research within composition and TESOL because of these narratives that are representations of truth, I still made sure to interweave them into the existing literature as a means of making sure they do not stand alone. While I agree that narratives should be able to stand alone, I still see the value in focusing on the existing literature as well because I have learned a lot from my attempt at putting theory into practice (both in the reflection on my experiences and the narratives that were developed out of that experience and subsequent reflection). It took me a long time to be comfortable with my method of inquiry, as well as my choice to step into an alternative genre for this study: a book, but I am so glad that I did. Through writing this book, I learned that a reflective inquiry of my own teaching practices is rigorous research because the narratives that I have created are designed in a way that allow me to analyze my lived experiences as they contend with existing literature and existing pedagogical practices. I just needed the encouragement from my committee, as well as my continued research within the field of international service-learning to finally push me in the right direction.



Writing this book allowed me to analyze my teaching experiences in a way that helped me truly grasp what these teaching experiences have taught me about myself, teaching, and even life. Therefore, throughout this book, I present my teaching experiences to show the struggle of 1. Evolving as a teacher in general and 2. Attempting to implement sustainable practices in an international service-learning course. I, sometimes painfully, share narratives in an effort to learn from my successes, and even more so, my failures, and it is my hope that my readers will be able to bring their own perspectives to this body of work as well in order to add valuable insight and varied interpretations to these narratives.

### **What's The Issue**

I began studying international service-learning in an Ecocomposition course I took well before starting this book. I realized that there was not a lot of research conducted on reciprocity and locality within international service-learning, but there was a lot of research that focused on goals of different service-learning programs. One of the first things I learned was that service-learning pedagogues and theorists proposed international service-learning in order to promote service-learning on a global scale. The initial emphasis on international service-learning was requiring students to leave the country that they are most familiar with in order to travel to another country in order to conduct service. As I began studying the goals of different international service-learning programs, I noticed that there were a lot of common goals and intended outcomes across programs in various disciplines. As a result, I wrote my first article within the field of international service-learning that discusses the goals of international service-learning projects, which include international service-learning as civic engagement, as reciprocal learning, as transformative experience, as a sustainable program, and finally, as a means of

encouraging a more solid theoretical framework for the teaching practice (McKee, 2016). In this article, I state that:

A major goal of service-learning has been to promote civic engagement and social awareness to students participants. International service-learning reflects these ideals as projects are used to instruct students on how to analyze social dimensions through critical reflection and collaboration with the community in which they are working. Since service-learning is not merely community service, the goal of such programs becomes civic engagement that is born out of students' desires to see change in a community they have come to relate to or appreciate through their time spent within the service project (Kiely, 2004, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002).

As a result of this desire for civic engagement, international service-learning theorists have focused on the importance of developing critical consciousness—the awareness of inequalities and marginalization—before taking that consciousness a step further into action through experiential learning (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970; and John Dewey, *Experience & Education*, 1938). While international service-learning projects are intended to provide service and awareness of social marginalization, data from the studies consistently shows the need to understand who is benefiting from the service. International service-learning researchers note that many projects leave “no lasting benefit” if they do not truly understand the marginalization that occurs in the community in which they conduct the service (Crabtree, 2008, 2013; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002). In the same regard, scholars have also commented on the notion of unsustainable “spring break projects” and short-term projects that may provide little, if no help at all<sup>1</sup> (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely, 2004; Ver Beek, 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> To both the students and community members

Furthermore, King (2004) states that international service-learning can serve as the parallel to Freire's term extension. This term means that the person with the expertise (in this case the service) can make the receiver powerless as the receiver becomes the "served" (p. 123). Therefore, the goal is to have students learning with and from the community in a sustainable program.

Not only can there be an unbalanced power dynamic between provider and receiver, but there can also be power struggles within the confines of the service-learning team itself. Higher education is still primarily dominated by the white, middle class (Green, 2003), and this notion is often reflected in service-learning project teams. As a result, Acquaye and Crewe (2012) studied an international service-learning program dedicated to including black students as they advocated human rights and social justice through the international service-learning project, yet theirs is only one of a handful of articles written on diverse international service-learning programs.

As a result of these uneven power dynamics that can develop in international service-learning, there is a need to redefine international service-learning's goal of reciprocity—the idea that all members of the international service-learning project work together in a reciprocal (equal) relationship (Crabtree, 2013; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002) in order to promote a truly sustainable program. In order to do so, I turn to an ethic of care and the theory of mutuality in this redefinition of reciprocity. Nel Noddings (1988) is considered the first person to conceptualize the use of care in the classroom and states that the one-caring should continue to build that relationship for the cared-for's empowerment (p. 219). Therefore, in the case of the instructor/student relationship, all of the caring should be done to promote student growth. Furthermore, she states that caring relationships can be mutually beneficial (p. 222), which is

what I am striving for in this research through applying the theory of mutuality. David Wallace and Helen Ewald (2000) define mutuality as the notion that students are given agency in the classroom as instructors and students negotiate their roles. Overall, there is currently a lack of research on international service-learning programs that are truly sustainable by benefiting all involved, which is why this book is so significant. This book is significant because, in creating my service-learning course, my goal was to theorize sustainable international service-learning programs in two ways: 1. a redefinition of reciprocity through care and mutuality and 2. A focus on how locality leads to sustainable international service-learning, which has allowed me to study my evolution as an international service-learning instructor as I analyze my experiences attempting to implement these theories into the design of my international service-learning course, as well as analyzing my experiences that made me turn to international service-learning in the first place.

### **Why I'm Writing This Book**

In any study, there is a purpose for the madness. But because the original purpose of this study was to examine international service-learning in the fields of composition and TESOL, I struggled with writing this book for longer than I thought I would because I kept going back to that original study. I think that part of my issue writing a book focused on reflective inquiry was the fact that I still thought I needed “traditional” research; however, I do not even like the word “traditional” when referring to research because what does that even mean? Once I finally realized that a reflective study focusing on my experiences as an international service-learning instructor can and does offer research that is valuable to the field, I was able to truly understand what I really wanted to do in and with this book. Furthermore, as I began developing this study, I realized that I am currently the only international service-learning instructor (that I know of and

that I have access to) aiming to implement care and locality, so I began wondering why I chose those aspects of international service-learning and whether or not I could learn from a study of my own teaching practices. As scholars already know, service-learning has emerged as a field of its own over the years due to its popularity with critical pedagogues, and what better way to be critical of service-learning practices than to analyze my own service-learning course and project? Furthermore, as a result of globalization and an increased awareness of multiculturalism, international service-learning is slowly emerging as a way to bring social awareness and civic engagement to a variety of cultures and countries. However, since international service-learning is such a new endeavor, issues surrounding the need for sustainable service programs are largely unresearched at this time. Even more so, international service-learning within the fields of composition or TESOL is rarely researched. So, I hope to provide narratives of my time teaching international service-learning as a means of analyzing the effect redefined reciprocity and locality have had on international service-learning theory and pedagogy in my classroom in an effort to promote cooperation between instructor, students, and community members within the service project. Furthermore, through an examination of research already in the field, as well as my own teaching practices within an international service-learning course, I focus on how sustainable international service-learning can lead to projects that are truly diverse and truly relevant and meaningful to all those involved.

So, overall, my goal is to examine how I evolved as a teacher in general, and more specifically, as an international service-learning teacher so that I can suggest ways to improve the sustainability of service programs through a focus on reciprocity and locality. This goal is important to me because international service-learning is such a relatively new teaching method, and I would like to take what I learned from my own experiences and provide suggestions for

others interested in implementing this type of course design within an international writing classroom. I framed my research questions broadly because I am examining my evolution as an international service-learning instructor, and in order to adequately do so, I must analyze much more than classroom interactions alone. Furthermore, with these research questions, I hope to understand why this method of teaching is so interesting and valuable to me and what makes it a viable teaching method for me? Why do I use this type of teaching over any other? What am I trying to implement in my classroom and within my community and what makes this pedagogy the best way to do so? These are questions that I explore by looking at my interpretation of international service-learning in the writing classroom.

Furthermore, I chose to specifically focus on sustainable international service-learning because Ellen Cushman (2002) states that service learning programs must be self-sustaining and promoters of sustainability in order to be effective. I agree with her, as do other researchers like Welch (2002) and Ver Beek (2002), who state that service learning programs often fail due to lack of sustained resources, as well as a lack of reciprocity between service members and the community. Therefore, through my attempt at implementing sustainable international service-learning, I would like to better understand how sustainable service-learning can be fostered through redefining reciprocity in light of an ethic of care and mutuality and through a focus on locality. In regard to mutuality, Wallace and Ewald (2000) state that “Pedagogies that strive for mutuality do not ‘free’ students by investing them with personal authority that is autonomous. Instead, such pedagogies enable agency by demonstrating that the choices students make and the freedoms they have are situated in social interaction” (p. 140). I believe that Nel Noddings would agree, and would advocate student freedom and agency through caring for them as individuals in the classroom and service sites. Mutuality, as a practice, encourages student resistance,

challenges social practices, and establishes a classroom focused on mutual respect, and care, between students and the instructor. As a result, researchers like Welch (2002) state that mutuality in service- learning produces empathy among students and community members as they emulate the respect and care they have seen in the classroom. Therefore, I aim to see whether or not empathy and engagement can be fostered in the classroom and whether or not that transitions into reciprocity as well. Furthermore, my goal is to also research how a focus on location potentially leads to sustainable international service-learning as the program ideally fosters reciprocity through valuing other's cultures and places around the world. Specifically, my research questions are asked in order to further theorize sustainable international service-learning in order to legitimize international service-learning's use in the writing classroom. Robin Crabtree (2008, 2013) states that international service-learning researchers are just now adding to its legitimacy as they focus their studies through solid, foundational theory such as work by John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Bruce Herzberg. Since the goal of this book is to study my implementation of these theories in an international service-learning environment, it is vitally important that I understand how these applied theories potentially contribute to international service-learning theory and pedagogy in light of the current research within the field.

### **Why This Research is Important**

I see the value of international service-learning in my own classroom, and I hope that sharing my successes and failures as a teacher will help me discuss the changes I see that need to be made in order to make international service-learning theory and pedagogy more useful, and sustainable, for all involved in the practice. As a result, this book is significant because the findings show the need for increased diversity within the service project as well as the need for service projects to work in conjunction with the local community in order to promote

sustainability. Even more so, this book focuses on a teacher's perspective, which is rare within the field of international service-learning, and this focus allows me to speak to another facet of international service-learning that needs more research in order to add to the theory's framework.

Since international service-learning theorists like Robin Crabtree (2008, 2013) and Richard Kiely (2004, 2005) call for a more explicit theoretical framework for international service-learning, this book in particular is theoretically significant because it concentrates on implementing a framework for this pedagogy and theory that focuses on teacher preparedness and moving the field forward to include diversity in the project members, as well as the community members with whom they work. Through redefining reciprocity through an ethic of care and mutuality, this book contributes to the expansion of the current theoretical framework for international service-learning because of its focus on creating relationships within the service project that are lasting, and more reciprocal, which leads to the potential for more sustainable programs in the future. Also, this book is theoretically significant because it applies reciprocity and locality together in an effort to suggest ways to make programs more sustainable, which has not been done yet.

Even more so, this project is methodologically significant because there is currently little research on how international service-learning projects affect instructors. While some international service-learning instructors, like Crabtree (2013), focus on more narrative-like research, the focus remains on student perspectives and not instructors. My focus on what it means to be an international service-learning instructor allows me to focus on an important aspect of research currently excluded from international service-learning theory: the analysis of how a teacher's experiences allow her to learn, grow, and suggest ways for improved theory. Overall, this reflective inquiry on my own experiences teaching international service-learning



helps me bridge a missing link between teacher experience and the international service-learning classroom.

This work is not only important for its theoretical and methodological contributions, but also for its focus on pedagogy that can potentially lead to curricular and policy change. Currently, the body of research on international service-learning does not include a focus on place-based writing, nor does the current definition of reciprocity include an ethic of care and/or mutuality. As a result, this project contributes to international service-learning pedagogy because it helps link students to both local and global issues around them as they see value in their own places as well as where they are now (in this case—this link is developed through their writing about the local community, as well as their home communities). Furthermore, this study aims to shed light on how to successfully implement reciprocity within international service-learning, which will then lead to changes in pedagogy in order to do so effectively. Additionally, international service-learning research has consistently shown the need for more integration of service projects into the curriculum throughout students' entire time at the university as opposed to a single one to two-week trip overseas. Therefore, this project aims to contribute to curricular change as it focuses on creating service projects that are sustainable and able to be maintained over a longer period of time in students' academic careers<sup>2</sup>.

Finally, this book is important because it focuses on international service-learning that is truly diverse. Researchers are careful to point out that a U.S.-based group dominated by privileged white students does not always suggest social change. Instead, international service-learning should include students from many different backgrounds in order to ensure the validity of the reflection and action. Therefore, this book's policy contributions include fostering

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<sup>2</sup> Even if this means fostering the desire for civic engagement on students' own after the service-learning course ends.

diversity among the service project and moving away from valuing U.S. students and instead encouraging both American and international students to participate in the service course and projects.

### **Methodology: Steps Toward Reflective Inquiry of My Teaching Experiences**

There are a lot of different aspects of my journey that led me to teach an international service-learning course while also taking doctoral courses at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP). I discuss these aspects of my journey throughout this book, but as I look back at them, I am really amazed at how many different experiences I had with service-learning before I actually taught a course using this theory and pedagogy. I taught English to refugees for college credit, I taught English in Russia, and I studied service-learning extensively for a year before I even got the chance to experiment with the teaching method myself. Nevertheless, when I finally got the chance to teach an international service-learning course, it inspired me so much that this book was born!

I remember interviewing for a teaching position at the American Language Institute, an intensive English program, housed on campus at IUP, in the summer of 2014. I applied for the job because I wanted to continue teaching while I was in school, and I really love working with international students. During my interview, my interviewers asked me about my research interests, and I mentioned service-learning. They told me that they had a service-learning course, the Community Participation Workshop, which they offered during the fall and spring semesters. They asked me if I had any questions, and I asked about that course specifically. They told me the class was designed to get students out of the classroom and into the Indiana community. At the end of the interview, I thanked my interviewers for their time and got off of Skype. I was just hoping for a job—I didn't really care what I would be teaching.

I was offered a teaching position at the ALI one week later. My boss wrote me an email to tell me the good news, and said that due to my service-learning research background and expertise, I was offered the Community Participation Workshop because the former instructor was no longer able to teach the course. The fact that she mentioned my service-learning “expertise” terrified me because I literally had zero experience teaching this type of class. I had only read research and experienced service-learning as a student myself. Nevertheless, this class had great backing from the ALI’s administration, and I received a lot of help from the former teacher as I prepared to teach this course.

The former instructor gave me his old lesson plans and a list of organizations he had connected with during the previous years he had taught the course. As I looked over his lessons, I began to notice that he took his students to many different organizations within the community. In fact, they went to a new location almost every week. At first, I tried to do the same thing. Unfortunately, I did not take into consideration that he had worked with most of these organizations for more than a year and had forged trusting relationships with them. I was stuck with having to forge new relationships with these organizations in a short amount of time, and it was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I ended up having more than a few organizations tell me that they did not have time to work with our class. While that was initially discouraging, it ended up working out for the best because our class was able to work with fewer organizations for longer periods of time, and we were able to develop relationships with these community organizations that allowed us to learn with, and from, each other.

After finding organizations to work with, I had the beginnings of a schedule and lessons ready for each week, and I looked forward to our first day of class. The Community Participation Workshop (CPW) was offered on Fridays at 9:30-12:30 beginning on the second week of the fall

2014 semester. Since this course was actually considered a non-credit workshop, it had to be offered on the students' only "off" day from courses. The students had classes Monday-Thursday, so Friday they could either take off or join one of two workshops: the CPW or a TOEFL/IELTS prep workshop. We would start each class period by learning about the location we would be going to that day and then have them go into the community and interact with different people, before returning and reflecting on what they had learned. The idea was to get them into discussions about the similarities and differences they saw in their own communities as a basis for introducing this idea of service-learning (which was new to the majority of my students during both semesters I taught this course). The students were not given homework and were advised to be present as much as possible, but due to the fact that this course was non-credit earning, there was no real incentive other than self-motivation to participate. Because I wanted the students to take initiative concerning their education as an attempt to keep attendance consistent, on the first day of our course, I asked students where they wanted to go. I had a list of places in the community (that were willing to work with us) and asked them to spend some time researching these locations before we chose which we would work with first. After some deliberation, we came to the consensus that we would start at the Indiana Community Garden due to the Garden staff's willingness to work with us, as well as my students' desire to see a community-run garden, which they had never seen before.

### **Partnering with the Indiana Community Garden**

The Indiana Community Garden is a volunteer-run organization that partners with IUP and the local Indiana community to provide fresh produce, learning tools, and materials to those wanting healthier food options (and may not be able to afford them on their own), and has been run successfully for more than three years. Therefore, this place was an excellent location for my

students to serve because they were taught about sustainability from a place practicing this goal. It was here in this place that I first started asking myself what the link between locality and service- learning might be because I started taking what I was learning about sustainable practices and started applying them to my home (in California at the time) as a result. One of the Garden's main sources of self-sustainability was their own recycled water source, and it was here in this setting that I realized how to transfer what I learned about water conservation and sustainability to my home context, specifically within my own garden and every day water use. I remember that at this time, I was also writing a research paper for a composition seminar focusing on sustainability. My project was on how place influenced writing for sustainability because I had been wondering how I could encourage my students to get involved in local sustainable practices—especially if they were homesick like I was at the time. In fact, through working at the community garden, I realized that locality can be important, and I wanted to find out how so; therefore, I began to wonder about the link between international service-learning and locality as a result of my experiences, as well as those of my students. Furthermore, I learned how to make connections between the community garden and my own home context through observing my students as they took the material and applied it to their own contexts as well. I also began to question whether one has to identify with a place as “theirs” in order to accomplish any sustainable act, which led me to focus on how place-based writing or even just a focus on place itself could transfer successfully into service-learning in a global context. Drew (2001) states, that “the roles of student and traveler, then, could be constitutive of what counts as both teaching and learning, in the multiple spaces in which those figures operate” (p. 63). Again, this reiterates the need for students to be able to make connections between their place and the place they are currently in so that we as a class can learn from each other from multiple perspectives.

This quote resonates with me because it made me begin to question what international service-learning actually means. If it means U.S.-based teams going overseas and working, why can it not also mean an international team working in a U.S.-based project as well?

Overall, this book began when I paired my love of teaching writing to students of all cultures and languages with my desire to go out into all the world and care and help as my God would. Therefore, my goal for this book, and my goal for my life, is to be used by God to shine His light in the broken places and to spread hope to people like others did for me. International service-learning is not a perfect method of doing so, and this method is not without fault. However, this book sheds light on a theory that encourages attempting to make this world a better place through the best means: our students. Therefore, as a result of my faith, my learning experience through my own place-based writing, and my desire to care for my students and see them change the world, I decided to pursue a study focused on sustainable international service-learning by theorizing reciprocity through care and mutuality theories, as well as locality and place-based writing in an intensive English program context. In order to meet the goals of this book, I used a reflective inquiry, specifically focused on my own teaching practices in the Community Participation Workshop classroom. This classroom was where I was finally able to understand how my life and service experiences had lead me to service-learning, and how I then wanted to continue that journey in order to see what it meant for a service project to be truly sustainable. With that said, I decided that the best methodological approach for this book is a reflective inquiry focusing on my experiences leading up to this course, as well as during this course, as a means of analyzing my evolution as a teacher as a way of showing the value in sustainable international service-learning.

This reflective inquiry is done through narratives that are derived from my time spent as both a student within international service-learning and an instructor throughout the 2014-2015 academic year at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. These narratives provide examples of successful reciprocity through care and mutuality, as well examples of teaching incidents that failed to meet the goals of sustainable international service-learning in the writing classroom. The use of both positive and negative interactions is important to my dissertation study for two reasons: 1. Transparency since the main data sources come from my own experiences, and I want to tell readers why I chose specific experiences to analyze and 2. By focusing on ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ experiences, I can also look at how those two terms can be problematic for a study like this because the goal is not to ultimately have new and perfect theory and pedagogy, but to even be able to problematize the ‘positive’ experiences for potential issues that can arise in an international service-learning classroom. If I do not focus on my shortcomings as a teacher, I may have a study that looks excellent (and unrealistically successful), but I will not learn anything of value, and there will be no potential contributions to international service-learning theory. Crabtree (2013) says, “Acting justly in an unjust world and honoring the people who share their lives and communities with us requires a commitment to education for solidarity within a truly reflexive practice ...Honest assessment includes individual and collective exploration of the injustices that are encountered in and revealed by our work together, as well as of the injustices our work may unintentionally produce” (Crabtree, 2007, p. 62). In order to truly learn from this study, I had to reflect on the areas that I unintentionally contributed to injustice—even if I am afraid to do so, so that I can consciously make an effort to learn and mature from such experiences.

## **Methodology**

I mentioned in an earlier section of this prologue that I think a good teacher is one who can reflect and learn from her experiences. I still stand by that statement, and I hope I always will, but standing by that statement and actually practicing that sentiment are two different things. Since I am focusing on theorizing international service-learning that is sustainable through its focus on reciprocity and place, I knew that it is beneficial to my research to study my own pedagogical practices through narratives focused on my time teaching international service-learning and my time as a student within international service-learning. I also knew that doing so was also a way to reflect on what I ask my students to do in the classroom: focus on the local and make connections through writing. However, even though I knew that this was the right methodology for this book, and one that I really wanted to pursue, I still had such a hard time writing about critical reflection because I guess I'm not as comfortable with the practice as I would like to claim. Nevertheless, after much work, I can say that, through writing this book, I have grown as an instructor, and I have learned what I can do better, or not do at all, next time. Because I wanted to learn from the practice of self-reflection, I chose to conduct this study through a reflective inquiry approach that utilizes aspects of narrative and autoethnographic inquiries.

While I am using a reflective inquiry, a lot of the methodological research I cite is from narrative inquiry and autoethnography. As a result, I take aspects from each and label my approach as reflective inquiry throughout this book. Therefore, since the majority of my methodology research focuses on narrative inquiry and autoethnography, I began this study by labeling my approach to conducting research as "narrative autoethnography." However, I noticed that I was not being consistent throughout my research and had at least three different labels for



my approach throughout this book. I had to take a step back and really try to understand what it was that I wanted to accomplish in this book. While I knew that I was conducting narrative inquiry through my narratives and subsequent analysis of them, I also knew that I was even going further than narrative inquiry alone because I was also focusing on my myself, and using autoethnographic research as well. I knew autoethnography was important to me because I did not feel I would be analyzing my evolution as an instructor if I did not go further than classroom interactions as well. Therefore, I chose to do a reflective inquiry above any other approach because I did not think it was enough for me to focus solely on my teaching practices without analyzing how other intersections of my life contributed to my desire to 1. Be a teacher; and 2. Continue growing as a teacher. While both narrative inquiry and autoethnographic inquiry are useful approaches on their own, in my study, I needed them both to present myself to my readers. With that said, I wanted to rename my approach and thought about what it was I was really trying to do. From there, reflective inquiry (as I see it) was born because I wanted to go further into my experiences and critically reflect on them as I have asked my students to do with their own.

Furthermore, this study of intersections of my life, as well as my own pedagogical practices is significant because, as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state, “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories” (p. 2). Even more so, the focus of my study is on my own teaching practices and interactions with students and community members through a reflective inquiry because of the fact that I am an insider to the practice of international service-learning as both a student and an instructor. This

methodology is significant to my study because only a small number of studies on international and domestic service learning within the field of TESOL have been done focusing on a teacher's perspective, and the same goes for the field of composition. According to Tsui (2007), "teacher's professional identity is considered a critical component in teachers sociocultural and sociopolitical landscape of the classroom and in teachers' and professional development" (p. 657). Since I am proposing additional international service- learning theory that focuses on students' recognition and understanding of their own sociocultural and sociopolitical landscape within the classroom and their communities, it is vitally important that I, as both instructor and researcher, have a strong understanding of my own landscapes and how those landscapes affect what I bring to the classroom as well.

Reflective inquiry is the most appropriate method for this book because, when paired with service-learning, it reflects, "the local and immediate context of members' experiences and situate(s) those experiences in relation to larger social (cultural, economic, historical) circumstances" (Fassett & Warren, 2007). So first of all, I analyze how implementing this type of pedagogy has changed me and how it has influenced my teaching. Also my goal is to explore how implementing sustainable international service-learning that is focused on reciprocity and place can lead to change within the local community and larger global context as students take what they have learned with them. Idealistic? Probably—but didn't we become teachers because we wanted to see our world change for the better? Michael Blitz and C. Mark Hurlbert (1998) state:

We try to make peace with the upheavals of the political world, the social environment, and the ecology. Or we resist even the idea of making peace with the forces that, if they are not challenged and changed, threaten lives. The classroom is one important place to

go to get past what has been done to us—and what we have done to others. It is the place where we can do work that adds needed things to our lives (p. 11).

Like Blitz and Hurlbert, I believe that the classroom is a place where change can happen because I think change happens first and foremost in teachers and students themselves, and it is because of this desire to see change that I chose to conduct a reflective inquiry on my own pedagogical practices because I know this approach allowed me to see areas I need to change. This approach allowed me to study how my own international service-learning theory and pedagogy has benefited and not benefited from theories of reciprocity and place-based writing. It has allowed me to analyze interactions between my students and me in order to see where I encouraged reciprocity and valuing the local community and where I utterly failed at meeting the goals of my own classroom. Like in any reflective inquiry, there must be a realization that there are multiple interpretations to any story (Pagnucci, 2004). Therefore, I explore one interpretation of these narratives as a means of providing suggestions for implementing reciprocity and place-based writing in a sustainable international service-learning program.

### **Where I'm Going**

Since the goal of this book was to analyze my evolution as an international service-learning instructor attempting to promote sustainable international service-learning through redefining reciprocity and implementing a focus on place/locality in my curriculum, I first had to explore the current theories associated with international service-learning before I attempted to redefine it. As a result, this project is divided into a prologue, six chapters, and an epilogue—each with the goal of analyzing my teaching experiences in order to make suggestions for implementing sustainable international service-learning. Furthermore, in an attempt to stay true to my reflective inquiry in order to effectively analyze my evolution as a teacher, this study was

written in book format because, as Pagnucci (2004) states, “nothing is more antinarrative than the traditional dissertation” (p. 24). As a result, the format of this book serves as further evidence of my development as an international service-learning instructor as I use my narratives to highlight theory and teaching experiences throughout this book.

Chapter one focuses on continuing to introduce the reader to this study. I also share narratives that focus on establishing my reasons for wanting to teach international service-learning, and I look at intersections of my life that contribute to my desire to teach sustainable international service-learning.

Chapter two presents the methodological framework for this book. This chapter focuses on showing why a reflective inquiry of my teaching practices is the best method to use for this book based on my own experiences in international service-learning as both a student and instructor. As a result, this chapter begins with a narrative encompassing the issues developed out of a lack of diversity within international service-learning and how these issues led to my own framework for promoting international service-learning that is both diverse and sustainable.

Chapter three focuses on presenting the foundational literature within service-learning that helped shape international service-learning theory and pedagogy. As a result, the theoretical foundations of service-learning, such as experiential learning, critical consciousness, and social interdependence are explored, especially in light of how they developed into goals of international service-learning, such as transformative experience and global awareness. Then, I present research focusing on sustainable international service-learning in order to call attention to the need of continued research on sustainable programs—specifically research focused on reciprocity and place. Finally, in this chapter, I discuss how this literature is relevant to my study, as well as how it was implemented in my international service-learning classroom.

Chapter four focuses on theorizing reciprocity within international service-learning through an ethic of care and mutuality through narratives of both reciprocal and unreciprocal behavior in the international service-learning classroom. The chapter begins by analyzing current theory on care and mutuality as a means of redefining the current use of reciprocity in international service-learning. Through this discussion of reciprocity, I then focus on suggestions for better reciprocal behavior that were developed from the findings of this book. In order to promote greater reciprocity in the international service-learning classroom, I suggest creating programs that focus explicitly on student diversity, encourage student resistance, and collaborate with other service courses and programs (among other suggestions given in this chapter).

Chapter five focuses on developing sustainable international service-learning through concentrating on how locality and place-based writing leads to local and global awareness that can then lead to lasting, and sustainable, change. Again, this is done primarily through a discussion of literature focused on locality and place-based writing, as well as my narratives that explore my experience with integrating place in the international service-learning classroom. I suggest that it is imperative that programs work with the local community in order to be effective, and that programs also encourage connections between service courses (across disciplines) for more sustainable service.

Chapter six is dedicated to tying together my evolution as a teacher to the research within the field of international service-learning. I analyze my evolution as a means of concluding this study and focus on being and becoming a teacher.

Finally, in an epilogue, I provide a section on further research that needs to be done in order to continue promoting sustainable international service-learning because, as my advisor, wrote on a draft of this book: how can you end a narrative that isn't finished? This is just the

beginning for my research on sustainable international service-learning, and I focus on what still needs to be done and where to go from here.

## CHAPTER I

### A DESIRE TO TEACH INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING

*January 2016*

*Ever since I was a young girl, I have wanted to be a teacher. I can remember making my brother, sister, and two cousins sit down in front of me and write in their journals before we started class, which consisted of us sitting around my grandma's kitchen table while I tried to help them with their 'assignments'. Even though I knew I wanted to be a teacher, I did not know how to teach. I would yell at them for getting answers wrong and send them to the principal (my grandma) for not doing well on a test. I had the desire to teach, but I needed guidance. Luckily, as I got older, the desire became less about me standing in front of a class and lecturing in order to teach my students something (as I had thought was appropriate when I was younger and, unfortunately, in much of the beginning of my career while student teaching during my Master's program) and more about us as a class teaching each other. Now, the idea that my students had valuable input to teach the class was a trait that has taken years to develop, and I am sure I will continue struggling with what my role as a teacher really means for the rest of my career. Anyway, I began teaching refugees through an organization called World Relief Modesto in 2010 at the age of twenty, and I soon realized that while I had something they needed: English, they also had something to add: knowledge about a different part of the world, specialized careers, and so much more. I worked with people who were teachers, engineers, and doctors in Iraq, but they had to learn English first before they could get licensed in the United States to work. It was humbling to teach people who were so much smarter than I was (and am), and learning about their culture brought me so much joy. I was so fond of these people who grew up in different areas of the world, and I knew that I wanted to work with international students for*

*the rest of my life because I wanted to learn about their cultures that were so very different than my own and make connections with people from all different walks of life. Even more so, my time working with Iraqi refugees exposed me to a way of life I had only been familiar with outside of the classroom: hospitality. I met with my students in one of their homes and during those class meetings, we learned much more about each other than we did about English. I truly cared for my students, and I knew that they cared for each other and me as well. In fact, several of the families were often cooking each other meals or meeting needs in various ways, and it made me wonder what this type of service would look like in the classroom. While I was not actually exposed to service-learning for three more years, these experiences I had with my Iraqi students set a precedence for the type of teacher I wanted to be without my even realizing it. I would soon be able to link my desire to serve international students with my love of writing, and who knew that six years later, I would be writing this book on that very subject.*

...

Since the beginning of my exposure to service-learning, I have learned that service-learning in the writing classroom is not a new and innovative way of teaching; researchers have consistently analyzed the link between successful service-learning programs and writing within multiple disciplines. However, the body of research conducted on international service-learning—service conducted in an international setting, usually during students’ spring or summer breaks—is much smaller than domestic service-learning research at this time. Furthermore, international service-learning focusing on international students studying in an intensive English program in the United States, as was the case for my students at the ALI, has been researched very little, if at all (at least at the time of writing this book). With that said, the goal of this book is to discuss international service-learning in a writing classroom through the



lens of a single teacher's (my own) perspective. Even more so, this book also examines me—my role as a teacher, Christian, student, etc. and how those different intersections of my life (and others) have shaped me into wanting to be an international service-learning teacher. Furthermore, I use narratives derived from my time teaching and participating in international service-learning projects as a way of examining how I have evolved as a service-learning teacher, and how what I have learned from those experiences could possibly contribute to the field of international service-learning. As a result, I begin this section of the book by focusing on an experience I had while in St. Petersburg, Russia that solidified my love of international service-learning as theory and pedagogy, and one in which strengthened my resolve to implement international service-learning as a practice due to the theory's potential to positively impact all involved with the service project. In the case of this experience, the narrative is largely derived from a teaching journal I kept while on the project, which is detailed below after briefly providing some background information regarding my experience.

### **Background to My Journal Entry**

During my preliminary study of international service-learning, I was intrigued but did not know how to go about implementing this type of theory into my own classroom. Then, during my second semester of my Ph.D. coursework, I prepared to leave the country for two weeks in order to teach English to teens in a camp located in St. Petersburg, Russia. This was primarily a missions project with the goal of using the English language as a platform for sharing the good news of the Gospel to my students. Since it was in the middle of the semester, I was advised to journal about my time in Russia and reflect on my teaching practices as well. I can safely say that this trip changed my life. This experience changed the way I view the world because it was the first time I had traveled farther than Mexico or Canada, and this trip also expanded my

worldview as I was able to see both sides of ongoing political issues between the U.S. and Russia, as well as seeing life from a different perspective by people in another culture and another country. I noticed when I returned home after the project that I did not feel like I fit in at first, so I continued to journal and document my experiences so that I could better understand them. Richard Kiely (2004) has also written about his students' experiences upon coming home from international service-learning projects and states that students must renegotiate their 'regular' life with what they have learned (and experienced), and thus how they have 'transformed' upon returning home. For me, this trip was transformative and life-changing for many reasons, but the main reason is because it solidified my desire to experience, and help my students experience, international service-learning. I now know what it is like to go through the process of traveling—the struggle of trying to communicate with a community in which you do not belong and the struggle of empathizing with a country much different from your own—performing a service (in this case teaching), and reflecting on the service in a way that leads to action. This reflection that leads to action—praxis as Paulo Freire (1970) puts it—is what has led me to a qualitative research study, and furthermore, one that allows me to reflect on my own experiences because I have been both student and instructor within international service-learning. Furthermore, as someone who has experienced the difficulty of returning home to 'normal' after a transformative experience, I began to wonder how I, as an international service-learning instructor, could aid students as they went from reflection to action as a means of transformative learning because many of them were in the United States for only 1-2 semesters and returned home soon after our course ended. My own students often commented on how they were experiencing service-learning, or even conducting community service, for the first time while in the United States. Many of them expressed interest in continuing their service upon returning

home to their country, yet they were unsure of the opportunities or resources to do so, which Kiely (2004), Crabtree (2008), and Ver Beek (2002) have all noted as potential issues in international service-learning pedagogy. I wanted to find ways of supporting them with their service learning so that upon returning home, they would be able to find somewhere to continue their community service because, I too, went through the difficult transition of returning home unsure of how to continue what I had learned while in Russia. Therefore, I want to continue this discussion of what I learned by detailing my memories and experiences in order to flesh out why St. Petersburg was so life changing for me (because it truly helped me connect the theory of international service-learning to actual practice, and it helped me to see value in this type of pedagogy even in the U.S. context). I truly believe that international service-learning fits my personality and teaching style so well because it allows me to pair service with learning in a way that requires our class to learn from each other and allows us all to practice reciprocity. I value this type of teaching style because I have the type of personality that does not require being the center of attention—in fact, I really would prefer not having to stand in the front of the classroom as much. I like being a teacher, but I also love learning, and I never want to stop—especially in my own classroom.

### **A Life-Changing Experience**

4/5/14

*I have been home from St. Petersburg, Russia for less than two days, and I feel like my life has been turned upside down (in that good way that challenges you). During this project, I was stretched further than ever before. I went to a country that is facing political tensions with my own; I went knowing about three words in Russian (two of which were the words for yes and no); and I went knowing that I would face spiritual warfare more than I had before the trip. However, by God's grace, I went. I stepped out in faith, and God seriously used this project to*

*change my life.*

*During my time in Saint Petersburg, I was teaching at an English camp for Russian teens in the 7th-11th grades. The camp's context was interesting because these students paid money to be taught by native English speakers—particularly U.S. English speakers; in fact, all of us who traveled to Russia for this camp were U.S. born citizens. We had fifteen members on our team<sup>3</sup>, as well as twenty Russian volunteers and two Russian-Americans<sup>4</sup> who were bilingual and aided with translation. This English camp was set during the student's spring break and was located about one hour outside the city at a local recreational hotel. The American team and Russian volunteers arrived on March 22<sup>nd</sup> in order to set up everything before the students arrived on March 25<sup>th</sup>, and during that time, we participated in a lot of bonding activities that allowed us to get to know each other quickly since we would be working so closely together for the next week. These bonding experiences were particularly difficult for me because they consisted of a lot of games that required closer proximity than I was used to, which frightened me a little because I was not used to being so close to strangers. And when I say close, I mean close. One of the games required us to interlock hands at random with people in the group and then find a way for us to un-jumble ourselves and form a straight line. As you can imagine, this put us in some very awkward, uncomfortable positions, but it did end up being very fun and a good bonding experience. Since this happened right after we got there, I knew that I would be in for a time of stretching and adaptation throughout the next couple of weeks—in and outside of the classroom.*

*Since I was teaching at a camp, we had many other activities and things to do besides attend English class, which often included playing games like the one mentioned above with our*

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<sup>3</sup> Our team was referred to as the American team by the Russian Nationals.

<sup>4</sup>Two siblings with dual citizenship. Their mother is an American missionary, and their father is Russian. They self-identify as Russian-American.

*students. We leaders were up at 7:30 preparing for the day and would meet the students every morning in the cafeteria for breakfast at 9 am. We would eat every meal with the students, and there were four chairs at each table, so we made sure we had at least one American<sup>5</sup> with each group of teens. From there, we went to our morning meeting and then the students went to their English classrooms from 11:00-12:45. Since there were four language stations, which were shopping, recreation and hobbies, restaurants, and the airport, we had four teachers—one in charge of each station. Out of the four teachers, only two of us had any credentials for teaching EFL; however, all teachers were Americans and native speakers of English, so not much teacher training was given. This notion that the ‘native-speaker’ did not need teacher training drove me crazy because I knew it stemmed from years of marginalization of ‘non-native’ speakers, and contributed to linguistic imperialism, but upon returning home, I did not know how to channel my newly recognized privilege into action.*

...

I must interrupt my own narrative here to discuss the last sentence above, which was taken directly from my teaching journal I kept while in Russia and continued to write in upon returning to Pennsylvania. As I look back over my journal entries, I am bemused to see how much I knew compared to my fellow teachers. It is amazing I did not have to teach all of the workshops since it sounds like I was the only one qualified to do so (sarcasm). Furthermore, while it sounds like I am assuming that the other teachers had no idea about linguistic imperialism (and I will be honest—I was), I must state that those teachers may have worried about such issues as well, but we were there for more than English, and we all made it a priority

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<sup>5</sup> I refer to these people as ‘American’ instead of ‘teacher’ because our team only had four English teachers. The rest of the group was privileged as ‘native-speakers’ due to their American citizenship and were referred to as ‘American’ by everyone involved at the camp.

to learn from the Russian volunteers in our classes. Therefore, while I am trying to describe the setting from my perspective based off of my memories and my teaching journal, I want to remind the reader that while I thought at the time that none of the other teachers were worried, I had no way of knowing without asking them, and since I did not ask them, I must not assume.

...

*Finally, after much warring against this notion of linguistic imperialism, I decided to write a paper titled: Teaching English in Russia: A Native Speaker's Perspective<sup>6</sup> as a means of exposing the reality of marginalization and oppression for non-native English speaking instructors in Europe, which I will provide two brief snapshots below:*

*1. Before we arrived in St. Petersburg, our American team would meet over Skype because we were located in four different states. We went over a few pointers for teaching English, but we did not dwell on the lessons for two reasons: 1. We are native speakers and know how to use the language and 2. We were more concerned with students' ability to converse and make connections with us, as this was a mission project. While I knew we were more concerned with making connections with the students, I also took issue with the notion that just because we knew the language meant we would be good instructors. However, I did not state this annoyance because I was new to a team that had been traveling to Russia for eight years. Furthermore, we did not go over our lesson plans<sup>7</sup> until we were in Russia. We went over a few more tips, but*

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<sup>6</sup> This article was subsequently rejected because it was written from an autoethnographic perspective using one person's experiences with teaching abroad. The editor stated that the research was "too personal" and not "rigorous enough for publication."

<sup>7</sup> These lesson plans were developed by a woman in the States who had no experience with the Russian culture or language, and they were never used before in Russia.

*there was this attitude that we would figure it out as we go since we are so comfortable with the language<sup>8</sup>.*

*I was in charge of the shopping station, which consisted of realia for grocery shopping and clothing shopping. We were given groups that had students of all levels in them, and we were asked to lead them through vocabulary development and listening/speaking exercises in the time allotted each day. After the first day, I scrapped the entire lesson and started over because the lesson had been developed in a very ineffective way. It was disorganized and did not flow largely in part because there were a lot of activities that assumed understanding from my students.*

*Even more so, the lesson focused on shopping from a largely Western perspective and confused many of my students due to its lack of relevance to their own context. So, while we were teaching in an EFL context in Russia, the majority of the lessons were created in the US and focused from a Western perspective.*

...

Once again, I must interject with the fact that this lesson may have not been effective for my group, but with the help of a Russian volunteer, who sat with me and helped me tailor the next lesson to the needs of the students, it was better received by the next group. This volunteer helped me reorganize the lesson plan and even reorganize the teaching station so that it more closely resembled an actual Russian market. Furthermore, the other teachers also received help from volunteers, such as lesson organization and also just telling us how students are used to learning in the classroom (they are used to sitting in lectures in English as opposed to the more

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<sup>8</sup> In this case, it was explicitly said that we did not need teacher training because the students wanted to learn from ‘Native English Speakers.’

relaxed camp lessons we were teaching), and the lessons were tailored more to the needs of these students; however, the lessons themselves were not ineffective to all teachers as I hint at in my narrative. In fact, as one of my readers pointed out, my narratives have the tendency to make me look like the hero, so in an effort to remain transparent, I have made an effort to reanalyze these experiences after being out of St. Petersburg for a couple of years in order to provide a new perspective to these situations that I found myself in.

2. “...Non-native speaking English teachers do somehow experience a phenomenon that can be loosely related to that experienced by the victims of the 1973 Stockholm robbery in a world that still values native speakers as the norm providers and the natural choice in language teacher selection” (Llurda, p.119).

*This was not a specific snapshot on a specific day in a classroom, but rather, this was an observation that I noticed from start to finish at English camp. Our interpreters were all highly proficient in English with at least two of them working international jobs and at least two more teaching English in high school and the university. However, while they were highly qualified, knew more about Russian culture than any one of our American team members, and were accustomed to schooling in Russia, none of them were asked to teach or lead a classroom during English camp. Granted, we needed them to translate, especially during our cultural exchange, but many of the uncomfortable moments in the classroom were due to an inability to negotiate cross-cultural differences or an inability on the American teacher’s part to explain a part of the lesson. There were two interpreters in particular that I would like to focus on—a man and a woman who both have been teaching English in St. Petersburg for many years. The man, Pasha, graduated with a degree in Linguistics, and the woman, Elya, graduated with a degree in English and Linguistics. Both speak English very well and both had more credentials than most*



*of the English teachers at the camp. In fact, as an English instructor myself, I was very nervous to teach in front of Pasha because I knew he was more qualified. In fact, he was so gracious and would take notes on the lesson and offer suggestions for next time. However, even though he was extremely qualified—even more so than our ‘native’ teachers—he was not approached to teach English in the camp because the students pay money to learn from “native English speakers”.*

My paper goes on to say:

*We have seen a reliance on the native speaker that has nothing to do with preparedness and ability to teach, but rather, assumes knowledge based on language hegemony. According to Llurda (2009), “A high level of critical awareness regarding what it means to teach a language needs to be developed [by NNESTs] so as to avoid repetition of customary practices inherited from past experiences as language learners and established as the dominant commonsensical practices” (130). Many multilinguals, like Pasha and Elya, have spent years studying and using the English language, yet they continue to allow unprepared teachers to teach at this camp because those teachers are native speakers. While I cannot change the mindset of these teachers, I can change my own. I have learned from this experience that I can utilize their input, and next time, instead of using Pasha’s suggestions myself, I can ask him to teach using the suggestions given.*

As I said before sharing this narrative, this trip, and the English camp project, changed my life. It gave me a greater understanding of the benefits, and more importantly, the difficulties that arise during international service-learning projects, which has aided in the development of my critical consciousness and has allowed me to better articulate why I wanted to focus on sustainable international service-learning when I began teaching in the ALI. I also share this journal entry with you, and parts of the subsequent article that developed from this journal entry,

as evidence for my desire to implement sustainable international service-learning that is truly diverse. I desire to implement international service-learning that is truly international and not focused on only one type of student (in this case the native English speaker). Instead, like in the Community Participation Workshop, a focus on both international students and domestic students, and of minority and majority students, is needed to be effective in implementing truly diverse international service-learning. In fact, in order to be truly sustainable and reciprocal for all involved, international service-learning must be truly international, and its theory and pedagogy must move past the linguistic imperialism often seen in current programs (Acquaye & Crew, 2012; Prins & Webster, 2010). Therefore, I chose to utilize these narratives in this book because I want to change the way I research and teach so that I can be aware of potential linguistic imperialism in my own practices, as well as in other cases, as they arise within the international service-learning classroom. I want to grow from these experiences, and I hope that my students can grow from them too. A specific comment from one of my readers for the article I submitted for publication (the one briefly detailed above) stated that this research was too personal and was therefore not rigorous enough for publication. As you can imagine, after receiving that feedback, I struggled with wanting to continue focusing on my own teaching practices, but after reflecting back on my time in St. Petersburg, I knew it would be worth it because there is value in examining how I have evolved as an international service-learning instructor who is very passionate about my pedagogy. I want international service-learning to progress, even if that progression only happens in my own classroom at first. However, before that progression can begin, it is necessary to dig deeper into the definition of international service-learning that I will be working with throughout this study.

## **Diving Deeper Into International Service Learning**

In recent years, international service-learning has been established as a subfield of service-learning and was initially developed out of a need, and a desire, to see civic engagement, and social responsibility developed on a global scale through experiential learning. Even more recently, the term global service-learning has been used to expand past “the local, hands on service” seen in even international service-learning programs through internships and global partnerships (Bowler, 2010). However, both international service-learning and global service-learning continue to represent U.S.-based students serving internationally. Therefore, when I am discussing international service-learning, I am referring to international students in an intensive English writing course focused on aiding students as they struggle with defining community and examining their role within civic engagement. Researchers like Herzberg (1994), Cushman (1998), and Annette (2002) have defined civic engagement as the service learning itself—the notion that individuals and communities can act [serve] in a way that leads to addressing areas of social concern such as marginalization and inequalities. Furthermore, the same researchers define social responsibility as the notion that one is responsible for acting to change the issues they see around them in their communities, i.e. they have a responsibility to do something with the information they now possess. According to Miller and Gonzalez (2010):

Empirical studies indicate that service learning, a specific form of experiential learning where there is alignment between participant academic and professional development goals and community needs, has the potential to impact academic achievement, career goal clarification, civic engagement, and the development of cultural competencies (p. 29).

Even more so, international service-learning has been defined by its goals as much as its theoretical contributions to the service-learning field. According to McKee (2016), these goals include: a renewed focus on quality research, international service learning as transformative learning, having a critically reflective component, a focus on sustainability, and a renewed focus on reciprocity. For the purpose of this study, all of these goals are discussed in terms of the literature on international service-learning; however, my focus remains on the goals of sustainability and reciprocity due to the fact that these concepts were ones I attempted to implement in my own classroom in order to further develop international service-learning theory and pedagogy. Therefore, it is necessary to define these terms in order to further develop them in later chapters. As a result, I begin by defining sustainable international service-learning.

In order to be considered sustainable, service-learning programs must have proper funding, proper backing from administration, and must have more than one person with knowledge of training and administrative duties (i.e. the director must allocate responsibility of certain tasks to others so that, in the event of an emergency, the program does not shut down due to the director not being present). Even more so, according to Ellen Cushman (2002), “Service learning programs that have sustained themselves have incorporated reciprocity and risk taking that can be best achieved when the researcher views the site as a place for teaching, research, and service—as a place for collaborative inquiry—with the students and community partners” (43). Therefore, the idea of reciprocity is vital to sustainable service-learning as the goal is to have people work together to make the program successful instead of having one person in charge (as was some of the issue with the Community Participation Workshop, which is discussed later). With that said, reciprocity is defined as the idea that all involved in service-learning projects (students, faculty, community members, etc.) have a relationship that is equal, or reciprocal in

nature. Jacobi (2001) states that reciprocity is often defined as need and that student or class needs are often met before community needs. Therefore, I believe it is essential to further develop this idea of reciprocity in order to better meet the needs of all involved in the project. I am not so naïve to think that there will be a completely reciprocal relationship in the project with no marginalization or any inequalities, yet I do think there is room for improved reciprocity that makes the project more meaningful, and useful, to everyone. In order to encourage reciprocity, I believe that an ethic of care and theory of mutuality must be implemented to meet this goal; however, I do not feel that an improved definition of reciprocity on its own is enough to develop more sustainable international service-learning programs.

Therefore, in order to further develop this definition of sustainable service-learning, I would also like to incorporate a focus on place/locality due to the fact that I want to understand how a student's place affects his or her relationship with the current environment in which they are present and in order to better understand students and the community in order to aid in development of reciprocity. In order to do so, I am using Pennycook's (2010) definition of the relationship between locality and language practice. While he is focused particularly on language practices (which is important to my discussion on writing in later chapters), his primary focus on locality, and our relationship to our location is important in determining how a local community can aim for greater sustainability. He states:

To talk of language as a local practice, then, is about much more than language use (practice) in context (locality). To take the notion of locality seriously, rather than merely juxtaposing it with the global, the universal or the abstract is to engage with ideas of place and space that in turn require us to examine time, movement and interaction. To think in terms of practices is to make social activity central, to ask how it is we do things

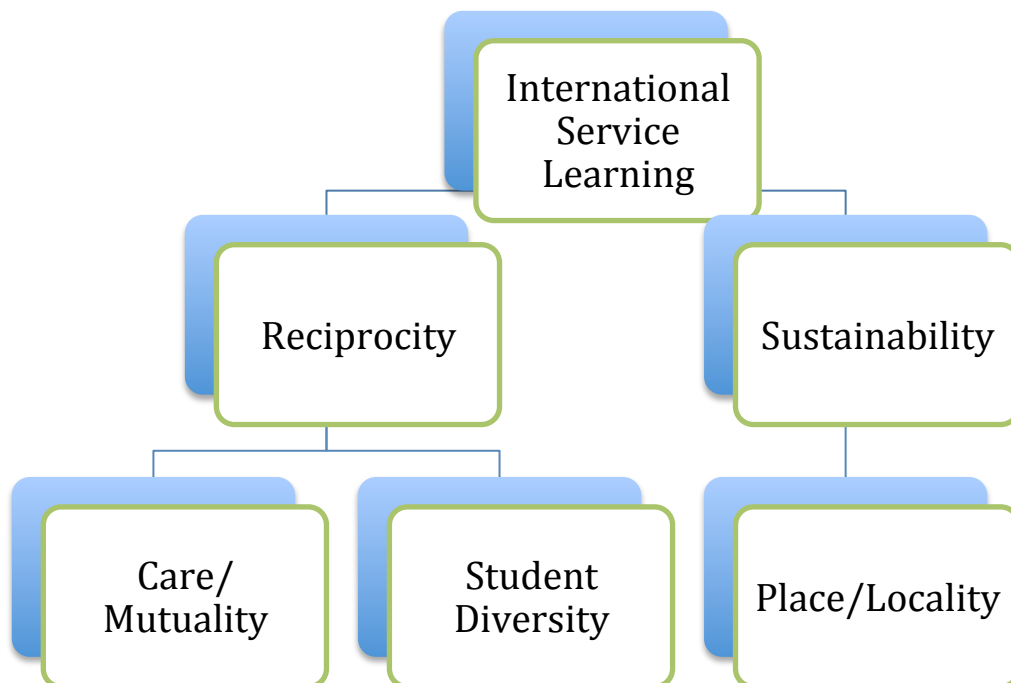
as we do, how activities are established, regulated and changed. Practices are not just things we do, but rather bundles of activities that are the central organization of social life (pp. 1-2).

Therefore, the focus on locality I was aiming for in my service learning course, as well as in this book, is a focus on how a specific place (including time and space) impacts students as they interact with the social activities and expectations they come into contact with. Does this affect international students if they are learning about sustainability in a country they have only been in for a few months? How do they negotiate their social norms from their previous locations to those expected of them in Indiana, PA, and does that affect our international service-learning class as a result? I asked myself all of these questions before, during, and after the international service-learning course, and they are examined thoroughly in this study through my analysis of my narratives in order to attempt to understand how a redefinition of reciprocity through care and mutuality, as well as a focus on locality all potentially contribute to greater sustainability within international service-learning.

International service learning programs have continued to attempt to develop reciprocity, as well as the other goals listed above, for both students and community members in a variety of different ways. Reflective modes of learning such as journaling and class discussions are very prevalent in international service-learning pedagogy, as well as the idea that students must serve on overseas service projects as a means of engaging in “transformative pedagogy” (Kiely, 2004). However, since I did not have the resources to get my students into overseas service projects, the focus of this international service-learning course at IUP was to help students make connections between their home communities and the Indiana community as a way of helping them understand the value of service-learning in both contexts. Even more so, while there has been

extensive research conducted on student experiences within service-learning, there has been less research conducted on teacher and community member experience (D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009). So, as I attempted to create an international service-learning course focused on sustainability through reciprocity and locality, I realized that analyzing the course, my motives, and my experiences would allow me to better understand my role as an international service-learning teacher, as well as potentially allow me to suggest ways of better implementation of this pedagogy for instructors who are interested in similar teaching practices. In essence, my goal in analyzing my own teaching evolution was to “practice what I preach” and encourage reciprocity as I allow readers into my experiences so that they can see my interpretation and offer new ones that I would never have been able to see. Furthermore, D'Arlach, Sanchez, and Feuer (2009) state that a common goal of service-learning programs is “to narrow the distance between universities and communities” (p. 5). I would even venture to say that another goal of reciprocal service projects is to narrow the distance between student and instructor; in fact, the definition of reciprocity is an establishment of equal relationships based on mutual trust and understanding (Cushman, 1998). However, while reciprocity is a goal of many service-learning projects, it is often illusive as programs continue to deal with issues related to inequality and marginalization—in the project itself, as well as within the community. Furthermore, while there has been ample research on reciprocal international service-learning within the last few years, there has been a lack of research within the field on sustainable international service-learning programs. As a result, with this book, I propose that a reassessment of the term reciprocity and a focus on locality in the international service-learning classroom can lead to international service-learning theory and pedagogy that is more sustainable and more encouraging of diversity as well. I chose to implement reciprocity and a focus on place as two pillars for my international service-

learning course because reciprocity, or more equal relationships between all service team members and the community, begins with the local—as does a focus on place and its affect on civic engagement. Through a focus on the local community within place-based writing, international service-learning projects can develop more reciprocal relationships, which will in turn develop more sustainable programs as community members, university staff, and students see the need and the value of service-learning within their own communities. Even more so, since my focus is on international service-learning, I still believe in the value of international and U.S. based students working together to form reciprocal relationships in their local contexts that can then be extended and built upon when they return to their home countries. This point will be expanded upon throughout this entire book.



*Figure 1.* The relationship between my key terms.



With that said, the research presented in this book is significant because, through an analysis of my own teaching evolution, I aim to theorize sustainable international service-learning programs in two ways: 1. A redefinition of reciprocity through care and mutuality and 2. A focus on how locality (and the writing that develops from it) leads to sustainable international service-learning. Therefore, this theorization of international service-learning that is sustainable through a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on locality is met through conducting a reflective inquiry of my own teaching practices within an international service-learning classroom and pairing that data with current research. Since I use a reflective inquiry approach to conduct this research, I must first tell you another story about how I found this book, or rather, how it found me.

### **Where I'm Coming From**

*“...an ethic of caring prefers acts done out of love and natural inclination. Acting out of caring, one calls on a sense of duty or special obligation only when love or inclination fails” (Noddings, 1988, pg. 219).*

The aforementioned epigraph encapsulates my teaching philosophy as a teacher-scholar, as well as my reasoning for choosing to write this book. How did my passion for a book focusing on fostering sustainable international service-learning through reciprocity<sup>9</sup> and place-based writing emerge? Well, if I am being honest, this project has been an ongoing development in my life since I was 14 years old and became a Christian. At the moment I accepted Christ into my life everything changed. Life was no longer first and foremost about me—instead, I learned that my life would be used for the glory of Jesus Christ and making Him known to those I come into contact with. As a result, I knew that whatever I did in my life, I wanted to be caring, compassionate, and kind because that is what Christ has been to me, and I also knew that I

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<sup>9</sup> Fostered through care and mutuality

wanted to be part of a profession that could enact change for the better in our world. However, while my faith is the foundation for my interest in international service-learning, I struggled with writing how my faith shaped this book because I have been continually reminded that there may be a place for faith and spirituality in the world, but these aspects of human life are often at constant odds with academia. Varghese and Johnston's (2007) article on "Evangelical Christians and English Language Teaching" was written due to the fact that the authors were concerned "by their [Christians] invisibility in the field's [English Language Teaching] professional discourse" (p. 6). This was interesting to me because I was reluctant to fully share the extent of my own Christianity in this book at first due to wanting my research to remain eligible for inclusion in our field's 'professional discourse.' In fact, I wanted this book to be the project that finally displays my faith for my readers to see due to my immense desire to glorify God in all that I do, but I was nervous that my readers would have preconceived notions about what it means to be a Christian that might interfere with taking my faith as a foundation for my desire to teach service-learning seriously. This directly relates to Varghese and Johnston's (2007) statement, which says:

We were concerned that, given the invisibility of evangelical Christians in the field's professional discourses, we were in danger of essentializing evangelical teachers and assuming much greater uniformity among them than is in fact the case. Certainly, among those in the circles we move in, which tend to include those labeled progressive or liberal, evangelical Christians are often treated dismissively. Our use of interview data was intended to humanize the teachers and help us and our readers see them as individuals and as people whose views are not dogmatically fixed but, like those of many

other teachers, in a state of flux and development, especially these teachers, who are just beginning their teaching careers (12).

In my own teaching and education, I have learned over the years that giving my faith as a reason for my pedagogy is usually inappropriate in the classroom, so like the statement by Varghese and Johnston (2007), my Christian faith has been almost invisible in my professional endeavors. However, I want to move past this invisibility into a state where my teaching, like my faith, is constantly growing, and I, as a Christian teacher, recognize and understand why I am so passionate about international service-learning and the people I interact with as a result of choosing this profession. As an example of the potential invisibility of evangelical Christians in academic discourse, I share a narrative look at a conversation that occurred during my last class before graduating with my Master's degree. This example showcases why I decided to implement an ethic of care into my own teaching theory and pedagogy because I want my students to feel like they can be honest in our classroom—a feeling I did not have myself in this narrative incident.

*May 2013*

*As I sit in my final class for my Master's degree, I am struck by the fact that I am finished at California State University, Stanislaus. In fact, I am leaving for Indiana, Pennsylvania in less than three months. I'm starting to get nervous—I've never been that far from my family for longer than a few weeks. However, I know God is calling me to go, and I know I must obey. I look out the window—it's sunny and warm; a perfect California day. How am I going to adjust to the cold? I wear a thick jacket when it's 50 degrees out.*

*"Ravyn!"*

*"Yes, Dr. S?"*

*“I asked you what you were planning on doing when you are finished with school. Why did you choose English? Why TESOL?”*

*As I sat and contemplated this with the whole class watching me, I thought “it’s now or never. You are leaving so you might as well be honest with yourself and your peers for once during this program.”*

*“Well, honestly, I am not completely sure. I would love to direct a language institute or work with international students on a university campus. Actually, I would really love to use English Language Teaching as a platform for missionary work.”*

*“That sounds very interesting, Ravyn, but what makes you think it is appropriate for you to share your faith with your students in a professional environment?”*

*I faltered at that question. I wanted to tell my professor that we all do that in some regard. Instructors and students negotiate shared, and different, opinions, beliefs, etc. on a daily basis, and that by stating it was inappropriate to share my beliefs he, himself, was imposing his on me. Instead, I said,*

*“I didn’t mean that I would explicitly proselytize in my classroom. I know that is inappropriate in a professional setting. I meant that I wanted to teach English in a manner that glorifies God. I want to meet the needs of those who are often overlooked and aid them as they learn English. I want to care for them and treat them more than just as students. I want to create a classroom that promotes genuine experience and care for my students, and I want us to have a relationship built on trust and mutual respect. That, in my opinion, is how I show them Christ. Then, if they ask me why I am different, I can tell them my relationship with Christ is the reason why. That is what I mean by teaching English as a platform ministry.”*

*Since I was nervous with the turn of this conversation to begin with, I knew that I had rushed through the above statement, and I was probably as red as a tomato. However, I had finally taken a stand for my beliefs in this seminar, and I couldn't help but smile.*

*“Well, I guess you are entitled to your opinions, but you may not want to mention them to hiring committees in the future.”*

*I sat there a little stunned as my classmates looked at me sympathetically. I was stunned because I finally spoke the truth about why I wanted to teach and about how important my faith is to me, but I was also stunned because my professor, who preached diversity and care for all students, had just gone against his own teaching philosophy because my philosophy differed from his. I thought then and there that I wanted to be a teacher who truly cared for my students and allowed, and encouraged, differences of opinion and true diversity in the classroom. So, it was here, three months before I even began my Ph.D. program, that I vowed to write a meaningful book that focused on care and reciprocity between me and my students—a book that would truly showcase my faith as well as my desire to treat my students with respect and dignity—even if they did not believe the same things I did.*

...

Now, before I begin discussing this narrative, I want to make something clear. My professor never actually told me that he disagreed with my faith and thought it was inappropriate to share in the classroom. He only told me that it would be inappropriate for me to discuss my faith during a job interview. In all reality, he could have told me this out of kindness and his desire to not see me overlooked for a position because I discussed a topic deemed inappropriate for the job interview. Unfortunately, because I have had other incidents in my professional and academic career where my faith has been questioned, and even my suitability as an instructor

because of that faith (even by the same professor), I was quick to analyze this interaction as a situation where I was belittled due to believing in God. I will never know the truth, but I do know that I felt this situation was belittling to my faith because of how he spoke to me and because of other incidents in my life like this one—incidents that have made me want to keep my Christianity invisible at times. However, in my case, everything that I believe and want to accomplish in my life stems from who I am in Christ, and after prompting from my mentor, I realized I would be dishonest with my readers, and with myself, if I did not include this vitally important aspect of my journey in this book. Nel Noddings (1988) states that “there is...more than intellectual growth at stake in the teaching enterprise...teachers, like mothers, want to produce acceptable persons—persons who will support worthy institutions, live compassionately...be admired, trusted, and respected” (p. 221). I want the same for my students, and I know that this care I have for them stems from my deep love of Jesus Christ, which is also why I chose Noddings’ quote for my epigraph. Love and natural inclination motivate me to care for my students because I am a Christian and am called to love others as myself (Mark 12:31). Therefore, if I am to be the caring teacher that allows my students to write about issues they feel passionate about; if I am to be the caring teacher that pushes my students to succeed and shows them they matter, then I also need to practice the same method in my own writing—even if that means I might face resistance. Finally, I want to remember incidents like this interaction with my professor when I am teaching, because, even though he may not have meant any harm, I, as the student, took it that way, and I want to be very mindful of my students in the classroom—I want to be clear and avoid as many potential misunderstandings as possible by keeping a caring, open, and diverse dialog with them.

### **Why a Focus on International Service-Learning in the Writing Classroom?**

My focus on international service-learning in the writing classroom developed out of this desire to be a caring teacher and enact change in my community. As Noddings says above, care aims to produce compassion and empathy in both students and instructors. Within service-learning theory and pedagogy, one of the goals is also to foster compassion and empathy that leads to social change through civic and social engagement (Annette, 2002). Green (2003) states that service-learning has always been more than “doing good” (p. 276), and therefore, we must instruct students in a way that allows them to develop their own social awareness and civic engagement. Social awareness [or engagement as it is often called as well] and civic engagement develop as students recognize marginalization and inequalities [social, economic, political, etc.] in their communities, and then engage with said communities in order to enact change that aims to break down these inequalities (Herzberg, 1994). Furthermore, international service-learning encourages examining one’s own values, culture, and country in order to engage in civic action on a global scale. Since service-learning is not merely community service, the goal of such programs becomes civic engagement that is developed out of students’ desires to see change in a community they have come to relate to or appreciate through their time spent within the service project (Kiely, 2004, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002). Therefore, an ethic of care led me to focus on international service-learning as I saw the need for care and compassion within service-learning pedagogy firsthand during my time as an international service-learning student and teacher.

I also knew that I wanted to focus on the impact of literacy in some form, which is why I chose a program focused on Composition and TESOL in the first place. I am passionate about literacy because I, myself, realized at a very early age that I loved reading and writing. I could spend hours reading stories from my grandma’s small library in her spare bedroom and then

spend even more time creating my own stories based off of what I read. Not only did I enjoy the time spent developing my literacy practices, I was also encouraged to continue pursuing them by my grandma, my parents, and my teachers all throughout my schooling. I realized that without this encouragement and influence, I may never have pursued education as fully as I have, which made me think about the impact teachers can have on their students, as well as the responsibility we have as educators to remind our students how important their experiences and perspectives are in the classroom, and in life.

Furthermore, I realized that I wanted to be a teacher because many of my own teachers showed me kindness and were willing to work with me to develop my literacy skills. They were kind because they valued my voice and allowed me to write about issues I was passionate about. Furthermore, they took interest in me as a person and helped me work through life issues in my writing. As I looked back on the instructors who helped shape me into the student I now am, I realized that I wanted to be the same encouraging individual to my future students. Furthermore, ever since I became a Christian, I realized that I did not want to be just any teacher or any citizen of this world. I wanted to be that teacher students thought back to and realized how much she cared for their well-being and how much she created an environment that was conducive to useful and relevant learning. Even more so, I wanted to be that person who showed kindness to strangers—one people knew was different because they saw Christ in me. I wanted my students to know that I valued them and their knowledge and experiences, and I wanted them to know they matter. As a result, I knew that it was imperative to adopt an ethic of care in my research in order to more fully examine proper ways of caring for my students in the writing classroom.



This desire to be a caring teacher led me to composition and TESOL because I feel that writing is powerful and gives voice to the sometimes otherwise silenced (Cushman, 1998; Freire, 1970). In fact, service-learning's focus on reflective action usually has a large writing component as students reflect through journal entries on what they have seen and what they have learned through their service experience (Crabtree, 2008, 2013; Herzberg, 1994; Kiely, 2004). So, going into this program, I wanted to do a few things: 1. Promote caring in the classroom (Noddings); 2. Allow my students to project their voices through writing (Hurlbert, 2012; Wallace & Ewald, 2000); 3. Provide an engaging classroom; and 4. Help others. I was new to the field of composition upon entering this program, but I soon read about service-learning, and I fell in love with it. When implemented correctly, service-learning can promote care, empathy, and empowerment to both students and community members through reciprocity. Yes, there are many issues within this theory and pedagogy, but I value service-learning because of its focus on learning through experience, as well as the need to enact change in a society filled with marginalization and inequality. I remember sitting in Theories of Composition during my first semester here. My instructor mentioned how powerful service-learning could be on an international level, and I was immediately intrigued. I began researching international service-learning, and the work people are currently doing fascinated me. International service-learning aims to promote diversity, caring and reciprocity among cultures and across languages, and help for those in need. However, a large majority of the international service-learning population happens to be white, middle class, U.S. based students who travel overseas in order to help those less fortunate. Instead, I knew that I wanted to promote diversity in a truer sense by encouraging a theory of international service-learning that spans more than the U.S. context.

Furthermore, throughout my time here at IUP, I have had the privilege of both researching and teaching an international service-learning course. When I was hired to teach this course, I knew right away that I wanted the course to focus on civic and social engagement and responsibility, which is the notion of encouraging students to participate in society (or at least see their need to) through the acts of service and subsequent critical reflection that continues after the course ends (Annette, 2002; Bartel, Saavedra, & Van Dyne, 2001; Cushman, 2002; Giles, 1994; Hollis, 2002; Welch, 2002). I was also fast becoming interested in sustainability at the time due to a course I took on Ecocomposition, as well as an ongoing drought in my home-state of California, which is where I had lived my entire life up until the point of moving to Pennsylvania for graduate school. Not only was I interested in sustainability, I was also interested in sustainable service programs because many service programs fail due to directors leaving, grants ending, and a variety of other reasons that will be explored later in this book (Cushman, 2002). So, I decided to partner with the Indiana Community Garden and have students serve while simultaneously learning about sustainability and individual and public responsibility because I knew the garden was a promoter of sustainable gardening and food practices, and researchers like Anne Merrill Ingram (2001) state that pairing ecocomposition with service learning must be done in a sustainable service site in order to be most effective (p. 211).

Overall, I wanted to develop a book that reflects who I am as a teacher because it is my hope that I will be conducting research on this topic in some form for the rest of my academic and professional career. As a result, this book has been shaped from many different experiences I have had leading up to, and while, teaching international service-learning. It is my hope that I have a better understanding of myself as a teacher at the end of this project, and it is also my

hope that I better understand the field of international service-learning and the requirements for implementing sustainable programs. Because of this desire to understand myself as a teacher, chapter two is dedicated to presenting my approach to writing this book, which is a reflective inquiry of my teaching practices.

CHAPTER II

REFLECTIVE INQUIRY AS A MEANS OF IMPLEMENTING DIVERSE AND  
SUSTAINABLE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING

**Learning to Conduct Rigorous, Academic Research**

*November 2015*

*As I sit across the table from my dissertation committee trying to turn my iPhone's voice recorder on, one of my readers begins with saying, "I have a problem with your research questions."*

*Oh dear goodness, I think. So much for passing my three-chapter defense.*

*"Okay," I mumble.*

*"You describe your methodology as narrative inquiry based on your own teaching practices, but your research questions do not reflect this focus right now. Why don't you focus more on your evolution as a teacher implementing international service-learning and how that evolution speaks to the greater field? As of right now, I can see you warring with wholeheartedly adopting a narrative inquiry lens and trying to focus on 'rigorous, academic research.' How is narrative inquiry any different?"*

*"Yes," said my other reader, "You mention that these narratives are accurate, word-for-word depictions of conversations, but that really is not the point of narrative inquiry, is it? I want you to focus more on telling the narrative as data instead of focusing on accuracy, especially since accuracy is not your main concern with these narratives—the discussion that comes from them is more important."*

*"We think you need to commit to narrative inquiry and run with it."*

*...*

Well, my committee saw right through the façade that made up the first edition of my methodology chapter as I tried my hardest to make my study sound “more academic,” and they also saw my reluctance to adopt an actual reflective inquiry approach because I did not want to seem “self-centered” (Denzin, 2006), and I wanted my research to be taken seriously. Heidi Stevenson (2010) mentions in her own dissertation, “I had subconsciously accepted this [a “rigorous,” quantitative study] as the only definition of worthwhile research” (29). I had done the same thing and had walked into my three-chapter defense expecting to have to justify my minimal data sources since I was both the researcher and the participant. Instead, I was met with a committee that challenged me to move past this idea I had about the dissertation study as having one type of ‘academic writing’, just as I challenge my students within international service-learning, which was something I was not expecting and which caught me off guard completely. However, my being caught off guard was a good thing and made me realize that there are many types of rigorous, worthwhile research, and my goal was to make this book that type of study. As a result, this book is my attempt at doing so.

### **Finding Reflective Inquiry**

*April 2015*

*As I am standing in front of the classroom going over the students’ final project for our Community Participation Workshop one last time, one of my students raises his hand and asks, “Ms. McKee, I know you want us to write about our time in the community this semester, but I don’t know how to write it. Should it be a research paper? I don’t have time for another one.” I tried not to smile at that last statement. These students are taking eight courses a semester at the ALI and are taking this workshop for fun—no credit, just a certificate of completion when they finish. And even more so, these students have been writing research papers all semester*

*because they are preparing to enter U.S.-based universities after passing the IELTS or TOEFL and finishing at the ALI.*

*“Kao, may I ask how many research papers you have to write?”*

*“I have three, and presentations in almost every class.”*

*“Ouch,” I think to myself, but I say to Kao, “Okay, Kao, what do you want to write about?”*

*I ask him this because I know how it feels to be a student and feel overwhelmed at all the seemingly endless assignments due. I also know that I don’t want this assignment to stress them out. I just want to know what they’ve learned and about their experiences. I’m fine with them writing in whatever genre they want to as long as they do one final reflection on the class and the service.*

*“I want to write about our time at the community garden—especially the time when it was so cold and we were outside shoveling dirt in the snow.”*

*“That sounds great! Remember, it doesn’t have to be a research paper. I said you could write about your experience however you would like. I just want to hear what you have learned from this workshop.”*

*“Well, can I write a story? Like, where I am the main character, and I just describe how I was feeling and what I learned? I want to talk about how freezing I was and how it amazed me that that those one plants [Brussels sprouts] were still growing.”*

*“Yes! I think that would be a great final project. Remember class, you can be as creative as you want. These are your experiences. Write them in a way that is useful to you. I would love to hear some stories.”*

*...*

I will be honest. I think, on some level, I wrote this book because I thought analyzing my evolution as an instructor would be easy. It most definitely is not, but I have found it so valuable because it has taught me that my experiences as a teacher, as well as all of my students' experiences within our course, are meaningful and have the potential to speak to the field of international service-learning. I may be only one person, but like I told my students above during our class, their experiences are worthwhile to discuss, and what they have learned is important for them as well as for others around them [whether inside or outside of the classroom]. Even more so, the Community Participation Course was largely a self-reflective course focused on allowing students to reflect on their experiences through writing, so in an effort to remain open with my students and myself, this book is a product of that work. It has not been easy to look at my own teaching practices because I do not always want to see the mistakes and the downright ugliness, but I believe it is worth it in the end because I have learned from this book, and I hopefully have also grown as a teacher, and human being, as well. I want to push past my fears because I want my students to learn, to grow, and to be better, so is it not only fair that I try to do the same? Brian Fotinakes (2014) asks, "Didn't many of us, I'd like to believe all of us, begin teaching out of love for other people and with the belief that this love would inspire the people in our classes to go into the world and make it a better place?" (p. 2). I wholeheartedly agree, and am a firm believer that teaching goes way past simple cognitive knowledge. I wanted to be a teacher because I wanted to make a difference in the world, and as cheesy as it sounds, I believed (and still do) that my students can help make those positive changes. Fotinakes (2014) goes on to say, "Michael Blitz and C. Mark Hurlbert state this very position in the opening of lines of *Letters for the Living: Teaching Writing in a Violent Age*: 'We can't imagine why anyone would choose teaching as a profession unless he or she had a notion that educating people is somehow

involved in making better neighborhoods, better communities, a better world”(p. 2). In my experience as a student and as a teacher, I have learned the importance of understanding that I am in the classroom for much more than the lessons themselves. I am there because I want to grow, and I want to push my students, and myself, to be better people—to think past themselves and want to help others. With that said, I would like to show a narrative that really encapsulates my reasoning for using reflective inquiry because I feel it best allows me to explore my evolution as a teacher and how that evolution has the potential to keep growing for the rest of my career.

*December 2014*

*As I write this, I am sitting at the kitchen table at home. AT HOME. I want to cry I feel so relieved. I just flew in from Pittsburgh yesterday, and since I had such an early flight, I had stayed the night at a hotel the night before with Olive and Abel [my dogs]. I didn't sleep more than two hours because I was so anxious. I usually don't struggle with anxiety, but I had it big time. I think it was because I was flying with dogs for the first time and because I was just so overwhelmed at the thought of being home in just a few short hours. Thank God for air travel. Wow, it is almost 2015, and as I look back at this past year, I can't believe how hard it has been. So many great things happened—I went to Russia! I passed my QP, but there were also some very hard times, too. I'll never forget the emotional rollercoaster of getting back into St. Petersburg and finally having Wi-Fi. It was my 24<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I had some really sweet birthday messages on my phone. As I scrolled down, I saw one from my dad: Praise God. Mom's tumor is benign. Mom's tumor? WHAT? They had told me that they found out about the tumor in her stomach a few days after I had arrived in Russia, and there was no way for them to tell me, nor did they want to until they knew more about what was going on. When I saw this text message, I felt a mix of emotions. I was so relieved that whatever they had found was benign, but*



*I was also so sad my mom and dad had had to go through that week on their own. I was sad I wasn't there for my mom; however, I knew that once I got back to the States, I would be able to call her, hear the full story, and just thank God with her.*

*After returning to Indiana the next week, and trying to recover from jet lag, I began work again. I remember the day so clearly. I was waiting for my next student interview in Dr. Park's office, and I got a call from my mom. I was expecting this call because she had had an appointment with her specialist that day, and they were going to talk about options for removing her tumor. She was crying and told me that the operation to remove her apple-sized tumor could take anywhere from 3-5 hours and would take at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  of her stomach but potentially the whole thing. She told me she didn't want me to come home, but I told her that I am an adult and make my own decisions—she wasn't so happy about me telling her that. After work, I emailed my professors right away. I was really nervous because I had already missed two weeks of class for Russia, and if I left early now, I would miss another two weeks. All three of my professors quickly replied and said to leave and be with my family. I was so grateful, and I booked my flight that night. Mom's surgery went so well, and she only lost  $\frac{1}{4}$  of her stomach. The surgeon said that it was really the best-case scenario. I was so thankful she was okay, and that I got to spend the summer helping her recover. I was also so thankful that my professors were so understanding. In fact, I still have all of those emails they sent me when I asked to leave early because they remind me to have compassion for my students and their life circumstances—just like my professors did for me.*

*It was really hard for me to leave for school that July, but I was just so grateful to have my mom with me still. Then, as I started the fall semester, I started feeling really sick. Now, mind you, I'm intolerant to certain foods and have struggled with immune issues in the past, so I did*

*not take it too seriously at first. I thought it was just the same stuff happening, but I quickly became so sick that I was having a hard time making it to class and then staying awake while I was there. After trying to find a doctor that would take me seriously, I was finally diagnosed with walking pneumonia and was told that I had had it for months. I went the entire semester with walking pneumonia! I did not even get on antibiotics until December because my insurance only works in California. I don't even care that it took that long now. I survived, and I am home for five weeks. Although this break will be different because mom and dad told me that dad got the job at Compassion International, and they are moving to Colorado Springs, Colorado in February. Two months away! Mom says her tumor made her realize how short life is and that we must be obedient to God and go wherever He calls. I really admire her faith and her bravery. Both of her parents aren't doing well, and we have always lived within 15 minutes of them—and have spent at least two days a week over there for all of my life. I am so excited for my parents, but also a little nervous. I will no longer be a California girl. I will no longer be able to go visit all of my family whenever I want<sup>10</sup>. It will be a great adventure for my parents, but it's weird thinking I won't ever be back in this house after I leave here in January. Oh well. I've been through harder times than this—that's for sure. As I look back on this past year alone, I am amazed that I made it through two semesters of my Ph.D. program without failing a class. I am so thankful to God because I know without Him, I would have lost my sanity. Honestly, I lost count of how many times I would come home from work and school and just cry because I was so exhausted. Not to mention the helplessness I felt when they wheeled my mom into surgery, and I didn't know if she would ever be healthy again. I am just so thankful everything worked out.*

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<sup>10</sup> I have lived within 25 minutes of my entire immediate family since I was born.

*It just reminds me that my students go through semesters like these as well. I hope I never forget that and act unforgiving if they don't do well in my class. I'm sure many of my students have their own issues they are dealing with, and I want to be available to listen if they feel comfortable enough with me to share. It reminds me of our first-day orientation meeting we had when I moved to Indiana. I was so nervous for classes, and I remember our director telling us that we had to put this program above everything in our lives if we wanted to pass. I thought that was a little harsh, but that was a large part of the mentality I witnessed at the beginning, and it just made me so afraid to ask my professors for more time off. However, all of them, including the director, told me to be with my mom who was so much more important than school. I am so thankful to them, and I am reminded that I have an obligation to keep the important things in mind when I am a teacher. Learning can happen in other places besides the classroom, and I need to remember to treat my students like human beings—always, and especially when they need support and a little encouragement like I have so often before.*

...

I have this problem with being honest with my readers. I am writing this book because I want to share narratives that are sincere and open, and show whoever might read this book that I learned from my experiences teaching, and living, during this time. However, I have noticed that I constantly fight my desire to share experiences with my other desire to stay away from vulnerability. Nevertheless, especially as I have gone over revisions for this book, I have taken time to make sure I am sharing stories like the one above because they do matter. Why? Because they teach me about myself and about my experiences, and because they allow me to write meaningfully. According to Pagnucci (2004), “Stories connect what we know to what we’re trying to understand. They make things personal, give things meaning. They make things matter” (p. 9). I knew before I even started writing this book that I wanted my study to be meaningful to

both my readers and me. My goal for this book was to document my evolution as an instructor as I aimed to implement sustainable international service-learning in the writing classroom through a redefinition of reciprocity, as well as through a focus on locality. I also wanted my readers to be able to understand why I believe sustainable international service-learning could be the means for action that leads to change. In essence, I desired to “practice what I preach,” so to speak, to foster the reader’s critical consciousness through the data that would hopefully then lead to action. As such, I knew that using reflective inquiry with characteristics of narrative inquiry and autoethnography would allow me to do so because of the approach’s ability to make readers “care, empathize, and do something, to act” (Ellis & Bochner, 1990). As I mentioned in the prologue of this book, I chose to label this approach as reflective inquiry because I wanted to critically reflect on my experiences and evolution as I have asked my students to do about our service as well. While this approach is focused on autoethnographic narrative inquiry, I will refer to it as reflective inquiry because I feel that reflection, which is so necessary in service-learning theory and pedagogy, is important to my continued growth as a teacher-scholar as well.

Furthermore, according to Clandinin and Connelly (1990), “The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world. This general notion translates into the view that education is the construction and reconstruction of personal and social stories; teachers and learners are storytellers and characters in their own and other’s stories” (p. 2). Therefore, through reflective inquiry focused on 1. my own pedagogical practices and 2. my evolution as a teacher, I hope to construct stories that show what I have learned about myself as an instructor, as well as the potential for growth within sustainable international service-learning in order to allow readers (and especially myself) to care and empathize enough to hopefully act on what they have learned through this study.

As I mentioned earlier, I was exposed to international service-learning theory during my first semester of my Ph.D. program. I was instantly drawn to this theory and method of teaching because of its emphasis on transformative learning, which is the focus on making the connection between reflection and action concrete and ongoing as student lives are “transformed” by the experience of the service project. As a result, this book is my attempt at developing my own critical consciousness as I reflect on the marginalization I have seen as both an international service-learning instructor and student, as well as the interactions that I have seen between my students and community members that show the struggles inherent in the development of critical consciousness that leads to action. In my case, my action is attained through writing this book, which is similar to Ellen Cushman’s (1998) desire to act by writing her book *The Struggle and the Tools* with the intent of showing an inner-city population’s development of critical consciousness. Therefore, this chapter is organized in a way that first demonstrates my experience with teaching international service-learning and my critical reflections that emerged as a result of the experience through a reflective inquiry. Then, I focus on my perspective as a researcher to justify my reasoning for using narratives as a means of reflective inquiry. Finally, I end this chapter with a brief look at the study context, data sources [my narratives], and ethical considerations in order to solidify the value of my chosen approach used for analyzing the data in this book.

### **The Value of Self-Reflective Teaching**

*September 2014*

*It has been two weeks since I was hired and started trying to speak with people about volunteering or touring their different organizations around Indiana. I was given a list of resources from the previous instructor; however, the rapport he built with some of these people*

*has not translated to me, the newbie, and it has been difficult to get the okay for students to volunteer, which has really surprised me. Nevertheless, the Indiana Community Garden responded very quickly, and the master gardener, Kay, was really excited to partner with our class. In fact, she actually okayed us to spend four weeks in the beginning of the semester at the garden learning about sustainable practices, gardening techniques, and more. I really hope the students enjoy being out in the sunshine and learning about this awesome place in the community.*

...

*Today, we went to the Community Garden for the first time. Kay and Lisa were both there, and they were both extremely friendly and helpful. My students seemed to enjoy speaking with them and had good conversations about gardening in their own countries. In fact, I learned that a few of my students had gardens of their own back home, but they were all surprised to see a communal garden where lower-income families could take fresh grown produce as needed. Kay shared with my students, all of Japanese descent, about her time living in China and the difficulty she faced learning about the language and the culture. They then shared similar experiences they have had while living here and in England. She then asked if our class would like to work with American students while at the garden, and my students enthusiastically said yes. There is an Anthropology course on campus required to do community service at the garden, and the instructor would love for the students to pair up with international students. We were very willing and said yes, so next week the students will work with American students of the same age.*

...

*We showed up for our second week at the Community Garden and saw that six Anthropology students were waiting to join our class. Kay asked the students to partner up and assigned them tasks such as breaking up the soil in some of the garden beds, watering the plants, harvesting carrots, and picking weeds. As I walked around and asked how students were doing, they all seemed to be discussing different topics. Some were asking the American students about their interests, some were asking questions about the garden, and some were discussing their own interests as well. However, all of them were talking and getting to know new people—which was a big goal for them from the beginning of the semester.*

...

*January 2015*

*Kay was very happy to hear that our class wanted to continue working at the Garden for another semester and assured me that there was plenty to do in the winter months. At first, due to weather, we were not able to work at the Garden, so Kay and Ginger, another master gardener, were gracious enough to bring a project to our classroom—a fundraiser the Garden was working on that they wanted our class to be a part of. Now, I must state that our classroom was very small. It was a conference room in the middle of Wallwork Hall and only seated about 10 people comfortably. I was probably assigned this classroom because my superiors figured our class would not stay in it long as we would be venturing out into the community; however, it was not the ideal location to have students work on separating seeds for the fundraiser. Anyway, we decided to move tables right outside the classroom in the communal space and had plenty of room to work. The project we were working on was a Seedling Project created to give lower-income families in the Indiana community fresh food and seeds through a soup kitchen environment. The project was designed to help families grow their own tomatoes, etc. and teach*

*them to eat sustainably even if they were on a tight budget. The students would be separating the seeds into different packets and preparing them for delivery to the families—a vital role in the process that helped the Community Garden workers immensely. There were some mishaps due to a seeming language barrier. While it was a misunderstanding, one of the garden workers yelled at the students and told me that they could not understand the directions given when in reality they were listening and understood—they just took their time counting the seeds and took longer than the worker expected. Even with this misunderstanding, the students really seemed to enjoy working together to make the seed packets.*

...

*When we were finally able to get to the Community Garden, three weeks after our Seedling Project was started, the students were surprised to see how much it had changed since they were last there. Most of the beds were empty; however, we learned that Brussels sprouts were still growing due to their ability to handle hard frost until about February, when the plants would be dug up and added to the compost pile. We were asked to dig up some of the beds and add nourishing topsoil that would make them ready for the Spring when it was time to plant. It was very frigid that day and after awhile, I noticed that the students were getting very cold. I had warned them to dress very warm the week before, but some only wore light jackets and could not stand the cold for much longer. After being at the garden for about 45 minutes, it began to snow, and while my students thought it was pretty, they also knew we had to walk 10 minutes back to campus and began to beg to leave. Of course, Kay and I both said yes, and our class started back to campus. By the time we reached our classroom, my students looked miserable, and when I dismissed them early, they all hurried to their dorm rooms to warm up.*

...



I share these excerpts from my time in the Community Participation Workshop because they allow me to analyze my interactions and even my intent for the lessons as well. Schaafsma and Pagnucci (2007) state, “Composing stories reveals not only the people, places, and things we observe but also why we observe them and the significance we invest in our observations” (pp. 282-283). I had all of these notes from my time teaching, and as I constructed narratives, I became even more aware that I was paying attention to specific things like student interactions with community members, but I was not overtly aware of my own interactions or feelings during those interactions, even though the goal was to analyze my own teaching evolution. As a result, these narratives, as well as the rest of them throughout this study, are significant because they allow me to reflect on my teaching and as much else as I can notice when creating them and analyzing my notes and different sources used in their creation. These experiences are valuable because, hopefully, they will allow me to learn from them and grow.

I chose to do a qualitative book length study because I am interested in lived experiences of both students and teachers. More specifically, I wanted to study how international service-learning actually works in a classroom setting, even if that analysis comes from my own experiences as the international service-learning teacher. A qualitative approach is most appropriate for my research because I focus on my own teaching practices in order to potentially contribute to the growing body of research within international service learning—research that currently focuses on student and community members’ perspectives extensively.

I chose to use a reflective inquiry approach because I am interested in studying how sustainable international service-learning can be fostered through a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on locality. Even more so, there is currently no research within international service-learning that focuses on locality and place-based writing promoting sustainability, and there is

also no research on applying an ethic of care or mutuality to the definition of reciprocity. So, this method is a great fit for my project because it allows me to focus on my lived experiences as an instructor as a means of analyzing the effectiveness of my current theory and pedagogy in order to hopefully contribute to the field of international service-learning. In essence, researching my own pedagogical practices allows me to give suggestions for practices that may be effective, and show ones that may be proven ineffective (at least in my specific context), in the international service- learning classroom and service sites.

Gian Pagnucci (2004) states that using narrative inquiry is a political move that may automatically move researchers to the outskirts of more ‘traditional’ research, yet I chose to implement this approach (under the umbrella approach of reflective inquiry) because of its ability to provide meaningful experiences to the research project and its ability to move the field of composition forward toward new types of valuable and insightful research (which Pagnucci discusses). I am aware that this move could label my research as “less rigorous” due to its narrative and reflective nature by some researchers, but I feel that this topic is worthy of study. Clandinin and Connelly state (1990), “The central value of narrative inquiry is its quality as subject matter. Narrative and life go together and so the principal attraction of narrative as method is its capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways (p. 10). Furthermore, Clandinin and Connelly state that narrative inquiry aids in the development of empowered relationships between students and instructors as their narratives interweave in the classroom. When quoting Hogan (1988) they state:

Hogan (1988) wrote about the research relationship in a similar way. Empowering relationships develop over time and it takes time for participants to recognize the value that the relationship holds. Empowering relationships involve feelings of ‘connectedness’

developed in situations of equality, caring, and mutual purpose and intention (p.12).

Hogan highlighted several important issues in the research relationship: the equality between participants, the caring situation, and the feelings of connectedness (p. 4).

Through the use of reflective inquiry, my hope was to create a more caring and empowering pedagogy by examining how care and mutuality theories can be used effectively in the international service-learning classroom.

Furthermore, characteristics of autoethnography are also a good fit for my research because autoethnography is defined as, “a genre of writing and research that connects the personal to the cultural, placing self within a social context” (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Because the goal of autoethnographic studies is to connect the personal to the cultural within a particular social context, I am able to focus on how my teaching experiences have led me to interact with not only my students, but the local community (and location) as well. Furthermore, “Critical pedagogy, folded into and through (auto)ethnography attempts to disrupt and deconstruct these cultural and methodological practices performatively in the name of a ‘more just, democratic, and egalitarian society’” (Denzin, p. 422). Since, my goal for international service-learning is to disrupt the current trend of societal oppression and marginalization, a reflective inquiry with a narrative and autoethnographic focus aids this goal because it forces the researcher to analyze sources of privilege that she has not even recognized before. Because reflexivity forces me to recognize my own privilege before I can foster criticality in my own students, a reflective inquiry shows real lived experiences that have meaning and are useful to the field. Furthermore, a reflective inquiry on my own pedagogical practices is important to my research because, as Bell (2007) states,” A key way of coming to understand the assumptions held by learners from other cultures is to examine their stories and become aware of the underlying assumptions they

embody”(p. 10). Therefore, my students’ stories can help me see privilege as well as I understand the assumptions we had about each other. In order to challenge the marginalized status quo, I chose to implement reflective inquiry with characteristics of narrative and autoethnography because I believe that stories can help us understand where each other is coming from. Gordon states, “Our belief in the power of story to narrative our research support our critical imperative—to work through the ambiguity, the unsaid and unsayable, and keep refashioning the texts we write to challenge coherent meaning” (p. 328). With that said, reflective inquiry focused on my own pedagogical practices is most relevant and useful to my research because it allows me to challenge the lack of social justice currently seen in the international service-learning paradigm (and even present in my own classroom) as of now. Because reflective inquiry, narrative inquiry, and autoethnography are often thought of as “less rigorous,” as well as the fact that many other forms of reflexive, narrative, qualitative research are often contested as approaches that are “self-obsessed,” (Denzin, 2006), it is important that I have a strong theoretical framework that can justify the means for this type of methodology in my study. Therefore, in an effort of transparency, I find it necessary to further discuss how, I as a researcher, chose reflective inquiry due to my approach’s focus on meaningfulness and reflexivity in the research process.

In “The Politics of ‘Being and Becoming’ a Researcher: Identity, Power, and Negotiating the Field,” Frances Giampapa (2011) states that “recognizing and casting a reflexive gaze on who we are as socially constructed beings not only focuses the lens on what we research but also on the ways in which we research” (p. 133). Therefore, in this methodology chapter, I find it vital to not only express my positionality as a researcher, but also, how this positionality affects the type of research I conduct and the participants I choose. In essence, I want to be transparent

about how I came to choose a qualitative method for my study. Giampapa also states, “There should be more scope to be able to engage in an ethically minded dialogue through a process of reflexivity, even at the early stages of review (and even at the early stages of thinking and constructing a piece of research) that would lead researchers to problematize their identities and positioning in relation to the field and deal with a field that is always in flux” (p. 135). As a qualitative researcher, I value reflective research that is largely narrative and autoethnographic because it forces this reflexivity that Giampapa states is needed. This methodology forces me to look at my biases and question my own privilege. Furthermore, reflexivity forces me to view how I, whether intentionally or unintentionally, contribute to the marginalization I am asking my students to fight against in the service-learning classroom. So, in order to enact change through my work, I cannot try to speak for a particular community or social context, but I can provide one interpretation to the mix. Even more so, this type of methodology allows my readers to interpret these experiences in ways I may have never seen as well.

I chose to focus on narratives of my own teaching practices primarily because there is a lack of research on teacher’s perspectives within international service-learning research, and I would like to add one more piece of research (this time focusing on a teacher’s perspective) to this common body of knowledge—especially since I am calling for international service-learning pedagogy that is reciprocal between all members of the team (including instructors). Ellis and Bochner (2000) state, “Autoethnography shows struggle, passion, embodied life, and the collaborative creation of sense-making in situations in which people have to cope with dire circumstances and loss of meaning. Autoethnography wants the reader to care, to feel, to empathize, and to do something, to act” (p. 433). I want my readers to come away with a sense that change needs to happen and that maybe international service-learning could work toward

successfully enacting that change. Even more so, “Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). Since, reflective inquiry is used to bridge lived experiences (of the self) with the culture and social context around a person, researchers use the method in different ways depending on the context.

Researchers like David Hanauer, Gloria Park, and Jason Long have used reflective inquiry and poetry as research to further humanize our field of research and bring different issues to light. Park (2013) asks, “What’s the value of autobiographical-poetic inquiry in teacher education programs...I hope to raise our awareness of and consciousness about what it means to do advocacy work around issues of (dis)enfranchisement that we teachers face, especially the visible minority women faculty in higher education” (p. 15). Like Park, I also hope to use this method as a means of raising awareness concerning advocacy in order to move our field forward toward change for the better. Park goes on to say that:

Situating my line of research in teacher education, I am continuously reminded of how my teaching informs my research and vice versa. In attempting to bridge theory and practice, I am able to unfold my own identities as a teacher and teacher educator learning side-by-side with my students. Through these learning moments, I am reminded of the need to re-conceptualize existing courses to bridge the theory and practice divide.

Similarly, promoting autobiographical-poetic and other evocative writing genres unveils my identity as a second language learner and immigrant to those who enter my university classroom (pp. 15-16).

I, too, have found it difficult to separate myself as a teacher and researcher. Instead, I refer to myself as a teacher-scholar and know that both aspects of my identity inform each other. As a

result, reflective inquiry focused on my own pedagogical practices allows me to analyze my reasoning for certain teaching practices and my growth as an instructor through continued research in the field of international service-learning. Along the same lines, in his dissertation on using poetry as research, Jason Long (2014) states:

Zebroski's work is important because he recognizes that theory is practice, and practice should reflect the things that people do. Zebroski reminds us that theories on teaching writing should develop from the things that writers actually do—in this case, the poetry writing strategies that experienced poets say they use to write poetry. The conclusion drawn from Zebroski's argument provides an important avenue for conducting research on poetry writing in creative writing studies. Importantly, Zebroski recognizes, 'a concept is seen as coming out of an environment, a social formation with its histories, and the concept retains traces of that ecology'" (p. 100).

Therefore, Zebroski's statement is important to this book because, if theory is practice, and if theories of teaching, like writing, should develop out of things teachers actually do, then it is important to study implementing international service-learning from a teacher's perspective as I am aiming to do. So, overall, I believe that this method allows me to examine the practices that I actually implement as an instructor, through my experiences and my actual evolution as an instructor, which allows me to analyze the effectiveness of the applied international service-learning theory to my current context. While Park and Long use poetic inquiry as a means of engaging with their teaching and writing practices, I use narratives to engage with my own practices, as both an international service-learning student and instructor, in order to study my own teaching evolution as a means of potentially contributing my findings to the current body of research focused on international service-learning.

Because I am interested in moving toward eradicating marginalization and societal oppression through critical consciousness and subsequent action fostered through service-learning, I work from a social justice framework as well. I focused specifically on Jeff Frank (2013)'s *Mitigating Against Epistemic Injustice in Educational Research* and Kevin Kumashiro (2000)'s *Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education*. Frank focuses on Harvey Siegel's limitations of epistemic diversity and proposes that educational research move away from the language of epistemic diversity and begin using epistemic injustice instead. Frank states, "Epistemic injustice allows us to do the work that epistemic diversity sets out to do—that is, creating more inclusive epistemic practices that lead to more accurate descriptions of the world—without leading to the untenable and unjustified conclusions that follow from using the language of epistemic diversity" (abstract). Therefore, through a focus on epistemic injustice instead of epistemic diversity, researchers can create more inclusive practices that were lacking in the language of epistemic diversity. Frank presents Siegel's argument that there are two ways to view epistemic diversity: 1. Pluralism, which states that there already a diversity of approaches to a problem, but "there are ways of deciding which of the approaches better suit the problem" (p. 363); and 2. Relativism, which includes multiple epistemologies and there is no way of determining which is better (p. 363). In the case of relativism, any research approach is as good as the other; however, Siegel, and Frank, feel that this relativist position is politically ineffective (p. 364). He states, "First, an individual or a group of individuals positioned on the disempowered end of a social system will often have different perspectives on that system than those positioned with power in the system. Second, the perspectives of those on the disempowered end of the social spectrum are often invisible to those with power" (p. 365). Therefore, relativism fails to meet the goals of epistemic diversity due to the fact that the



epistemologies in power will continue to stay in power because people cannot determine which ideas are superior.

However, while epistemic diversity fails to fully meet the goals of social justice and change, the idea of epistemic injustice is very important not only to my research itself but also to the students I teach because I want to find the most effective way of implementing international service-learning in order to aid them and the community. Frank states, “We need to understand the potential for conflicts between truth and privilege, and see the difficulty of accepting a truth that destabilizes our status and threatens the benefits that follows from that status” (p. 365). This idea of conflict between truth and privilege is valid in every aspect of this study. How can an ethic of care in international service-learning conflict with privilege? How can mutual cooperation and reciprocity in international service-learning conflict with privilege? How can locality and place-based writing pedagogy in international service-learning conflict with privilege and how can international service-learning itself conflict with that privilege? It is necessary for me to focus on these questions and attempt to answer them in my research because I am advocating international service-learning that promotes care and leads to social justice, and I worked with recognized, and unrecognized, privilege in every site—the community, the classroom, and between individual students and my role as a teacher.

In international service-learning that is U.S.-based, there is a tendency for recruiting students for projects that are white, middle-class, and predominately male (Green, 2003). If this continues, then social injustice continues due to the fact that students with valuable knowledge and skill sets are being left out due to our privileging the majority. This happens when project costs are not covered by scholarships, are only taught in monolingual writing courses, and are focused on “serving/served-based” scholarship and not “learning-based” scholarship (the idea

that one travels in international service-learning to learn from the community in mutual cooperation). Frank states, “Rather, stressing injustice in epistemology reminds us that we cannot get an accurate picture of our world if we cannot hear the arguments of individuals who argue differently than we do, or who emphasize different aspects of the world as salient, or who question whether the authority we have established for ourselves is due to unearned privilege or to the truthfulness of our arguments” (p. 365). Therefore, this article is important to my research because it challenges me to work against these injustices in my own work, as well as the classroom and community in which I learn and teach.

Like Frank, Kumashiro’s article focused on marginalization as well. Kumashiro focuses on reviewing the literature on anti-oppressive education—specifically with four primary approaches, which are Education for the Other, Education About the Other, Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering, and Education that Changes Students and Society (abstract) and states that engaging in anti-oppressive education can include aspects of all four of these approaches. Furthermore, he encourages instructors to look beyond the field of educational research to truly understand perspectives regarding anti-oppressive education. Education for the Other focuses on “improving the experiences of students who are othered in and by mainstream society” (p. 26). This approach is very concerned with oppression and how its implementation in school systems can be detrimental. It is praised for requiring administrators to realize they are dealing with a very diverse student population (p. 29), yet a weakness is its focus on individual prejudice instead of other causes of oppression. For Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering, which is particularly important for the focus of my research, Kumashiro states, “Educators and students need to examine not only how some groups and identities are Othered, that is, marginalized, denigrated, violated in society, but also how some groups are favored,

normalized, privileged, as well as how this dual process is legitimized and maintained by social structures and competing ideologies” (pp. 55-56). This is particularly important to service-learning pedagogy because the goal is to foster critical consciousness, which can only be done if students are able to understand who is marginalized while also recognizing privilege. In order to overcome this cycle of marginalization, we must desire change. Therefore, the idea of anti-oppressive education is vitally important to my research because I am focusing on extending my own practice of international service-learning in the U.S. context so that this theory and pedagogy does not reinforce imperialism or marginalization of minority populations. Kumashiro states, “First, coupled with the poststructuralist notions of repetition and supplementation, is the notion that a formidable barrier to anti-oppressive education is the unconscious desire for repetition and the psychic resistance to change” (p. 43). I have noticed that so much of the research conducted within international service-learning states that there needs to be diversity in the student population in order to best benefit the class and community in which the students will work; however, while the research continues to make this claim, many programs never change and the same issues continue to arise in international service-learning researchers’ work throughout the years. I want to be more than an ‘armchair radical’, so this idea of anti-oppressive education is essential to me because I want my international service-learning course to move beyond the replication of oppression within the school system and into enacting change first in the classroom and then in the community. Experiential education that is also focused on being anti-oppressive can be very powerful because it focuses on meeting students where they are and valuing their knowledge and experiences as important for learning in the classroom.

Finally, Giampapa cites England (1994) as he explains, “that it is not about speaking for a particular community but instead studying ‘a world that is already interpreted by people who are

living their lives in it...research would be an account of the ‘between-ness’ of their world’ and the researchers” (p. 138). So, in my case, I am attempting to view how my world shapes my views and how those views shape my teaching practices through reflective inquiry.

### **I am Both Researcher and Participant**

Since I am analyzing own teaching practices, the context is within my own classroom, as well as the service sites my students and I frequent throughout the semester. More specifically, the study is located in my Community Participation Workshop, which is a voluntary workshop given on a weekly basis through the American Language Institute (ALI) on campus at IUP. Furthermore, my desire to use reflective inquiry grew as I developed detailed criteria for my participants—so detailed, in fact, me as a participant seemed only natural. The criteria are as follows:

- Self identifies as an international service-learning instructor
- Self identifies as a published researcher within the field of international service-learning
- Self identifies as a writing instructor
- Adopts reciprocity through ethic of care and mutuality in both the classroom and service sites
- Adopts the practice of place and locality in order to focus on and develop sustainable practices in the classroom and service community

Furthermore, my research approach developed as I realized that it allowed me to focus on what works, and what does not work, in my particular international service-learning classroom. This approach forces me to reflect on my experience as an instructor in order to improve international service learning theory and pedagogy in the classroom for my students and

community members as well. In order to improve as an international service-learning instructor, I must make changes to the theory according to what works for my students. Therefore, I chose reflective inquiry because it forces me to focus on my goals for the international service-learning class in an effort to see who they are benefitting: me or the students. I must also be honest and show narratives that represent areas of success and failure in the international service-learning classroom. I must continue to ask: Did I implement this pedagogy in the classroom as a means of moving my own political agenda forward? And if so, how can I ensure I will not do so with the next class. According to Freire (1970):

We simply cannot...give them 'knowledge' or...impose upon them the model of the 'good man' contained in a program whose consent we have ourselves organized. Many political and educational plans have failed because their authors designed them according to their own personal views of reality, never once taking into account (except as mere objects of their actions) the men-in-a-situation to whom their program was ostensibly connected...one cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion, good intentions withstanding (pp. 94-95).

Therefore, it is my goal through this book to use my experiences as a means of analyzing the implementation of sustainable international service learning. Through reflective writing, I hoped to further understand how to implement programs that do not foster cultural invasion, but instead, promote anti-oppressive education that critiques marginalization and works against it in the community.

According to Engstrom (2008), autoethnographic writing involves:

1. Reflecting upon prejudices [the writer] brings to a communicative situations before entering it,
2. Reflexively examining the effect they may have upon the people they will attempt to assist,
3. Discussing the role that ethics plays in their writing and interactions,
4. Discussing the impact of their writing on themselves and on those with whom they will interact, and
5. Reflecting on their overall learning about power in society through their interactions (p. 27).

Therefore, since I taught the Community Participation Workshop at the same time that I took courses in my doctoral program, I was advised to take field notes and write teaching reflections for every class I taught within this course. As a result, I have a year's (2014-2015) worth of field notes and teaching reflections that are the main source for my narratives, which is the data I use to analyze my teaching evolution. Furthermore, I also have my journal from my time in Russia as a participant in international service-learning myself and my memories of specific events in my life that have shaped me to be an international service-learning teacher. All of these sources were used to develop my narratives, which are my data for this book.

While I used classroom data to develop narratives, I also created narratives focusing on childhood memories and specific incidents that have shaped me thus far as an instructor that happened well before (and even after) the time I was teaching this course. These narratives render my interpretation of the events depicted in a way that leads to discussion about international service-learning pedagogical practices. Furthermore, I chose to write narratives for my data source because this book is focused on my teaching experiences and will allow me to learn from my experiences while also allowing for crystallization as these narratives work together with current research within the field of international service-learning to provide an

interpretation of the events shown. As a result, the goal of this book is not to use the data as a sole means of interpretation, but rather, in conjunction with current research and theory in order to develop a new theory of sustainable international service-learning. As a result, I note the importance of understanding the data in combination with research and theory in an effort to move away from my opinion into findings that can be implemented in international service-learning classrooms within various contexts.

### **Ethical Consideration and Trustworthiness**

Even though I am writing a reflective inquiry focused on my teaching practices and not data derived from student experiences, I have still taken considerable measures to ensure that my study is rigorous in its approach to ethical considerations, trustworthiness, and my ability to crystallize my data sources.

It is important that I am rigorous with my ethical considerations because, as Blee (1999) and Jacobson (2007) state, there is privilege that is associated with a researcher's position in the researcher-participant relationship. Blee states, "It is the social scientist who solicits information from the research subject, and it is the social scientist, not the research subject, who stands to benefit most from the exchange" (994) while Jacobson states, "Power has long been understood to be at the root of ethical peril in research" (2). Even though my students are not participants in my study, they are often present in my narratives, and as a result, I have taken measures to ensure their safety. I made sure that, while the data was collected during the time the course was being taught (2014-2015 AY), the analysis and interpretation of the data was not attempted until after May 2015 (when the students had already received their course completion certificates). Furthermore, students' names and identifying information were never written down in any of the data sources and word-for-word conversations were written from memory and paraphrased.

While this may seem less rigorous to some, the use of exact conversations was not necessary to my research as the narratives were derived from different data sources in order to provide crystallization as a means of a more accurate depiction of an international service-learning course. Finally, while the interpretation of the data is taken from my perspective, it was done with the intent of protecting my students' identities and allowing them to take my course without feeling pressured to also participate in my study. These measures helped to alleviate any potential privilege on my part as the researcher because I did not make students feel like they needed to participate in this study for a good grade, which allowed me to focus solely on my teaching experiences without feeling the need to include my students' work and perspectives in conjunction with my narrative data (Blee, 1999; Jacobson, 2007; Knight, 2000). Furthermore, since there is a lack of current research on teachers' perspectives within international service learning, a focus on my original research paired with current theory and pedagogy practiced within the field will aid in giving my study credibility and trustworthiness as my research is heavily saturated in theory. Overall, this study is focused on me as an instructor and not my students, so while I made sure to keep their anonymity, the focus is again on me, and trustworthiness is built upon my transparency as both researcher and participant.

### **Final Thoughts on Reflective Inquiry**

Overall, I chose to conduct a reflective inquiry over any other approach because I want both my readers, and me, to come away from this book with ideas for implementing sustainable service-learning. Even more so, this approach allows me to act on my convictions and find meaning in these stories that I share. Through reflective inquiry, I analyze these different intersections of my life in an effort to reflect in the same way I ask my students to. This critical reflection allows me to grow as a teacher-scholar and allows me to see how I can improve my



teaching in the future. Finally, reflective inquiry allows me to act—to take my narratives, learn from them, and enact change—even if that change is only within my own teaching.

## CHAPTER III

### A DESIRE TO PROMOTE GLOBAL AWARENESS AND ACTION: CURRENT INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING THEORY AND PEDAGOGY

*December 2015*

*I remember sitting in English 830: Theories of Composition during my first semester at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I remember my professor talking about teaching things that matter and about teaching in a way that makes our students know they matter. Now as I sit here two years later, in another state working at a different type of university, I am struck by what a colleague told me the other day. We were discussing the role writing had in students' lives, and I mentioned that I wanted to give my students opportunities to share their voices through writing (and in this case, specifically through international service-learning). I wanted them to know I care about them as individuals, and I wanted them to know that they matter simply because they do—because they are human beings loved by God Almighty. This colleague looked at me, laughed, and said that I picked the wrong university to work at if that was my goal. My colleague went on to mention that if I wanted to be “touchy-feely” I should have gotten a job at a liberal arts college. I was stunned that this person, who was also a writing teacher, would even think like that, yet I can now look back at the discussion and learn from it. From my academic background as an ESL instructor to my focus on writing for change through journaling my international service-learning experiences, I have long desired to show my students I care about them and about what they have to say. I know that this type of teaching is not new at all, yet it baffles me that it still faces resistance in certain academic circles. Furthermore, as a Christian, I recognize my need to value my students and treat them with the same care and dignity that I would expect if I were also a student. Many might disagree with me associating this desired*

*behavior with my faith and say that I should do so just because my students are fellow humans. I agree wholeheartedly, although it is my faith that makes me desire the ability to care and show dignity to my students no matter how difficult it may be for me to in certain circumstances, i.e. I am ill or cranky, etc. My faith demands that I look past myself in those circumstances and focus on the people in front of me. So, thinking about this conversation, I have come to the conclusion that I have an obligation to let my students share their voices no matter what university I work in; no matter what class I teach; and no matter how much I agree or disagree with them. Thinking through this conversation has reminded me of how much I value service-learning scholarship because it gives students the ability to share their own voices while also attempting to advocate for a community that has needs of its own. Service-learning allows community members and students to work together to use their voices for change, and I love the idea of providing the opportunity to empower students who can then work together to empower their communities. Granted, I know that my colleague may not have meant any offense, and this person does have a valid claim due to many universities' focus on preparing students to write for academic purposes over writing to 'express their feelings', yet I cannot neglect the fact that writing for academic purposes and writing to express one's voice do not have to be exclusive of one another. In fact, I would even venture to say that having the ability to express your voice no matter what genre or purpose for your writing is immensely valuable and evidence of higher levels of thinking.*

...

\*I must interrupt another narrative to give my readers a better understanding of this conversation as I look back on it in hindsight and with a newer perspective as my colleague and I have had further discussions on this topic that lead me to believe that I misjudged my colleague's

previous statements as shown above (not a big surprise here because I have done it in the past...and just a few pages ago). While recently speaking with this same colleague, this person and I have been discussing ways of implementing student voice into different genres of writing. We have been discussing how students who include their own voice in their writing (as opposed to writing what they feel the teacher wants) usually have a greater command over their writing and their prose is more eloquent and advanced. These more recent discussions we have had lead me to believe that my colleague was not being rude by any means and disagreeing with the importance of student voice, but rather, this person was warning me that our current university may not be as willing to focus on development of voice in writing because of the type of institution it is. Our conversation was held only a couple of weeks after I was hired at the United States Air Force Academy. It has been a few months since I have begun working there, and I can attest to the fact that the Academy has specific writing goals for the cadets that do allow for voice; however, more rigorous, academic writing is expected over personal experience (for the most part—this is obviously not always the case). As a result of being at the Academy for sometime now, I can say that my colleague was right in stating that it may be more difficult to focus on personal experience in certain universities over others. However, I still maintain that this difficulty that can arise does not make the effort of utilizing student experience and voice in writing any less worthwhile.

...

As I continue to reflect on my conversation with my colleague, I am struck by my statement above that says certain universities treat the use of personal experience in papers differently. I am working at three different universities right now—the United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Technical University, and Colorado Christian University. Each of these

universities deals with the use of personal experience within writing differently, yet all cater to a large population of active-duty military, and veteran, students. In fact, Colorado Technical University (CTU) prides itself on working with ‘non-traditional’ (mainly military and those going back to school later in life) students and has a mission to incorporate students’ prior learning, and even life, experiences into the curriculum. Eleven out of thirteen students in my English 101 course at CTU are veterans and bring valuable experiences to the classroom that our class (including me) would not get to learn from had their experiences not been valued. It is times like seeing my students use their experiences to learn more, as well as conversations with people like my colleague above that remind me of the importance of learning by experience. Experiential learning is one of the reasons that I love service-learning so much because it truly allows students to build new knowledge through meaningful experiences.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Service-Learning**

Service-learning pedagogy has emerged over the years and is now used in many different fields as researchers and instructors see the value of promoting social responsibility and civic engagement—the notions that we have a responsibility to develop awareness of marginalization that eventually leads to action, i.e. engagement (among other qualities) (Blake Scott, 2009; Cushman, 2002; Giles, 1994; Herzberg, 1994). Bruce Herzberg (1994) states that social responsibility and civic engagement develop after service-learning generates a social conscience, which is when “we understand a sense of reality and immediacy of the problems of the poor and homeless along with a belief that people in a position to help should do so” (p. 308). Therefore, in this regard, social responsibility develops as students understand marginalization and the fact that they have the power to critique inequality through the civic engagement often encouraged within service-learning programs. Since service-learning is such a prevalent teaching method and

theory, researchers, like Giles (1994), continue to argue over whether service-learning should be considered a field or social movement and state that, “despite being implemented in a variety of disciplines, service learning is moving toward a field of its own due to its common body of knowledge produced as its research and theory develops” (Giles, 1994). Thus, service-learning has emerged from a number of sources and theories, and has even been discussed as having no exact time frame for its enactment, yet over the years, this pedagogy has emerged as a field of its own because of the continuous body of knowledge that has, and is being, developed from its implementation.

Some scholars state that service-learning dates back to the Civil Rights movement of the 1950’s and 1960’s (Julier, 2001, p.133), while others state that the pedagogy emerged even earlier through the works of John Dewey (Deans, 2000; Giles, 1994). I, myself, link John Dewey explicitly to service-learning theory due to service-learning’s dependence on experience as learning; therefore, I agree with researchers who state that service-learning even emerged earlier than the 1950’s (Cushman, 1998, 2002; Deans, 2000; Dewey, 1938; Giles, 1994; Herzberg, 1994; Waterman, 1997; Welch, 2002). Furthermore, while service-learning is used in many different fields and disciplines, it is particularly focused on civic engagement, social awareness, critical reflection, and transformative experience (Cushman, 1998, 2002; Deans, 2000; Giles, 1994; Kiely, 2004; Ver Beek, 2002; Welch, 2002). Since there is a focus on civic and social awareness and responsibility, there is also a focus on the community in which the service is being conducted. Alan S. Waterman (1997) states that Dewey viewed community as vitally important to educational experiences because students must take what they have learned in the classroom and apply it elsewhere (and vice versa) (p. 133). Thomas Deans (2010) agrees that John Dewey is one of the foregrounding theorists behind service-learning and also discusses

Dewey's theories concerning experience. Deans notes that Dewey's work, *Experience and Education*, allows service-learning theorists to apply real-world applications to education through experience. Furthermore, in *Experience and Education*, John Dewey himself states:

When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences...the connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience...two conclusions important for education follow. (1) Experience is primarily an active-passive affair; it is not primarily cognitive. But (2) the measure of value of an experience lies in the perception of relationships or continuities to which it leads up (p. 31).

Therefore, according to Dewey, the experience is what leads students to learn. Furthermore, Dewey begins this book with a discussion on traditional versus progressive education, which are two different educational theories that define good learning experiences oppositionally, and states that:

The history of educational theory is marked by opposition between the idea that education is development from within and that it is formation from without; that it is based upon natural endowments and that education is a process of overcoming natural inclination and substituting in its place habits acquired under external pressure (p. 17).

These dichotomies provide a clear distinction between two types of educational theories and views—the traditional view that labels the instructor as the “knowledgeable authority” and the progressive view that aims to provide students with more agency in the classroom through being more democratic and appreciative of student individuality. It is my hope that any service-learning course, or any course for that matter, I am part of is appreciative of student individuality. Furthermore, one view upholds that instructors provide learning material to

students while the other maintains that the learning must be more than the transfer of knowledge from instructor to student. However, Dewey notes that these dichotomies should not promote an either/or approach to choosing an educational theory, but instead, both views should be reevaluated in light of the role of experience in education.

Therefore, Dewey calls for a theory of experience—one in which experience is educative and informed in such a way that students learn democratically and critically instead of by perpetuating stereotypes. He states, “The belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative” (p. 25). In fact, genuine experience “has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had” (p. 39). Therefore, through the continuity and interaction within an experience(s), students can learn in an environment that promotes real learning as opposed to (mis)educative moments that often happen inside a classroom due to inexperience (or ingenuine experience). Overall, in order to be effective, experiences must build upon each other, and students must be given the chance to reflect on their past experiences in order to recall them in new and meaningful ways during the learning process. For example, we began the Community Participation Workshop answering questions about our previous learning experiences. I asked students what their backgrounds with service-learning, and even community service, were, and then we discussed how we would build upon that knowledge in this class. Also, we always started working with a new organization by learning about the organization, then learning from the people at the organization before actually conducting service. Even more so, our class took at least 2-3 weeks at each service site, which allowed us to build our knowledge about the organization as we went back each week. Finally, after each service day, we came back into the classroom and reflected on what we saw—even if that meant free writing



about the students' experiences for 5-10 minutes. The overall goal was to allow students to learn from these experiences in the service-learning course as much as possible.

I view Dewey as a founder/father of service-learning theory because of this call for experiential education. Therefore, Dewey's work is important to this study because it lays the foundation for service-learning theory through experience. Without the experience of the service project, students would not be able to reflect on what they learned through the experience. Furthermore, Dewey's call for truly educative experiences is vital to my work because international service-learning theory focused on reciprocity must not perpetuate stereotypes, but rather, must lead to genuine experience that will lead all involved to more reciprocal relationships. Giles, a well-known service-learning theorist (1994) cites Dewey's continuity and interaction as vitally important to service-learning because of service-learning's goal to promote civic engagement. In order to promote this engagement, students must be able to build upon past experiences (continuity) and interact appropriately in situations based on knowledge they have already acquired (interaction), which will hopefully produce a desire to take a stand for one's beliefs and work with the community to change for improvement (civic engagement) (p. 79).

Furthermore, another aspect of Dewey's theory applied to service-learning is the idea of reflective activities as a way of learning from experience. In order to be effective, the experience must first be one that is appropriate and conducive to learning, and second, must allow for students to make connections with their own knowledge and experiences in order to critically reflect upon them in a productive manner. These requirements for effectiveness are necessary because the experience is far more than a cognitive process and becomes the learning material as people learn to understand different types of relationships through the experience. This view of experience is upheld in Parker-Gwin and Mabry's (1998) study of service-learning models,

which produced results that indicated students' attitudes concerning service-learning lowered at the end of the semester while their ability to analyze and think critically saw a slight improvement (p. 284). Parker-Gwin and Mabry suggest that student attitudes may have lowered because they had higher expectations to accomplish more than they did in their projects during the semester, which led them to reflect on the learning material poorly. So, while the students did not react as hoped to the experience, the interaction itself still allowed students to critically reflect on the experience and develop their literacy practices as a result. Overall, the experience is not primarily cognitive, but the reflection on the experience allows for cognitive gains as students participate in reflection through writing.

Furthermore, Krain and Nurse (2004) state that Dewey is a foundational theorist for service-learning due to his call to "teach concepts through active learning strategies involving real-world application" (p. 193). As a result, Krain and Nurse implemented a service-learning project in their undergraduate courses as a means of examining human rights. Krain and Nurse state, "service-learning takes advantage of a shift in student preferences for learning and for action by linking text and classroom to service, thereby demonstrating the interdependence and mutual applicability of scholastic and experiential learning" (p. 195). Therefore, according to Krain and Nurse, linking service-learning with experiential learning is vital because it gives students real-world experience that they would not receive if they were stuck in a classroom. Most of the students in the Community Participation Workshop really wanted to see what the Indiana community was like outside of IUP's campus, but aside from grocery shopping and hanging out with friends, they did not venture into these different organizations we ended up working with on their own. However, because our goal in this class was to learn from our experiences at the service site, students were introduced to learning material that they would not

have gotten in the classroom alone. For example, a few of my students had gardens back home, but the majority of them had never seen a garden (and none of them had seen a community-run garden). I could have lectured, and even shown a video, on how to harvest carrots, but instead, when we were at the community garden, students were actually able to harvest carrots themselves, which made them much more interested in the discussion on sustainable practices we had with the garden leaders after our service was completed. Experiential learning like this is invaluable because it teaches students through letting them experience the learning material right in front of them as opposed to learning from a secondary source.

Researchers like Giles (1994), Deans (2000), Jacoby (2009), and Herzberg (1994) agree that Dewey's experiential learning is foundational to service-learning, and without the idea of relating experience back to the objectives of the course, the service component of the course would be merely community service (Dewey, 1938; Krain and Nurse, 2009). In fact, Jacoby (2009) defines service-learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development" (p. 5). This notion of intentionally educative service is directly related to Dewey's experiential learning, which Giles (1994) states was specifically focused on how experiences were educative (p. 79). For Dewey, experiences were educative if they led to more experiences in the future and learning happened through reflection (Giles, 79). This notion is the reason I wanted my students to work with an organization for multiple weeks at a time because it allowed them to continue learning through their experiences as they served and then reflected on that service more than once. Dewey states that "reflective thinking impels to inquiry" (as cited in Giles, 1994). Therefore, reflection is a goal of service-learning because of its power to make individuals question the experiences that

they have been a part of during the coursework. Furthermore, experience that is active and educative must include the following: the ability to generate interest, be intrinsically valuable, present issues that awaken a desire for information, and must include time to aid development (Giles, 1994, p. 80). Not all of our class's experiences met the criteria above in every student's case, but the goal was to ensure that students were serving at a site that was interesting, that provided information to learn from, and that gave us enough time to make that learning impactful (in this case through reflection). These criteria are implemented in most service-learning projects in order to ensure the projects' usefulness, and it is with this foundation that service-learning draws its need for experiential learning. However, while international service-learning stems from experiential learning, critical pedagogy, and other theories that focus on finding ways to liberate the marginalized, many international service-learning theorists struggle with student participation and lack of response to these teaching methods in the classroom, which I also experienced. There are a lot of factors involved for this struggle in my case, but as I really started to analyze my teaching reflections, I noticed that I mentioned in many class reflections that students were absent or did not turn in work. This course was non-credit earning and was considered a "fun" way to learn about the Indiana Community. As a result, I knew that, in this book, I wanted to explore the reasons why student participation was lacking. Specifically, I use narratives to explore why I perceived that certain aspects of international service-learning were not successful in the writing classroom in order to understand how future assignments and class sessions can be modified to encourage the development of effective experiential learning and critical pedagogy. Giles (1994) states that service-learning stems from Dewey's experiential learning due to four criteria Dewey set forth in order for projects to be truly educative (Dewey,

1938)—criteria Giles (1994) states are often implemented, or should be implemented, in service-learning pedagogy. The criteria are:

1. Must generate interest; 2. Must be worthwhile intrinsically; 3. Must present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for information; and 4. Must cover a considerable time span and be capable of fostering development over time (pp. 217-18).

Therefore, service-learning derived from experiential learning aims to be intrinsically motivating and interesting to students, and it must be ongoing in order to be effective. These criteria are important to this book because they allow me to assess the effectiveness of the Community Participation Workshop in motivating students to act. These criteria also allow me to assess whether or not the time frame of the course was sustainable, i.e. did the students have enough time at each service site to truly learn in ways that are lasting? Overall, these four criteria allow me to look for ways of improving an international service-learning course as I apply them to my narrative data.

Those upholding service-learning pedagogy also draw from theories of critical pedagogy, and more specifically, Paulo Freire's liberatory pedagogy. This pedagogy practices dialogic education and focuses on using students' experiences to reflect on social issues in order to engage with societal oppression as a way of struggling for liberation (George, 2001, p. 94). A goal of service-learning is to promote change in society through the students' work and their subsequent reflections, i.e. through reflective action, which is an idea that stems from the work of Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). Freire's work aims to meet students where they are—to begin developing a critical consciousness, or awareness of inequalities and marginalization present in one's own society, within the individual life situations present in the classroom. This work is vital to service-learning pedagogy and theory because most of the calls

for criticality in the classroom stem from Freire in some way. However, while Freire states that critical consciousness must be developed in students, researchers like Ellen Cushman (1998) state that students are already living out those critical viewpoints—especially outside of the classroom. Cushman’s (1998) *The Struggle and the Tools* details her ethnographic work in an inner-city neighborhood in Northeastern United States. Through her time spent working with minority families in this environment, she realized that these people were fully capable of changing their speech patterns depending on who they were speaking to, as well as using language to work against societal marginalization. In essence, Cushman states that her study participants were very much aware of social marginalization (i.e. they had developed critical consciousness)—even if they did not explicitly act out against it. Nevertheless, Freire’s work is necessary to my research because it lays the foundation for the necessity of critical consciousness within the service-learning classroom; however, like Cushman, I still want to play with this idea that the consciousness is already there (which I think it can be).

Paulo Freire’s liberatory pedagogy practices dialogic education and focuses on using students’ experiences to reflect on social issues in order to engage with societal oppression as a way of struggling for liberation (George, 2001, p. 94). Furthermore, Freire coined the term praxis as the relationship between reflection and action, which showed us that there needs to be a healthy balance of both reflection and action done in students’ lives in order to bring change to society. According to Freire, “neither critical consciousness nor unreflective action alone will enable people to transform the world” (George, 2001, p. 94). Freire works against the “banking concept” of education, which is where teachers transmit their knowledge directly to the students (usually through lecture that focuses on the teacher’s knowledge over any of the student’s) so that they can continue to replicate the norms of society. This is quite similar to John Dewey’s

definition of traditional education, but Freire takes it further by his call to work past this method of teaching by focusing on students' critical consciousness and ability to 1. See those inequalities and 2. Develop ways of enacting change through action.

A goal of service-learning is to promote change in society through the students' work and their subsequent reflections, i.e. through reflective action, which is an idea that stems from the work of Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. In order for reflective action—or praxis—to be effective, students must learn from their service and use the experience for change first within themselves and then in society. In order to do so, change must start from within students as they negotiate meaning and the purpose behind service in order to enact this change. As a result of this idea, I made sure to have reflective questions about our service in the community at the end of each class session. These questions were designed to get students thinking critically, but I made sure to let students know that they could also reflect on whatever they thought was most insightful from their time in the community. The questions were always very broad and were just designed to get students thinking about the service and learning material. For example, after listening to Kay speak to our class about the sustainable practices seen at the community garden, one of the questions for reflection was: Why do you think sustainability is important? I noticed that even though that question was very broad and basic, my students ended up reflecting on issues in their home context without me even asking them to—they were applying their experience, thinking critically about it, and then discussing how they could use this information when they were back home. Granted, this type of good critical reflection was not always present in our classroom, but it was really encouraging to see glimpses of it.

Freire also states that dialogue must be a component of the classroom, as well as giving students the opportunity to reflect on issues that are usually kept under wraps in order to maintain the status quo. Freire (1970) states, “The man or woman who proclaims devotion to the cause of liberation yet is unable to enter into communion with the people, whom he or she continues to regard as totally ignorant, is grievously self-deceived” (p. 61). This statement is so important to my research because my goal is to promote reciprocity that leads to change through international service-learning. Real, sustainable change happens when there is reciprocity between community members and the international service-learning class, including between students and instructors. One way that the research on international service-learning shows the potential for disconnect between truly reciprocal relationships is within the title the instructor assumes in the classroom. Many research pieces describe the instructor as one who is in charge and helps develop students critical consciousness (Cushman, 1998; Herzberg, 1994), while other research describes the instructor as a facilitator who focuses on helping the entire class learn together (Crabtree, 2008; Kiely, 2004). This discrepancy is a large gap in the research on reciprocity within international service-learning and is important to my research because it allows me to distinguish how these role(s) affect reciprocity in the classroom. During my time in the international service-learning classroom, I learned that there were times when being a facilitator was more appropriate than being a teacher. For example, when Kay and Ginger, two master gardeners at the Indiana Community Garden, came to our classroom to let us work help them with their annual food drive, it was most appropriate for me to facilitate—in this case introduce them and help with whatever they asked—while they taught the class. In other cases, when the students were teaching each other about their cultures, it was most appropriate for me to again facilitate and allow others to teach the class. These experiences I had negotiating my



role(s) in the classroom allowed me to understand the importance of learning from each other—including learning from the community members, who are often experts in their fields.

Furthermore, international service-learning programs must be willing to work with local community members, and must be willing to set aside their opinions on what is best for the community based off of their own privilege in the U.S. context. Therefore, the goal is to engage with students in a way that extends well beyond students' classrooms and societies. This was attempted by first starting with what students knew (their own experiences) and building from there with the new learning material we engaged with at the service sites. Then, through discussion and personal reflection, I asked students to apply what they were learning to their home context (or at least try to make connections with it). According to Ruggins and Sinor (1997):

Like students in composition classes who find it easiest to write personal narratives about their own life experiences, students in service-learning courses usually start from a highly individualistic and self-focused perspective. Historically, composition theory has emphasized the importance of moving students from an exclusively personal focus to a more socially-directed one. The challenge in service learning, as in composition classes, is to broaden students' perspectives from the exclusively personal toward what Bruce Herzberg calls a "social imagination" or the capacity to understand that responsibility for social justice extends beyond individual acts of charity to comprehending the ways that social institutions affect our lives ("Community Service").

This "social imagination" that the authors refer to enables students to see beyond the individual and allows them to notice the social relations and inequalities present in their own communities. Without social imagination, students are likely to attribute conditions, attitudes, and beliefs to an

individual rather than social source (Herzberg, 1994, p. 317). This idea of social imagination is realized in the psychological term social interdependence, which is the idea that the outcomes of individuals are affected by both their own and other's actions (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). In essence, social interdependence is the realization that what one does affects not only oneself but others as well.

Thomas Deans (2010) also notes that critical consciousness develops as individuals move away from personal reflection toward reflection that analyzes social, political, and power balances in order to find room for action (p. 105). In liberatory pedagogy, there is no room for critical reflection without action. Along the same lines as Freire, Irvin Peckham (2010) states that working-class children see the world as a fixed order where they are not heard, yet middle-class students expect to be heard because of how they are raised (p. 75). He also states that, "the more you are heard, the more you hear" (p. 75). In this example, Peckham shows us that working-class students see social inequalities, yet they often continue to take society as is while middle-class students are raised to question, which leads to middle-class students' acceptance into society and the status quo. In this case, while working-class students do have critical consciousness and reflection on the "fixed order" of society, working-class students will not find change until this awareness of their marginalization leads to action, which can be done through service learning pedagogy. However, Ellen Cushman's (1998) ethnographic research focused on an inner-city population showed that working-class citizens who have critical consciousness can foster that awareness for change when they learn to recognize the marginalization that is happening to them. In Cushman's account, she details how her study participants learned to mimic the speech of government agency workers in order to get the help they needed for their families. In each of these areas, service-learning can become the source for critical reflection that leads to action.

Service-learning is a way for students to develop awareness of social marginalization and oppression. Even more so, throughout the years, service-learning has been implemented in the fields of composition and second language teaching as a means of developing students' critical consciousness through writing and language learning.

### **Service Learning in Composition and Second Language Teaching**

Thomas Deans (2010), along with Nora Bacon, state that there are different ways to engage with service-learning. They distinguish between writing about service-learning and writing for service-learning. Writing for service-learning uses student writing skills to meet the needs of agencies, such as non-profits, in order to create brochures, websites, etc. that provide information about the organizations. According to Deans (2010), this type of service-learning can contribute to the endorsement of current societal marginalization because students work for the major agencies and institutions that benefit from the marginalization. He states that instructors must be careful when assigning writing for service because it has the potential to further contribute to institutional marginalization and oppression. On the other hand, writing about the community places the students directly in the area of need and permits them to interact with the locals in order to learn from the community as well. However, in order to implement international service-learning, both writing for service and writing about service are needed in order to bring change to communities around the world.

Finally, since service-learning theory has developed over the years out of research on experiential learning by John Dewey (1938) and critical pedagogy that focuses on social justice issues, specifically a need to develop critical consciousness in students and community members, critics often note the issues that can arise in developing critical pedagogy in the classroom. Pennycook states, "critical pedagogy seeks to understand and critique the historical and

sociopolitical context of schooling and to develop pedagogical practices that aim not only to change the nature of schooling, but also the wider society” (Pennycook, 1990, p. 24), yet Graham Crookes (2010) states that critical pedagogues often “lack tangibility concerning the broader goals” (p. 342). Even though this critique is within the field of second language teaching, it is not a new critique of critical pedagogy because researchers have noted that a critical classroom can have lofty goals that are unreachable or support political notions moved by the instructor instead of promoting social change within the community. Nevertheless, in a service learning course, critical pedagogy is needed because it promotes critical consciousness in students—or an ability to understand and see social inequalities and marginalization within communities and institutions that may not be fostered in other courses (Cushman, 1998; Freire, 1974). In my case, I only saw my students for 3 hours a week for 12 weeks, so I was not using this course as a means of developing students’ understanding of social inequalities within a country they would be leaving after the end of the semester. Instead, my focus was to encourage communication between students and community members in the classroom and in the service sites as a means of fostering understanding between all involved in the service project (especially since the people involved were from different countries and cultures). As a result, I implemented Kumaravadivelu’s (2003) notion of critical cultural consciousness, or the recognition that “there is no one culture that embodies all and only the best of human experience; and, there is no one culture that embodies all and only the worst of human experience” (p. 271). This notion was really important for me to implement because many of my students wanted to learn about American culture and were hesitant to speak about their own at first. Kumaravadivelu’s critical cultural consciousness helped me see that there is no perfect culture, but I had the chance to encourage learning across multiple cultures. So, in our class, the focus became less on learning

about this new and exciting American culture (their words, not mine), and instead, I wanted students to develop critical cultural consciousness that allowed them to form connections between communities in an effort of becoming more globally-minded individuals. This was a large goal for me because my students kept admiring American culture, and I wanted them to teach each other about their cultures, customs, and knowledge as well, which led me to incorporate place-based theory (locality) in an effort to meet students where they were when they entered the classroom. I was also able to encourage class discussions about the similarities and differences they saw in their own cultures and in the American culture, which seemed to make the students more willing to share about their home context. Because of this desire to implement global engagement and understanding across and between cultures around the world, international service-learning was developed. Therefore, the current research on international service-learning is important to this book because the research develops the need for more rigorous theory within the international service-learning paradigm that will aid in the goal of global engagement and change.

### **International Service-Learning Theory and Pedagogy**

International service-learning is a more recent development aimed to meet the growing demands of a globalized populace. Alonso Garcia and Longo (2013) state, “By framing service-learning efforts globally— that is, as opportunities to learn about the interconnectedness of the world—local, community-based service learning provides an ideal opportunity for cosmopolitan education (p. 118).” However, the growing body of international service-learning work usually focuses on international trips for American students as they aid others in “less fortunate countries” (Ver Beek, 2002). The theory and pedagogy differ from study abroad programs because they have a service component (Annette, 2002), but like study abroad, they are usually

reserved for white, middle-class American students (Annette, 2002; Becket & Refaei & Skutar, 2012; Crabtree, 2013; Welch, 2002). Although little work has been done on international service-learning in a truly international sense, i.e. countries working together to promote sustainability, I am choosing to apply service-learning theory to my class comprised of international students because, in a global context, there is a great need to further the definition of international service-learning to include students and instructors from multiple backgrounds, cultures, and countries.

Since international service-learning is largely interdisciplinary, the goals of specific programs do not always coincide. However, there are foundational goals to service-learning pedagogy that are almost universal in this field—specifically in terms of writing development. Some of those goals include stricter and more-focused research that allows for the development of more grounded international service-learning theory (Crabtree, 2013; Giles, 1994; Ver Beek, 2002), the development of civic engagement and social awareness (Crabtree, 2013; Giles, 1994) service-learning as a transformative experience (Miller and Gonzalez, 2010; Olson, 2002), the development of critical reflection (Annette, 2002; Giles, 1994), and the development of sustainable service programs (Cushman, 2002; Merrill Ingram, 2001; Welch, 2002). Furthermore, international service-learning scholars have stated the importance of having a research agenda, especially as service-learning moves into a field of its own (Crabtree, 2013; Giles, 1994; Kiely, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002); therefore, the common goals of international service-learning are important to understand as programs are assessed for their contributions to the current body of research.

The importance of continued research within international service-learning stems from the need to have solid theory that guides pedagogical practice (Giles, 1994; Kiely, 2005). Therefore, international service-learning researchers state that research must be conducted in at

least two areas: extensive research within the field and research conducted specifically for each service project (Crabtree, 2013; Giles, 1994; Kiely, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002). The difference between these two types of research is that research within the field focuses on theory, case studies, pedagogy, etc., while project-specific research includes learning about the community in order to further aid its needs (Ver Beek, 2002). Ver Beek (2002) states that projects must seek to understand the issues they come into contact with to a greater degree in order to be effective (p. 62). Therefore, learning about a community before engaging in a service project allows service teams to better meet the needs of the community. On the other hand, learning about the project through qualitative and quantitative research allows members of the field to learn more about international service-learning's role in the community and education itself. Overall, international service-learning has common goals that have arose out of a need for a stronger research agenda, which is the focus of the next section.

### **Goals for International Service-Learning**

When I wrote my first article for publication I noticed that one of the things international service-learning researchers consistently mention is that even though international service-learning is taught within a variety of disciplines, one of the signifiers that it is its own theory is the fact that programs have common goals and outcomes for the service projects. As a result, I wanted to find some of those common goals. My journal article focused on analyzing the goals of twelve programs, which I will detail below. The majority of the discussion below is taken directly from my article on international service-learning goals among programs across disciplines (McKee, 2016).

**International service-learning as civic engagement.** A major goal of service-learning has been to promote civic engagement and social awareness to students participants. International service-learning reflects these ideals as trips to other countries are used to instruct students how to analyze social dimensions through critical reflection and collaboration with the community in which they are working. Green (2003) states that service-learning has always been more than “doing good” (p. 276), and therefore, we must instruct students in a way that allows them to develop a need for social awareness and civic engagement. Civic engagement and social awareness are goals for every one of the programs studied within this review. Not only are these goals sought for the students as they interact with community members, but the goals are also for faculty and staff as they develop a team of students for these projects. Acquaye and Crewe (2012) state that international service-learning teams often underrepresent students of color and that, as a goal of international service learning, social justice should be met by all. Therefore, in order for international service-learning to accomplish its goal of civic engagement, all students and staff must develop awareness of social inequalities and injustices and then work alongside community members to produce change for good (Amerson, 2012). Furthermore, international service-learning encourages examining one’s own values, culture, and country in order to engage in civic action on a global scale. Since service-learning is not merely community service, the goal of such programs becomes civic engagement that is born out of students’ desires to see change in a community they have come to relate to or appreciate through their time spent within the service project (Kiely, 2004, 2005; Ver Beek, 2002).



**International service-learning as a transformative experience.** International service-learning has the ability to engage students in transformational learning as they participate in a service project that aims to change their worldview. Mezirow (1991) created a model that has helped recent international service-learning researchers explore the implications of service-learning as transformative pedagogy. This model focuses on enabling students to see the social dimensions of their own communities in light of the problems occurring in the communities they interact with in their time of service. The model's results suggest that "well-integrated service-learning programs focusing on social change, and emphasizing quality community placements, reflection, community voice, and diversity into their pedagogy are more apt to lead to transformative learning outcomes" (as cited in Kiely, 2004). Therefore, in order to be effective, transformative pedagogy through international service-learning focuses on enabling students to relate to the community through experience in order to promote transformation and understanding. In order to accomplish transformation, this theory focuses on how students learn as opposed to what they learn and also seeks student understanding during the process of both serving and learning (Kiely, 2005). As a result, it is the process of learning about the community that provides transformation and a desire to continue aiding through service and civic engagement.

Furthermore, the studies call for service-learning as a transformative experience in a variety of different areas. While researchers like Kiely (2004, 2005) call for learning that is transformative for the students, others call for experiences that promote transformation in the community, in social dimensions, and in the type of reflection that leads to action within the service team. Kiely (2005) states that transformative learning extends well beyond critical reflection in a way that promotes lasting change in the mindset of the students engaging in the

service work. He proposes that transformation moves beyond reflection through dissonance, personalizing, processing, and connecting (p. 12). Mezirow (1991, 2005) defines five aspects of transformative learning. He states:

First the individual recognizes that a different perspective might provide new insight in solving a problem. Second, the individual becomes aware of the sources, context, and the consequences of the former perspective. Third, the individual engages in critical reflection on the existing assumptions. Fourth, the individual validates the new perspective or belief by testing it through action and dialogue. Finally, he or she changes behavior or worldview based on the basis of the transformed perspective (1991).

In essence, these five aspects of transformative learning allow critical consciousness that leads to action come to fruition in the life of the learner. Thus, the learning becomes transformative when a student learns how to move past critical consciousness alone. Dissonance refers to a student's realization of the inconsistencies of his or her previous frame of reference versus the contextual factors he or she sees during the length of the project (Kiely, 2005). Through dissonance, students begin a repositioning process that allows them to rethink assumptions about class and privilege as they deal with these aspects on a personal level as well as through self-examination during the service project (Kiely, 2005). Finally, as students connect with the community and project, their mindsets are transformed as they desire to contribute to lasting change through reflection and action.

**Critical reflection.** A major focus of international service-learning pedagogy is on critical reflection that leads to action. While Miller and Gonzalez's (2010) study showed that critical reflection paired with course themes led to students' adopting career-related outcomes after their service projects (p. 32), others have noted that critical reflection must be monitored through classroom activities with the intent of helping students move past reflection into action (Kiely, 2004, 2005; King, 2004). Furthermore, research on service-learning indicates that, while critical reflection is useful, it is not the only means necessary to developing critical consciousness within the students as they interact with the community. King (2004) discusses the defamiliarization students go through as they learn to identify more closely with community members' perspectives as opposed to their prior beliefs and assumptions (p. 132). Through the notion of caring for the community members, students were able to defamiliarize themselves from what they thought they knew to what they saw, which allowed them to critically reflect on their preconceived notions, as well as the issues surrounding the community. However, while all of the studies represented here call for critical reflection, they all relay the importance of reflection that leads to awareness and then action—not reflection that does not move forward. The goal of service-learning is to enable students to question preconceived notions about society. As students see the contrast between their own lives versus what they witness on site during their service, they begin to question as they critically reflect on the reasons for these stark differences. Ruo-Lan and Hsin-Hua (2011) state that this reflection must be ongoing in order for students to truly learn.

Much of the critical reflection seen in international service-learning research is done through the medium of writing. The majority of international service learning projects require students to reflect on their experiences through dialoging or writing in journals. Acquaye and

Crewe (2012) assigned guided journaling after their students returned home while Greenburg (2008) and Cabrera and Anastasi (2008) required questions and journals. Jacoby (2009) states that reflection through writing should be a focus for learning in these service projects. Therefore, it is through writing and dialoging that students are able to voice their critical reflections in a way that leads to their action.

**Nonreflective modes of learning.** Kiely (2005) argues for the inclusion of nonreflective modes of learning within international service-learning projects. He states that these types of learning, such as collaboration with the community, caring, relating, and listening are ways of connecting with a community that do not require critical reflection (p. 11). While Kiely argues that many service-learning projects value critical reflection over nonreflective modes of learning, there remains a need for these types of nonreflective learning in the literature used in this study. King (2004), a critical pedagogue analyzing the extent that privilege plays a role in service learning projects, argues that collaboration and caring are two of the top priorities in any service learning project. Green (2003) states this personal connection is what can aid students as they attempt to bridge their experiences with what they see at the service site (p. 283). While many researchers have stated the need for critical reflection in order to help students identify and relate to the community members, King (2004) states that the students in his international service-learning project in Tijuana, Mexico did not need to critically reflect on the situation to understand how their experience “fundamentally differed” from the children’s (p. 130). Furthermore, Ver Beek (2002) asks service-learning educators to remember that more than a superficial understanding of the “served” community is needed in order to provide sustainable service-learning projects. In order to be effective, an international service-learning project must

allow students to relate and collaborate with community members on a different level than through critical reflection alone.

Service-learning researchers have struggled with constructivist-led critical reflection as the sole means of promoting action because critical reflection is often done in the classroom away from the community (Kiely, 2005). However, nonreflective modes of learning within the field of practice paired with critical reflection can lead to action as students relate, listen, and learn to care for the community members they come into contact with. Since the goal of international service-learning is to provide communities across the world with aid and empowerment, it is important that service learning pedagogues and researchers remember that interpersonal collaboration between students and the community can lead to caring and empowerment—with a smaller chance of privilege from either side (King, 2004).

**Sustainability.** International service-learning has been used throughout so many disciplines that the types of service learning opportunities are almost endless. However, while there are many types of services being conducted globally, not all of them are as useful to community members as they could be. Ver Beek (2002) notes that international service learning pedagogues must ask whether each project, “will be sustainable given the human, environmental and economic resources available locally” (p. 64). It is with this issue of sustainability that most international service learning advocates struggle, and it is also the reason behind the need for long-term service projects. The research used in this literature review consistently state that long-term projects are ideal because they promote sustainability as the community members and project staff members work together to enact change that is lasting (Crabtree, 2013; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Taylor, 2009; Ver Beek, 2002). Furthermore, sustainability is a long-term goal of international service learning projects, especially when the projects deal with environmental

work. Therefore, researchers state that, in order to be truly effective, service learning projects must be sustainable in order to enrich the community rather than burden it further (Ver Beek, 2002).

Therefore, although there are many varying goals among international service-learning programs, common goals include development of civic engagement, experiences that are transformative and allow students to continue developing critical consciousness after the service course ends, the ability to reflect on what students have learned, and a focus on sustainability and making programs last longer. Each of these goals is important in creating international service-learning programs that meet the needs of both students and community members. However, like in any theory and pedagogy, the goals of such programs are not always met effectively.

Therefore, in the next section, I detail issues that arise in the current body of international service-learning research. The goal of discussing potential issues in this pedagogy is to show the need for a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on place-based writing within international service-learning as a means of moving past issues that currently arise within the field.

### **Issues in Current International Service Learning Theory and Research**

In any theory, there is always the potential for issues to arise in its implementation. Because international service-learning is such a new subfield of service-learning, a lot of time has been dedicated to looking at the issues among different programs across disciplines. As a result, this section focuses on the issues that have arisen in international service-learning theory and research, as well as issues that can potentially occur in future programs.

#### **The Label “Tourist” Versus Having a Tourist Gaze**

As an international practice, service-learning requires students to leave the country that they are most familiar with in order to travel to another country in order to conduct service. As a

result, students are often placed in hotels and hostels and can be mistaken for tourists instead of community members. Prins and Webster's (2010) study analyzes the effect the term "tourist" had on students working on a service-learning project in Belize. Prins and Webster (2010) note that tourists are usually in a foreign country due to leisurely activities while international service-learning projects require students to work hard in order to receive academic credit (p. 8).

Researchers note that a fundamental aspect of international service-learning is collaboration with community members (Annette, 2002; Kiely, 2005; King, 2004; Prins and Webster, 2010; Taylor, 2009; Ver Beek, 2002). While the tourist label may not hinder students' ability to work with community members, it can be noted that the term tourist can conjure negative stereotypes in the community about privileged Americans on vacation instead of being willing to communicate and collaborate for change (Prins and Webster, 2010). Not only does the term tourist have the power to evoke negative emotions in community members, but this term can also produce negative feelings in the students who want to relate to the community members in order to aid and empower them (Ver Beek, 2010). Furthermore, the term tourist, paired with the notion of privilege, can further burden the barriers of culture, language, and race that are already present in these projects (Green, 2003).

On the other hand, while students do not want to be labeled tourists and will often go out of their way to dispel stereotypes, they often struggle with viewing the community from a "tourist gaze" versus from a critically reflective stance. Students working on a service project in an international context often feel they must adapt to the environment and can look at their new surroundings from a non-native or tourist perspective (Amerson, 2012; Annette, 2002; Ducate, 2009; Kiely, 2004, 2005; Prins & Webster, 2010; Ruo-Lan & Hsin-Hua, 2011). The goal is not to get students to see from a community member's stance, but rather, to instruct students how to

see the social inequalities present in the community through time spent with members as well as engaging in critical reflection. If students can see past the “tourist gaze” then they are better able to work alongside the community instead of for it (Prins & Webster, 2010). Overall, while a tourist gaze can hinder the service project, students usually are able to overcome feeling out of place through interaction with community members. As students interact with community members, relationships that are mutually respectful have the chance of forming as students see that they need the help of the community members as well to effectively complete the service project (Prins & Webster, 2010).

### **Tensions in Moving From Awareness to Action**

Researchers have noted the tensions students feel as they gain a more thorough awareness of social issues that extend beyond national borders. Kiely (2004) and Cabrera and Anastasi (2008) state that students often find themselves in a strange place between awareness and action as they realize the need for change within a community but struggle with enacting that change through what they learned during their service projects. Kiely (2004) labels this struggle the *chameleon complex* and states that a disconnect can arise out of what students aim to do with the knowledge and awareness they have gleaned from the experience versus what they actually do (p. 16). Along with the frustration in how little students feel they accomplish, Taylor (2009) states that many service projects are under time constraints that can add pressure to those involved. Many projects are conducted over spring break and last little over a week. Other projects last much longer, but students still feel pressure if not given the right resources. Therefore, while students deal with frustrations, they can often be offset if given the right curriculum that focuses on pairing with the community, and then the proper outlet for reflection at the end of the project. Overall, these issues that arise within international service learning



programs can be caused by several different factors, including the fact that international service-learning is a newer subfield of service-learning. Therefore, further research is always necessary in order to develop a common body of knowledge within the international service-learning paradigm, which will aid instructors and theorists as we continue to evaluate the effectiveness of international service-learning in the writing classroom.

### **Why More Research is Necessary**

Researchers have stated that the relational aspects of service-learning projects are of utmost importance because they encourage communication and understanding between project members and community members. Crabtree (2013) notes that in order to be effective, service-learning must promote the relationship between project and community members so that learning that is two-way and promotes change can happen. King (2004) states that the best way to accomplish this is through caring and cooperation and that continued research in this area is beneficial for all involved in these projects.

Ver Beek (2002) suggests that further research be conducted on the difference between projects that “come to serve” versus those that “come to learn.” While he briefly shows the difference between the two, he states that continued analysis of the benefits of learning from the community is important because it creates project members that value and empower those they are working with through the service. Service projects that come to learn allow mutual-respect relationships (Prins & Webster, 2010) to form as students realize how much they can learn from the community.

Finally, Green (2003) states that in order to advance the field of service-learning, the difficult stories involving class and race must be spoken of when teaching a service-learning course. She states that white, middle class students have been taught to silence those difficult

stories, but if service learning wishes to improve and advance, then these stories must be dealt with in order to enact change in both the service projects and the community members themselves. It is here that I see a gap in need of mending in order to produce sustainable international service- learning.

### **Sustainable International Service Learning Programs**

Since the goal of international service-learning is to provide communities across the world with aid and empowerment, it is important that service-learning pedagogues and researchers remember that interpersonal collaboration between students and the community can lead to caring and empowerment—with a smaller chance of privilege from either side (King, 2004). However, while there are many types of services being conducted globally, not all of them are as useful to community members as they could be. Ver Beek (2002) notes that international service-learning pedagogues must ask whether each project, “will be sustainable given the human, environmental and economic resources available locally” (p. 64). It is with this issue of sustainability that most international service-learning advocates struggle, and it is also the reason behind the need for long-term service projects. Furthermore, sustainability is a long-term goal of international service- learning projects, especially when the projects deal with environmental work. Therefore, researchers state that, in order to be truly effective, service learning projects must be sustainable in order to enrich the community rather than burden it further (Ver Beek, 2002).

The project becomes a relationship-forming task that allows all involved to learn about each other and work together so that those “serving” understand that they do not have all the resources and answers. In order to be effective, international service-learning must incorporate observation of, and communication with, the community. The importance of continued research

within international service learning stems from the need to have solid theory that guides pedagogical practice (Giles, 1994; Kiely, 2005). As a result, Paulo Freire and John Dewey are often cited as foundational to this type of teaching as well, although in recent years, service-learning researchers have struggled with constructivist-led critical reflection as the sole means of promoting action because critical reflection is often done in the classroom away from the community (Kiely, 2005). However, nonreflective modes of learning within the field of practice paired with critical reflection can lead to action as students relate, listen, and learn to care for the community members they come into contact with. Ver Beek (2002) also acknowledges this distinction and states that service projects must be designed so that “all should be contributing and benefitting from the relationships [developed during the project] (p. 58).”

As can be seen from the above literature on service learning, there is a significant gap in the research that I believe is valuable and necessary for moving international service learning forward in terms of theory and pedagogy. The vision that I have is truly sustainable international service-learning—learning that expounds languages, cultures, and ideologies in hope of bringing greater understanding and insight to our world through the medium of writing. In his book, *National Healing*, Claude Hurlbert (2013) states, “...the teaching of writing should be about teaching for international exchange and change” (p. 15). Like Hurlbert, I believe that writing can serve as a platform for enacting greater exchange and change on an international basis that is needed in order to move forward and as human beings in general. Hurlbert also urges the field of composition to consider teaching from an international perspective, “one informed by international connection, dialogues, and exchanges and that has the possibility to take us beyond national and cultural boundaries that currently limit our vision and practices” (p. 51). This perspective is one that I uphold in my own teaching philosophy, and one that is necessary to

adopt if international service learning is to be a success. International service-learning is devised as a way to bring greater understanding to the world on a global scale in order to bring much needed change that can come through writing. Furthermore, I believe that sustainable international service-learning is the answer to this needed change—a theory and pedagogy focused on diverse programs that reflect reciprocity and a focus on place and locality as means of sustainability. For the next two sections, I briefly outline the definitions of reciprocity through care and mutuality, as well as locality.

### **Reciprocity through Care and Mutuality**

Reciprocity is a core concept in most, if not all, service-learning theory and pedagogy and is often defined as mutually beneficial for all involved (students, teachers, and community members) (Welch, 2002). While reciprocity is the goal, researchers like Welch (2002), D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer (2009), and Cushman (1998, 2002) consistently state that reciprocity often goes unmet due to various reasons such as focusing too much on the university or the disconnect between the university and community members. Oftentimes, service-learning projects aim to do good but really treat the community as the “served” and can actually do more harm than anything else (Ver Beek, 2002). D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer state “Service-learning advocates an opposing epistemology: a need for knowledge to be local and co-created with (rather than for) the community” (p. 5). So, while service-learning advocates the co-creation of knowledge, the fact remains that many service projects focus more on the students’ perspectives at this time. Therefore, I believe that this notion of reciprocity is currently unreachd and needs to be further developed through adopting an ethic of care and a theory of mutuality in the international service-learning classroom.

When I say care theory, I am thinking specifically of care-based feminism, largely conceptualized by the work of Nel Noddings. Noddings (1988) developed this ethic of care out of a response to the need to educate for “moral life”. She says that the aim of moral education is respectable, but the current way of educating in order to meet this goal is not effective. She introduces an ethic of care, which she says, “prefers acts done out of love and natural inclination. Acting out of caring, one calls on a sense of duty or special obligation only when love or inclination fails” (p. 291). In essence, she is asking educators to continue caring for, and responding to, students even when it is difficult to do so and our natural inclination is to be careless to them usually in the case when a student dislikes us or is rude in the classroom) She later says, “...the primary concern is the relation itself—not only what happens physically to others involved in the relation and in connected relations but what they may feel and how they may respond to the act under consideration” (p. 219). In adopting an ethic of care, the goal is to foster the reciprocal relationship and understand how each member of the project relates to one another. This is important to my research because I am promoting a pedagogy that pairs care with mutuality in an attempt to bring reciprocity in the service-learning classroom because the goal is to promote awareness of marginalization through critical consciousness, and this goal is not possible if the teacher is the “knowledge authority” (Freire, 1970).

Finally, my intent in including care theory is to pair it with mutuality as a means for reciprocity. In the field of composition, Wallace and Ewald (2000) are credited with theorizing mutuality as an alternative approach to teaching. Wallace and Ewald define mutuality as “teachers and students sharing the potential to adopt a range of subject positions and to establish reciprocal discourse relations as they negotiate meaning in the classroom” (p. 3). This alternative approach values student input and autonomy and focuses on mutual respect in the classroom.

Therefore, teachers must be aware that students may resist the classroom discussions related to social engagement, etc., but unlike critical pedagogy and other approaches, a teacher encourages this resistance and uses it as a way to allow students to continue refining their critical consciousness. Mutuality is important to my study because, within service learning, there is an inherent desire to foster civic engagement and social responsibility within students. Because of this desire, I must also respect, and even encourage, student resistance to service learning pedagogy in order to truly treat them as mutual partners in the project and allow them to grapple with the ideas they are considering on their own as well. So, it is important that I practice mutuality in the service learning classroom instead of pushing my ideas on students in order to allow them to critically think for themselves and thus reach liberatory autonomy.

### **Sustainability and Locality**

The notion of the local within international service-learning is a topic that is studied by many researchers, usually in terms of trying to appreciate local communities and cultures when providing service overseas. VerBeek (2002), Kiely (2005), Crabtree (2013), and Prins and Webster (2010) have noted the importance of studying local communities before entering into them during service projects (as we have done in the Community Participation Workshop), as well as viewing current research within the field on pairing international service-learning with the local community in order to conduct service learning that is both sustainable and reciprocal. However, there is less research conducted on locality within service-learning within an international student population in a U.S.-based university, and there is also less research conducted on the link between locality and sustainable service programs. Even furthermore, there is a disconnect between the theory within international service-learning and the link between place [locality] and identity seen in recent research from Thrift (2007), Pennycook

(2011), and others. As a result, I briefly define locality and its role within international service learning here and then extend the discussion in the fifth chapter of this book.

The focus on locality is often defined as thinking beyond place as a geographical location and looking more at the social relations that make up the place and make it unique. Zhang (2006) states, “As Doreen Massey observes (1994) instead of ‘thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings’” (Zhang, p. 136). Thus, researchers attempting to implement a focus on locality must remember that they are looking at much more than certain regions. In my case, I am attempting to see how Indiana, PA influenced our class, and how my students, me, and others, were affected by the social relations and understandings we came into contact with in previous places we lived (whether that be home or another new place). Furthermore, Zhang goes on to say, “As mutual penetration between the local and the extra-local has dramatically increased, we need to explore the influence as well as the consequence of place-in-displacement on identity formation across cultural and national boundaries (p. 137). This notion of place-in-displacement—what happens when students leave their places and formulate their own identity in the new place—is extremely important to my research because I am focusing on how this theory of locality affects sustainable programs. More specifically, I am aiming to understand how focusing on locality can aid students as they make connections with the new location in regard to their homes, and how does that then motivate them to continue their service-learning in spite of maybe not feeling like they belong in that community. Pennycook echoes a similar definition and says, “To take the notion of locality seriously, rather than merely juxtaposing it with the global, the universal or the abstract is to engage with ideas of place and space that in turn require us to examine time, movement and interaction” (Pennycook, 2011, p. 1). Again, the

notion of locality is to study relationships within parameters besides only geographical location. In order to be effective, I must study the relationship between social interactions, time, space, and what happens when someone leaves their place to venture into a new one. Pennycook goes on to say:

To talk of language as a local practice, then, is about much more than language use (practice) in context (locality). To take the notion of locality seriously, rather than merely juxtaposing it with the global, the universal or the abstract is to engage with ideas of place and space that in turn require us to examine time, movement and interaction. To think in terms of practices is to make social activity central, to ask how it is we do things as we do, how activities are established, regulated and changed. Practices are not just things we do, but rather bundles of activities that are the central organization of social life. Once we bring language into the picture, and consider language to be a local practice, and therefore a central organizing activity of social life that is acted out in specific places, a number of common assumptions about language can no longer hold (p. 2).

I chose to focus on the link between locality and language specifically because the international service-learning course I was teaching focused on using writing to discuss and analyze our own relationships with our home communities as well as the Indiana community.

Composition researchers have established the value of understanding one's relationship to place in and through writing/literacy over the years. Raill Jayanandhan (2009) states, "Place does not only refer to physical landscapes, landmarks, buildings, towns, cities, and ecologies; place is also differentiated from space by the meanings it signifies for people (individual emotional bonds, positive and negative) and societies (social constructions, positive and



negative) (p. 104). Therefore, place involves much more than the physical area that a person calls home. While a focus on place within writing practices is not a new development within the field of composition, place's role in sustainability is a continually-needed research topic, as well as its role in service-learning programs. Derek Owens (2001) states, "...because students are genuinely interested in learning about each other's communities... an awareness of sustainability cannot exist without a developing awareness of the conditions and limitations of one's immediate environment" (p. 37). Therefore, place is important for students to understand in order to make their writing meaningful to themselves and to the specific audience and environment in which they are writing. I recognize that these definitions have been brief, but they are analyzed using narratives in the next two chapters.

### **How Can I Use This Literature to Understand My Journey as an International Service-Learning Educator**

*August 2016*

*How do you put theory into practice? I have asked myself this question a lot as I studied service-learning and international service-learning theory for the last three years, and I have learned a lot about myself, and about how I teach, during this time. As I began to study service-learning, I was so intimidated by the theory—I really did not know if I could ever teach a class that meets all the goals and intended outcomes of programs. However, I did learn the importance of learning from others. I learned valuable information from researchers who have gone before me, and who have studied and implemented service-learning for much longer than I have. I have learned the importance of seeing their successes and mistakes because I can learn from them and try to answer some of the questions they have for further research—in the same way that I am asking my readers to do in this book. I have always valued service-learning theory and pedagogy because of its focus on experiential learning that allows students to self-reflect*

*and learn—which I know is one of the reasons I chose to write this book using a reflective inquiry approach. I can use this literature to help me understand how I came to the conclusion that teaching an international service-learning course would be the most beneficial to my students and me. This literature shows me the development of international service-learning and reminds me that it is much more than an opportunity for students to travel overseas for a few weeks, or in the case of my students, a time to learn about American culture. This theory is about making connections, fostering relationships, and learning about ourselves as we do so. All of this literature reminds me that my goal is not just for my students to continue to develop critical consciousness but to also act upon it as well. Like any teacher, I am not satisfied with my teaching; I want to improve, and this translates to what I see around me as well. This world needs change, and what better way to bring that change than to encourage our students to do so? Overall, this literature helps me speak about things that I have wanted to do in the classroom but did not know how to do so or why I wanted to. This literature helps me understand my journey as an international service-learning instructor, because as I applied it to my class, I learned what works and doesn't work in my context, and I learned more about what still needs to change in my teaching in order to help me develop a more sustainable international service-learning course.*

## CHAPTER IV

### A TEACHER'S QUEST FOR RECIPROCITY

*Reciprocity includes an open and conscious negotiation of the power structures reproduced during the give-and-take interactions of the people involved in both sides of the [research and service] relationship. A theory of reciprocity, then, frames this activist agenda with a self-critical, conscious navigation of this intervention (p. 16).*

*—Ellen Cushman, “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change”*

*February 2016*

*I remember applying to this Ph.D. program on what I thought was a whim. I was hesitant to even consider applying at first because I really wanted to know why I wanted to pursue higher education to the fullest and whether or not I could even write a dissertation. I was eventually reminded of all the great opportunities higher education affords individuals, and so I became thankful for the opportunity, as well as adamant in my desire to further develop as a teacher who makes a difference in her students' lives. I think that, on some level, all of those different questions I asked myself when I considered accepting IUP's invitation to the program were excuses I was trying to make because I was scared. I was scared because, even though I have always wanted to continue improving as a teacher-scholar, I was stuck wondering whether I could even pass my classes let alone finish a dissertation. Then, when I did get close to the dissertation process, I wondered about what I should write. I had many ideas, but I knew overall that I wanted to focus on something that is meaningful to me, and that encourages me to be a better teacher and better person in general. So, I started with something that I value; something that I would like to think I'm good at: caring. I will say with conviction that I believe most teachers, if not all of them, decide to go into the practice because they care for people, and*

*especially their students. So, why would I start with care when it is not unique to this study? Because care is fundamental to me not only as a teacher but also as a person, and as I started with this study and with determining what type of teacher I wanted to be, I began to see potential for the application of care theory in the field of service-learning. Because, to me, a teacher shows care for students through helping them develop critical consciousness about the world around them so that they can be the agents of change we need in our communities. Service learning was not just a random theory and pedagogy that I happened upon, but rather, one which allowed me to pair my desires as a Christian educator with a way of teaching that grows me and hopefully my students as well.*

...

I became interested in service-learning because I believe it is important to remember that education can, and does, happen outside of the classroom. Furthermore, through my faith and my own classroom experiences, I developed a desire to implement service-learning theory and pedagogy because I see the value of aiming to develop civic engagement and awareness in my students and myself. Furthermore, as Cushman states in my epigraph above, it is my duty as a service-learning instructor focusing on developing critical consciousness in my students, to be self-critical in how I develop reciprocity, which in the case of my course, is through a redefinition of the term by focusing on implementing care and mutuality theories. While I value service-learning, I have noticed through my own teaching and research, as well as research within the field, that service-learning is not without issue, especially within the areas of reciprocity and sustainability. Therefore, this study was designed to focus on my service-learning teaching experiences in order to analyze how the use of reciprocity through mutuality and care and how a focus on locality affects the sustainability of international service-learning programs. Through a reflective inquiry of my own teaching practices and experiences as an international

service- learning student and instructor, I was able to better understand how I can improve international service-learning pedagogy in my own classroom, which hopefully speaks to the larger field as well. As a result, my research questions, again, are as follows: How did I evolve as a teacher over the course of this project and how does my evolution speak to the larger field of service-learning?

Since the focus of this book is on my experience as an international service-learning participant (both student and teacher), as well as my evolution as an instructor as a direct result of that experience, a large majority of this book must be dedicated to my desire, and attempt, to implement a redefinition of reciprocity through the adoption and implementation of care and mutuality theories as a means of developing an international service-learning course that is more sustainable. While it is true that my own course that I was teaching in did not successfully become sustainable, I still find value in the experiences and hope that this book can shed light on greater sustainability in the future. Even more so, while no service program is perfect, and while each is unique, I am looking at my unique experiences as an international service-learning instructor in order to analyze both positive and negative examples of reciprocity.

As a result, this chapter is dedicated to looking at reciprocity, and the lack thereof, in the Community Participation Workshop, as well as our time working with the Indiana community and administration at IUP and the ALI. Then, I look at specific incidents of reciprocity directly relating to care and mutuality as well. With that said, this chapter serves as my chapter dedicated to redefining reciprocity through care and mutuality theories. In order to show how the definition of reciprocity in service-learning has developed over the years, I first start with the theoretical foundations of reciprocity and current research on reciprocity in service-learning followed by a narrative look at what reciprocity is and is not in the international service-learning classroom.

From there, I discuss the theoretical foundations of care and mutuality as they apply to reciprocity and end with a section on goals and suggestions for implementing this new definition of reciprocity based on my own research within this study, as well as the current research within the field.

### **Learning to Care Through Suffering**

*November 2015*

*“Okay, so tomorrow I want you to start with a 5 minute introduction to your research and then us readers will ask you questions,” says Dr. Park as we sit on her living room floor the night before my three-chapter defense.*

*“Okay, I know what I want to say, but I’m so nervous. What if I don’t pass?”*

*“Why are you saying that? You are making me nervous.”*

*“I’m just so afraid I am going to get overwhelmed and start crying in front of everyone. I’m still so emotional, but I don’t want them to think I am trying to gain sympathy points.”*

*“Oh don’t worry. I am not going to even tell them anything about your uncle until after the defense is over. And if you cry, you cry. This study is about much more than the classroom alone.”*

*This study is about much more than the classroom alone. This statement has stuck with me since Dr. Park assured me it was okay to cry in my three-chapter defense if I couldn’t help it. You see, my uncle had passed away the month before from a sudden heart attack, and I can assure you that I have not ever cried as much as I have since then. He was my dad’s only blood brother (he has a step-brother still living), and he married my mom’s only sister, so our families have always been extremely close. He was a wonderful story-teller, avid hunter, and he loved his family so very well. He was such a big part of my life growing up, and aside from my own father, he was*

*one of the men that I looked up to most. I was devastated by this loss, and I was so scared that I might show this emotion during the highly stressful time of my three-chapter dissertation defense. What I didn't quite understand yet was that this study is about much more than the classroom alone. Oh maybe I just misspoke. I understood on some level that this study was about so much more than what happens in my classroom, but I was once again reluctant to let people in. I was once again fearful of letting my readers see what I really wanted to do with this study because I was unsure how they would take it, and once again, I refused to be reciprocal by not allowing them to see me vulnerable and let them see the issues I have gone through as a researcher. And heaven forbid I cry in the middle of a dissertation defense—which, in my eyes, is pretty much the most academic-type of situation I will ever find myself in.*

...

I share this with you to show you how far I've come in my thinking, and while I would like to say this evolution has come from myself alone, I am sure that is not the case. I am more confident in analyzing areas of my life because my dissertation committee, made up of three, tenured/tenure-track professors, told me that my voice was worth listening to. How many of my students ever hear that, from me and from other teachers? How many of my students are struggling when they enter the classroom? How can I show them mercy and grace and be there for them as Dr. Park was there for me? How many deal with issues of homesickness and so much more? I have only been a teacher for five years, but I have been a student for twenty-one years, so I realize the life issues students go through can make it extremely difficult to focus on school. I am happy to say that I did not cry until I got on the plane to fly home to Colorado. I cried because I had passed, I cried for my uncle, and I cried because even though I want my students to know that our classroom is a safe place, and that I want to understand and attempt to meet

their needs in the classroom and service sites, I was still so reluctant to let my own professors into any emotional issues that arose during the writing of this book. Like their suggestions that I commit to using reflective inquiry, I also want to commit to not being ashamed of circumstances that are out of my control—especially since I want the same openness for my own students.

...

*November 2014*

*“What is home for you?” “Where is it?” “We have been discussing the idea of home, or of place, for a few months now. Has it changed for you in any way?”*

*“Home is where I want to be right now. My grandma is not doing well, and I want to be there with her.”*

*“I’m so sorry to hear that” ...I faltered. I didn’t know whether to ask if she was close with her grandmother or when she was going home or what to say, but I guess I really didn’t need to.*

*“She is 84, and she has been sick for awhile, but it is getting worse. My mom told me my grandma told her to tell me to finish my classes here, but it is so hard.”*

*I could tell she was starting to cry a bit because she turned her head away, and one of the students to her right asked me a question about our writing assignment. I remember answering the student’s question while feeling so discouraged. A student, who was hurting, just opened up to our class, and to me, but none of us could move past the “I’m sorrys,” and really what could I say? I didn’t want to ask the class if they have lost anyone, and I didn’t want to tell her I had lost my grandma too. Maybe I was wrong, but empathy in this situation may not be the best decision, but I still feel like I should have done something. After all, I was trying to implement a pedagogy of reciprocity through care and mutuality at this time, yet I faltered and encouraged none of that theory in this interaction—aside from telling her that I would work with her and give her time to*



*finish her projects as long as she remained in communication with me. She said thank you, but I still walked away from the conversation feeling like I could have, I should have, done more.*

...

I have been doing research on service-learning for long enough now to know that the term reciprocity is one of the most used terms in all of the existing research (at least that I have read so far). However, while many, many service-learning scholars are talking about it, there still seems to be issues with creating reciprocal programs. Nancy Welch (2002) states that service-learning programs must be mutually beneficial in order for community members and students to both have positive experiences within the service program, while Ellen Cushman (1998) states that researchers will never know the true feelings of their participants unless they actually try to get to know them and not just use their lives for research, i.e. as a researcher, I must give back to my participants and not just get what I can from them in order to publish and move on. She writes about this throughout her entire book, *The Struggle and the Tools*, and I really like her examples of having to help her participants during welfare meetings and in other ways that it was appropriate to do so. Reading her work was a really good reminder for me that not only do my students have to benefit, but the community members we work with need to, too. That seems like such a big feat for me.

Throughout my research, and my own teaching, I have come to understand just how difficult it is to create reciprocal service programs that are beneficial to all involved; however, I do not believe that is a cause for not trying my best to implement reciprocity in my international service-learning course. As you can see from my narrative above, even while adamantly wanting to design a service program that encourages more reciprocal relationships in that program, as a teacher, I still struggled with basic human interactions with my students. This example above has

reminded me that reciprocity is multifaceted and that in order to implement it in the international service-learning classroom, I must be aware of my successes, and even more so, my failures in order to learn more about implementing reciprocity effectively. As a result, I document cases from my teaching experiences that show reciprocity throughout this chapter. And actually, and even more importantly, I document cases that did not show reciprocity so that I, and hopefully others as well, can learn from those instances where the goals of the service program were not met—which, unfortunately, occurs more often than I would like to think. Overall, I use this chapter as a reminder to myself to not put my needs as the instructor and researcher above everyone else's within the service program. I think it would be really easy to implement a type of “reciprocity” that, in all actuality, was just a way for me to analyze its effects on the classroom and community. You see, I could have only shown examples where I thought I was successful in implementing reciprocal behaviors in the classroom, and I could have not focused on areas of my experience, that frankly, make me look like an ineffective teacher at times. The narrative above still haunts me because I want reciprocity through care and mutuality to be second nature in my classroom—but I am nowhere near doing so yet. So, overall, this discussion of reciprocity and my experiences is a way to keep myself accountable and allows me to truly learn from my mistakes in order to improve as a person and as a teacher-scholar.

I apologize for the ramblings that make up my journal entries and narratives throughout this chapter, but I wanted to keep them whole and true to how they were written so that my evolution as an instructor, and my train of thought and how I dealt with framing this study were evident. Furthermore, through these journals, you can see how I, as both instructor and researcher, struggled with even the smallest definitions of reciprocity when implementing it into the course. There was a time where I questioned whether anything at all could be reciprocal. As I

have said before, I do not think there will ever be a situation where a service program is 100%, truly and completely reciprocal to all of those involved; however, I do think service-learning programs should continually be assessed in order to make them as reciprocal as humanly possible. I think we owe our students, our community members, and our research enough to at least try to fix the issues that arise in programs due to lack of reciprocity and understanding between those involved, and I think that can start by just discussing the effects reciprocity, or lack thereof, can have on service- learning courses and programs. In reference to service-learning pedagogy's focus on moving students away from self-centered thinking into also considering the effect the service has on the community, Papastephanou (2003) states:

Dialogue and communication might be less effective and complete but more constructive and genuine. Its impact on education will be felt in the construction of a subject that is less self-centered or centered around her/his achievement and position in her/his community and more oriented to post-conventional bonds with her/his others. For, to encourage the connections between knowledge on the one hand and emancipation, justice, democracy and care on the other, one must first believe in their ontological possibility (p. 405).

Therefore, this chapter serves as my attempt to connect my narratives with current research on reciprocity, care, and mutuality in order to make a conscious effort of analyzing reciprocity in my own service course. This analysis is also done as a means of finding ways to better implement reciprocity in the future. I begin with looking at the current research on reciprocity, specifically within the field of service-learning.

## **Reciprocity and Service-Learning**

Reciprocity is one of those buzz words in the field of service-learning. Many researchers discuss reciprocity, and many claim reciprocity as a goal of their service programs; however, there is a disconnect between the theory of reciprocity and its implementation within service-learning pedagogy. While I was formulating this study in my head while reading on reciprocity within service-learning, I kept asking myself why this was important to my research if everyone is already practicing reciprocity within service programs as they say so in their own research. I came to the conclusion that this avenue of my research is vital to creating a sustainable international service-learning program because creating service programs that are equal in benefit for all involved is hard—really hard, yet it is so important that service-learning programs do not take advantage of anyone involved—either unknowingly or knowingly. In fact, because it is so difficult, I find it even more important to study—to learn from others’ mistakes, as well as my own and to examine what I have learned about reciprocity through my own time teaching international service-learning.

In order to examine the effect of reciprocal relationships on the international service-learning project, I must first define reciprocity in terms of how it was used in this study. There are actually many, varying definitions of reciprocity depending on the program (which may be part of the problem), but I define reciprocity using its overarching definition and goal within service-learning according to Jacobi (2001). Reciprocity in service-learning is the notion that there is a reciprocal, or equal, relationship among everyone involved in the service project (university members and community members alike). However, the definition above is an idealistic definition for a multitude of reasons including: lack of funding for service projects (Welch, 2002), instructors’ desire to put their own research goals above the needs of the

community (Cushman, 2002), and a community's lack of involvement in the project process (Crabtree, 2013). In fact, researchers like D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer (2009), citing Patton (2002) and Himley (2004), ask, "How do you equally serve the needs of the community members and university students, when only one pays tuition...It is easy for the university, financially independent and behaviorally entrenched in its expert role, to see the community as deficit-based and impose expert solutions" (p. 5). As a result of Patton (2002) and Himley's (2004) studies on reciprocity between university and community members, D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer (2009) state:

Thus instead of creative, reciprocal, empowering partnerships to alleviate poverty, for example, service learning takes the form of tutoring the poor. Tutoring is a safe choice: the university benefits from community exposure and the community members receive needed help. But safe does not necessarily mean transformative, as these uninspired interventions tend to replicate exiting patterns of power (5).

Therefore, researchers like D'Arlach, Sanchez, and Feuer (2009) show us that reciprocity is often not met due to the university implementing what they would call "a deficit-model of service", which can happen in a service program or even just research on service programs as well. Many service-learning researchers (among them D'Arlach, Sanchez, and Feuer) advocate for transformative service in a effort to move away from replicating existing patterns of power; however, they also note the difficulty of doing so because power is relational and present in some way in all interactions in the service program. Furthermore, Jacobi (2001) states that service-learning research has "often addressed questions of representation through reciprocity, asking what various participants receive from service learning experiences" (abstract). In this case, reciprocity is often unmet in service programs because different members of the service

project require more than others, which can lead to unequal relationships as universities usually receive before communities (Cushman, 2002; Jacobi, 2001). In the case of Jacobi's research, he aims to redefine reciprocity as a need, and more specifically, he begins with what the community needs (p. 4). In order to be an effective teacher in a service-learning course, and program, one must have "direct interaction with community members to either affirm curricular ideas or replace them in ways that could better serve both student learning and community goals" (Jacobi, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, it is with this definition of reciprocity as a need that I begin to even redefine reciprocity further. Even more so, I am more concerned with the needs of students and community members. While this study is coming from a teacher's perspective, it is important to remember that I am most concerned with reciprocity being met between me, my students, and the community in which we are working and the people we are working with. The research on reciprocity in service-learning has shown that community members are the ones most often left out of the details and communication concerning service projects.

So, why didn't I choose to do my research on community member needs within international service-learning? Well, in my case, as an instructor, I had direct access to community members and an ongoing dialogue with them about what my students, and I as the instructor, could do to help meet the needs of the Indiana community. Since Jacobi's research came out in 2001, this has been an important goal for instructors participating in service-learning research, yet the goal of giving community members direct access to communicate their needs is often unmet in the reality of a busy teaching schedule, lack of administrative support, and other reasons. Therefore, it is beneficial for this study to analyze the reasons why there was an open communication between community members and the instructor (me) from a teacher's perspective in order to provide suggestions for future programs. Even more so, this entire study

is focused on the gap in research on service-learning and international students. As a result, this study is unique in that the community members are considered experts over the students, and even the instructor, as we were learning about the community through them. Furthermore, as a teacher attempting to implement reciprocity in my service course, it is necessary that I analyze how reciprocity was achieved, or was not achieved, within this course. Please remember that my ultimate goal is to redefine reciprocity using care and mutuality theories, which I attempted to implement in my interactions with everyone involved in this international service-learning project—students, other faculty, administration, and community members. While it was not always successful, I did learn that I had to be very intentional with trying to foster reciprocity in the community because most of the community members were willing to let me “teach” my class in their organization. I had to ask them to teach us the first time we went to a new place, and that initial interaction helped us all learn from the community organization. Looking back at these interactions that are present in my narratives has reminded me of the need for greater reciprocity in order to develop service projects that are truly “successful”—at least in meeting the very real needs of everyone involved in the future. My experiences teaching this international service-learning course really helped me to see progress in meeting the needs of all involved in the project, and has encouraged me to continue seeking that progress in the future.



Figure 2. A picture of the packets our class put together for the Community Garden's Seedling Project.

### Reciprocity in the Community Participation Workshop

January 2015

*"Ms. McKee, what are we doing today? Where are we going?"*

*"Well, since the weather is so bad today, we won't be going to the Community Garden like we thought."*

*"Instead, we are going to stay inside and help the Community Garden with a project they are doing."*

*"Kay and Ginger have been very gracious and have offered to come work in our classroom, so let's welcome them warmly when they come in, okay?"*

*"Sure, what are we going to do?"*

*"We are going to help them with their Seedling project, which is part of the local food bank here in Indiana."*

*"What is a seedling?" "And what is a food bank?"*

*"Does anyone remember what a food bank is? We went over the definition last week."*



*“Isn’t a food bank where local people can come and get food for free if they don’t have enough money to buy it at the store?”*

*“Yes, very good. Does anyone know what a seedling is?”*

*“A seedling is a small plant, right? Like either a seed or a seed with a little bit of the plant coming out?”*

*“Yes, that is correct. We will be helping them by putting seeds in packages for families so that they can have fresh food they grow themselves.”*

*“I will let Kay and Ginger tell you more about the project when they get here though.”*

*“How many of you have gardens back at home?”*

*“A couple of you I see...what do you usually grow?”*

*“My father grows rice, tomatoes, and lettuce.”*

*“My family grows flowers and vegetables.”*

*“Mine too.”*

*“Okay, awesome. When I am at home, my father and I grow vegetables as well. Last summer, we tried cantaloupe, and it was pretty good.”*

*“What is cantaloupe?”*

*“I will show you.”*

*...*

*“Oh, I don’t think I have ever tried that. Is it a fruit? Is it good?”*

*“Yes, it is a fruit, and it is delicious!” “I will bring us some next class.”*

*...*

*“Okay, everyone, Kay and Ginger are here. Please give them your attention, and they will teach us more about the Seedling Project.”*

*“Thank you, Ravyn, and thank you class for helping us with this important project. We could not do this without you, and we are so excited to work with you as we bring cleaner food choices to the food bank here in Indiana.”*

Implementing reciprocity into the Community Participation Workshop was a day-by-day battle. There were plenty of times where I failed in my pursuit of greater reciprocity for so many different reasons, but there were also times where there was growth toward reciprocity—like the case above.

...

I say growth because I mentioned earlier in this book that I will be showing successful and unsuccessful accounts of reciprocity in this chapter. While this is true (for the most part), I think that viewing ‘successful’ implementations as growth toward reciprocity is a better way to frame these narratives because none of them are completely reciprocal, and thus, completely successful. There were always negotiations of power in these interactions. The students still saw me as a teacher, and it was still my responsibility to make sure we were all being respectful to the community members. So, when I talk about success, I do so with the intent that while none of these interactions are completely reciprocal, they did move our class in the right direction toward growth, and for that, I consider them successful. Now, back to what I was saying.

...

I remember the day that class was held. The students had been looking forward to visiting the Community Garden again and seeing how much it had changed since the summer. Unfortunately, due to the weather, we were not able to physically get to the garden, so the staff was gracious enough to come to us. A move towards better reciprocal relationships was made that day as the needs of the community members, students, and the instructor were met in some

way. The students wanted to learn about the garden, and work in it, the community members wanted to teach us and have people to help them set-up the Seedling project, and I wanted to continue research on reciprocity in the international service-learning classroom. I share this narrative to explicitly show one area of reciprocity that is easy to meet: choosing when to teach versus when to facilitate. Since I was not the expert in this subject area, I asked Kay and Ginger to teach us about the project and about gardening techniques. While it may seem like a small step to some, it was done out of recognition of the community members' expertise, which is a step in the right direction toward reciprocity.

Reciprocity was always something I was concerned with when designing this international service-learning course. However, I was not explicit with this desire to be reciprocal until I focused on the purpose of this book. I really wanted to understand why I felt it was so important to be reciprocal and how implementing reciprocity within the course and service project could/would potentially, positively impact all involved. This attempt to understand the purpose behind the project is supported by John Dewey's definition of purpose in *Experience and Education*. He states:

The formation of purpose is, then, a rather complex intellectual operation. It involves (1) observation of surrounding conditions; (2) knowledge of what has happened in similar situations in the past, a knowledge obtained particularly by recollection and partly from the information, advice, and warning of those who have had a wider experience; and (3) judgment which puts together what is observed and what is recalled to see what they signify. A purpose differs from an original impulse and desire through its translation into a plan and method of action based upon foresight of the consequences of acting under given observed conditions in a certain way (69).

As a result, my intent in focusing on reciprocity was actually a purpose rather than an impulse because of my plan and method of action for researching the use of reciprocity in my classroom. Through the use of classroom experience, current research on reciprocity and service-learning, and my recollections through narratives, I purposefully focused on reciprocity in the international service-learning classroom.

Therefore, my original purpose in implementing reciprocity in this service course was two-fold: first, in order to study the effects for my book, and second, to create a more sustainable service project. However, I soon noticed that, after reading material on reciprocity from the field, my own observations, and reading student writing, I was not being fair, or reciprocal, myself in putting my own needs as a researcher above the needs of my students and the community members of Indiana we were/would be interacting. As a result, I reformed the purpose of this international service- learning course, and the goal of the project became one in which the course (and service project specifically) becomes a relationship-forming task that allows all involved to learn about each other and work together so that those “serving” understand that they do not have all the resources and answers. In order to be effective, international service-learning must incorporate observation of, and communication with, the community. Therefore, nonreflective modes of learning within the field of practice paired with critical reflection can lead to action as students relate, listen, and learn to care for the community members they come into contact with. Ver Beek (2002) also acknowledges this distinction and states that service projects must be designed so that “all should be contributing and benefitting from the relationships [developed during the project] (58).” In order to implement these types of reciprocal relationships within the service project, I knew that I needed to do so with the right mindset and motives, which is why I decided to focus on redefining reciprocity through both care and mutuality theories.

## **Reciprocity through Care**

Again, reciprocity is defined in service-learning as the notion that all members of the service project (instructor, students, and community members) all benefit equally and work together (Welch, 2002). D'Arlach, Sanchez, and Feuer (2009) state that "The core aspirations of service-learning [are] to increase civic engagement in students and narrow the distance between universities and communities" (5). Thus, true reciprocity links communities to universities instead of using university students to serve those in the community with a position of authority (D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009; Ver Beek, 2002). However, reciprocity is not always a realized goal of service-learning.

Oftentimes, service-learning projects aim to do good but really treat the community as the "served" and can actually do more harm than anything else (Ver Beek, 2002). D'Arlach, Sanchez, and Feuer state "Service-learning advocates an opposing epistemology: a need for knowledge to be local and co-created with (rather than for) the community" (5). So, while service-learning advocates the co-creation of knowledge, the fact remains that many service projects focus more on the students' perspectives at this time. D'Arlach, Sanchez, & Feuer (2009) continue:

Service-learning research on the community perspective is rare and recent (Worrall, 2007), as it lacks financial and motivational backing...Also, the community is more receptive to service established collaboratively...The more engaged the community is in planning and implementing the service, the more committed the partnership grows over time (Worrall) (6).

I read this article before I began teaching the Community Participation Workshop, and it gave me the idea of working collaboratively with the community organizations we served with.

Because my students wanted to learn from the community organizations we worked with, the community members were much more willing to continue working with us the next semester. While collaborative learning was helpful in moving our class' interactions with the community members toward reciprocity, I still saw the need to implement care and mutuality theories as well.

I know I am reiterating the information on care theory I wrote about in the last chapter, but I am doing so to build upon, and continue, that previous discussion. As a result, when I refer to care theory, I am referring specifically to care-based feminism, largely developed by the work of Nel Noddings. Noddings developed this ethic of care because she said we educate for more than cognitive knowledge; we educate for “moral life”. She commends the idea of moral education but aims to reform it through care theory. She introduces an ethic of care, which she says, “prefers acts done out of love and natural inclination. Acting out of caring, one calls on a sense of duty or special obligation only when love or inclination fails” (291). She later says, “...the primary concern is the relation itself—not only what happens physically to others involved in the relation and in connected relations but what they may feel and how they may respond to the act under consideration” (219). So, by adopting an ethic of care, my goal was to encourage reciprocity through understanding how each member of the service project fits. She also discusses a relational ethic, which is related to the quote above, and focuses on the fact that relations are built on care. She defines the “one caring” as the person responding to the needs of the second (219) and states that the one cared for “contributes to the relation by responding to the caring” (220). She focuses on the growth of those cared for and states that the objective of an ethic of care is to produce a “caring community through modeling, dialogue, and practice” (223). This notion of dialogue is directly related to reciprocity in service-learning because it pairs the

dialogue with experience, i.e. service-learning participants must be able to discuss issues as they arise in order to remain mutually reciprocal. Noddings notion of confirmation is especially useful to my project. She states, “When we attribute the best possible motive consonant with reality to the cared-for, we confirm him; that is, we reveal to him an attainable image of himself that is lovelier than that manifested in his present acts. In education, what we reveal to a student about himself as an ethical and intellectual being has the power to nurture the ethical ideal or to destroy it” (193). This notion played an important role in the classroom because my goal was to help encourage awareness of marginalization through critical consciousness, and this goal was not possible if I was the “knowledge authority” (Freire). Therefore, in order to truly apply care theory to reciprocity, I had to refocus my thinking and acknowledge my students as intelligent beings fully capable of seeing this marginalization (as opposed to believing I had to explicitly teach them), and I had to cultivate relationships that allow discussions about these issues to emerge in the classroom. That sentence sounds condescending, and I really don’t mean for it to. Of course, I know my students are intellectual beings fully capable of understanding marginalization on their own. I just mean that I, in no way, am the “savior” who can magically make them see social inequality. I know this; however, because fostering critical consciousness is such a prevalent part of service-learning theory and pedagogy, I had to check my intentions and be very deliberate in how I approached this topic in the classroom. And that was done through cultivating a relationship with my students where those issues emerged in the classroom if they needed to. I gave them open-ended questions and allowed them to reflect on things that were important to them without sharing my opinion. Sometimes I didn’t get the answers I was looking for—students didn’t talk about marginalization or anything like that—but they focused on their experiences in much better ways than they would have if I had pushed them to think

critically without giving them the freedom to do so. This was a conscious choice that developed as I read through care theory, and its critiques. I chose to adopt a more dialogic method of teaching (as Freire theorizes) because I wanted my students to come to conclusions themselves. However, there were also a lot of other factors that played into my wanting to teach this way. First of all, at this time, I was a very young, inexperienced teacher who was really trying to include reciprocity into my classroom however I could. Secondly, I did not quite yet understand that reciprocity is not intended to undermine the role of the teacher. There are times when I can ask students about marginalization, but I still want to focus that discussion on learning from each other as opposed to me merely giving them the answers I want. The reason that I state that here is because critics of Noddings' work, such as Card, state that true caring does not always mean feeling guilty when assuming the role of the teacher.

While Noddings' care theory is beneficial to my research, critiques of her work are also necessary. Card wrote a review in response to Nel Noddings' *Caring: A Feminist Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984). In particular, Card points out two areas she feels Noddings should have developed more in her research. They are: "the implication of ethical interdependence for individual character" and "that of guilt in caring relationships, which she points out, functions differently from guilt in legalistic contexts" (p. 101). She states that Noddings' caring is an alternative to ethics of principle, and therefore, the author's main question is: "Can an ethic of care without justice enable us adequately to resist evil?" (p. 101). For Card, evil is distinguished in two ways: the evil done by strangers to strangers and the evil intimates do to each other (for example, an abusive marital relationship). She states that Noddings' notion of care requires the one doing the "one-caring"—the person caring for the other (student, loved one, etc.) can be dangerous because the person doing the caring is asked to care even if this is



detrimental to the care-er. She uses the example of a wife being physically abused by her husband and staying in the relationship no matter what because she cares. She also asks how we show care to others, i.e. how do we choose which relationships count as significant and which do not require us to show care because Noddings states that our links with those receiving care will also link us to potential strangers (and how do we care for someone we do not know). Finally, Card deals with reciprocity and states that, “At the very least, Nel Noddings’ reliance upon ‘chains’ of connection needs to be supplemented by a responsibility not derived from caring, viz., a responsibility not to perpetuate unjust practices that block opportunities for the encounters to make caring possible” (p. 105).

So, overall, Card critiques these chains of connection and asks that those adopting an ethic of care will strive for mutual cooperation, because she states, these caring relationships are not always mutually beneficial—especially if the caring and the cared-for do not have common advantages (example: white male serving in a minority neighborhood, etc.). So, Card proposes to extend the ethic of care by including a focus on social justice for all people—whether strangers or intimates. This focus on social justice within an ethic of care is very important to international service-learning theory and pedagogy. Researchers like Ver Beek (2002), Cushman (2002), and Welch (2002) state that service-learning must be mutually beneficial for both the community and the students serving. Many programs do not meet this goal because there are many different power dynamics creating barriers for this mutuality and reciprocity to emerge. Furthermore, U.S.-based international service-learning theory calls for mutual cooperation and understanding among programs and the community; however, research has shown that community members do not always appreciate U.S. students coming in and trying to “serve the less fortunate” (Crabtree; 2008; Ver Beek, 2002). Also, as of now, many international service-learning programs are

unable to meet the goal of reciprocity needed in caring relationships due to the fact that there are unequal power relations that occur when a mostly White, male population from the U.S. travels abroad to “developing nations.”

Card’s focus is immensely important to my research because it reminds me that caring must be paired with social justice in international service-learning, or the potential for imperialistic programs and research will never diminish. Card states, “What ethical notions are relevant to our relationships with strangers, persons whose lives we may significantly affect although we will never know them as individuals, never encounter them. Where we have no responsibility to care for others, I should think that we still have responsibilities to refrain from doing them harm—to be careful, in a sense that does not require encounters with those for whose sakes we ought to take care” (p. 102). So, even if students and instructors participating in international service-learning projects do not form relationships with all of the community members, do they not still need to care for others by not perpetuating unjust social relations?

### **Reciprocity and Mutuality**

I chose to include care theory and mutuality together because I think these theories work together toward reciprocity. Compositionists Wallace and Ewald are credited with developing the theory of mutuality, which is an alternative approach to teaching writing. Wallace and Ewald define mutuality as “teachers and students sharing the potential to adopt a range of subject positions and to establish reciprocal discourse relations as they negotiate meaning in the classroom” (p. 3). This approach to teaching writing values input and autonomy and focuses on mutual respect in the classroom. When using this approach, instructors must be aware that students may resist the classroom discussions related to social engagement, etc., but unlike critical pedagogy and other approaches, a teacher encourages this resistance and uses it as a way

to allow students to continue refining their critical consciousness. I chose to implement the theory of mutuality into this book because, within service-learning, there is an inherent desire to foster civic engagement and social responsibility within students. So, it is important that I practice mutuality in the service-learning classroom instead of pushing my ideas on students in order to allow them to critically think for themselves and thus reach liberatory autonomy. As a theory, mutuality developed out of a need to move past critical pedagogy or as a way for those teachers interested in using alternative pedagogies but unsure how to implement them in the writing classroom. Mutuality developed out of work from Marx and feminism, yet the goal of mutuality is less concerned with political agendas and more concerned with negotiating meaning in the composition classroom. Wallace and Ewald state that “When articulated as a classroom goal, mutuality can be understood as teachers and students sharing the potential to adopt a range of subject positions and to establish reciprocal discourse relations as they negotiate meaning in the classroom” (p. 3). Therefore, when adopting a rhetoric of mutuality, the classroom environment will be a place of negotiation and resistance as students react to these new areas. According to Wallace and Ewald:

It [mutuality] depends on a view of students as motivated partners rather than as empty vessels or as underprepared or reluctant learners...a primary goal of such pedagogy is for students and teachers to understand their own subjectivities and to find voices that allow them to speak in the academy and other contexts that matter to them (p. 143).

According to Wallace and Ewald, “Mutuality is situated in the postmodern sense: it entails a contingent perspective on knowledge and emphasizes the socially constructed nature of meaning, self, and social roles, including those of teacher and student” (p. 5). They go on to say, “In the classroom, mutuality is tied to the realization that knowledge is constituted in the classroom

rather than simply brought in as disciplinary constructs, and the type of language used to generate this knowledge needs to be transactive in nature (p. 6). Mutuality theory requires alternative pedagogies that “depend not only on an ideological stance that sees teacher and student as co-constructors of knowledge, but also on an understanding that teachers and students, operating on a mutual basis, must work out their multiple subjectivities within new types of discourse” (p. 7). When mutuality is applied to service-learning pedagogy, it promotes a critical classroom that allows for resistance and negotiation between students and the instructor. This connects to my research because it is very important when working with social justice work in an international context that I also allow for critical discussion and reflection to happen inside the classroom as well. International service-learning focuses on the instructor as facilitator rather than instructor because the goal is to have students, instructor and community members work together to bring change.

I know I keep asking this question in various forms, but how much can one be mutual with the international service-learning classroom and with community members before caring becomes an issue (as Card says). Also, how do care and mutuality differ and how can care be theorized alongside mutuality...or rather, how can mutuality stem from an ethic of care in order to foster reciprocity for the community and international service-learning project while also striving for sustainable change and justice? According to Gwen Gorzelsky, “The measure of this transformation [course liberation through relations] is how extensively students and teachers share authority in directing classroom discourse and in constructing knowledge within the course” (p. 65). Gorzelsky takes mutuality even further and states that resistance in the composition classroom can lead to respect and agency as students learn how to disagree with authority in order to still interact with critical pedagogy—with their agency still in tact.

One of the critiques that a theory of mutuality states about critical pedagogy, a theory often adopted in service-learning pedagogy, is its focus on social and political aspects that are expected to be of as much concern for the students as it is for the instructor. For example, if an instructor is a feminist who also happens to be a lesbian, then a student who is against same sex marriage may not feel that he or she is at liberty to argue for this stance if the goal of the writing classroom is to promote tolerance through examination of social and political issues as well as critical reflection on the topic. This notion leads Wallace and Ewald to state, “Pedagogies that strive for mutuality do not ‘free’ students by investing them with personal authority that is autonomous. Instead, such pedagogies enable agency by demonstrating that the choices students make and the freedoms they have are situated in social interaction” (p. 140). Therefore, the goal of a mutual classroom is to invest in students and allow them to foster their own agency as they negotiate meaning and knowledge construction in the social relations of the classroom. The idea is not to get everyone to agree, but rather, to allow students and instructors alike to learn from each other and develop writing and language skills as they work through issues without the overt political ties that make students uncomfortable to disagree with instructors. Therefore, mutuality is beneficial to international service-learning because the theory calls for reflection that can eventually lead to action; however, a mutual classroom will not enforce a specific type of reflection and will, instead, value student input and experience, which leads to student agency and empowerment. Furthermore, according to Nancy Welch, who utilizes mutuality in the service-learning classroom, mutuality will strive to aid students as they connect with the community members. It will become less about students teaching community members or serving them and more about learning from each other through dialogue and experience (Ver Beek, 2002; Welch, 2002). Furthermore, learning from each other in a mutual, reciprocal

relationship can be done so effectively as students focus on writing within their place or community. In our class, I made sure to let students write about the community after every service day. We would discuss what we learned as well, and we did so with the idea that there wasn't a right answer to the questions I asked. We were really just trying to negotiate and learn from each other. While this was successful sometimes, there were also times when reciprocity was not present in the course, which is the focus of the next section.

### **When Your Best Intentions Turn into Utter Failure—Reciprocity Denied**

Now before I begin this next section, I must be transparent and tell you how difficult it is for me to share some of these reflections I have had about the course and about people I've interacted with during the project. Since my goal is to move toward greater reciprocity between all involved in the service project, I include cases of varying degrees of failed reciprocity. Each case is a learning opportunity, but some are much harder for me to share due to my complete and utter failure. I share these examples especially because I have learned from them, and I hope others can as well.

The first example I share is the teaching reflections I wrote after the very first day of class in the Fall 2014 semester. These reflections were written as quickly as possible and as they entered my head so I did not forget anything I wanted to analyze later. As a result, the journal reflection is written word-for-word below.

*September 2014*

*I overestimated my time for this course...I thought the syllabus would take longer to go over but quickly realized it was too difficult. I moved on instead of trying to better explain and ended up having to go back over it.*

*Students are low level and very quiet in English but very loud in Japanese. I have 10*

*students all from Japan.*

*The interview icebreaker seemed to go okay. They liked having the answer written down so they could read if they weren't comfortable just speaking.*

*I have realized that motivating students to volunteer in a language they are familiar with is difficult enough so doing so in a foreign language and country will be very interesting.*

*Students really want to focus on communication improvement and hope to also learn about American culture--most of my students are only here for 1-2 semester as exchange students.*

*Overall, I need to simplify lessons--the most productive part of the course was discussing where students have already ate, shopped, and how they get around, etc. They were willing to talk then because it was meaningful and about them.*

*Also, students don't tell me when they don't understand--they just pretend to so I'll have to watch for that. They also had good answers to the question: what does community mean to you?*

*Some of the responses:*

*identity*

*family*

*they respect each other*

*I hope to help foster those same qualities in their own communities during this time...or rather*

*work together to see those areas in this community and their own.*

*...*

Every time I read this journal entry, I cringe because I sound like such an arrogant teacher, and it was my first day teaching this course! I soon learned that if I wanted to be successful, and if I wanted to create an environment conducive to reciprocity, then I have to stop thinking I have the power to “help foster qualities” in my students instead of allowing us to work together as mutual learners. Overall, there are many reasons I feel this journal entry represents

me being unreciprocal, but one of the many reasons is because I assumed the “teacher knows all role.” I assumed my students did not understand things, and I assumed it was my responsibility to motivate my students to learn about the Indiana community. The idea of motivating my students is not bad, but it is my attitude in how I wrote it—it was my job to give them the answers. Even more so, look at what I did. I say right in the beginning that I wrote this right after class ended, and I actually remember starting to write before my students had all left the classroom. In essence, I was replicating Cushman’s (2002) statement about teachers being too focused on their own research to be reciprocal with their students and with their communities in which they are working.

...

*November 2014*

*This is the second week in a row I have had no students show up for class. None of them have emailed and none of them seem to think it is a big deal when I ask them to at least give me notice of not being present in class. This is frustrating.*

This incident failed to be reciprocal because we did not have good communication between students and me when students were going to be absent. In fact, since these incidents kept happening, I was encouraged by the administration to take points off or disallow students to participate in community activities if they were absent from the previous two classes. Implementing that new policy helped, but at first I thought it hindered reciprocity between me and the students. In fact, students may not have shown up for class because they were bored or didn’t take it seriously, so we had a discussion when they returned about places they would like to see. However, now as I look back on this interaction, I notice that it is a failure on the students’ part to be reciprocal. In a reciprocal relationship, mutual respect is shown. However, in



this interaction, the students did not take the class seriously, and did not have the respect to tell me that they would not be present for those two weeks.

...

*March 2015*

Before I begin, I will say that this incident happened while our class was working on the Indiana Community Garden's Seedling Project in Wallwork Hall. We did not walk to the garden due to heavy snow and very cold temperatures.

...

*"Thank you ladies for coming to us today," I said.*

*"No, problem, we are happy to be here," said Kay.*

*"This is Ginger. She is also a master gardener."*

...

*"Class, we are going to be counting out 100 of the black beans, putting them in this envelope, and sealing the envelope before putting it in the pile over there," said Ginger.*

...

*[Five minutes later]*

*"Class! Are you even paying attention to me? I asked you to count 100 beans. Please pay attention. Ravyn, do you think they aren't following directions because they can't understand me?"*

*"Everyone, let's stop for one minute. Miko, can you tell me how many beans we are putting in the envelope," I asked.*

*"Yes, we are putting 100 black beans in the envelope and using this sticker so people know which beans."*

*“Perfect, thank you, Miko. Does anyone have any questions? Ok, great work, everyone. They understand you just fine.”*

...

This incident failed because the master gardener felt she was not being understood or listened to appropriately, which was wrong on the students part, but when she asked me if they understood in front of them (and believe me, they all heard), that also hindered having everyone's needs met as students were not that happy to have someone think they do not understand her. And finally, I would say that I failed to be reciprocal in this interaction as well because, in this case, it was appropriate for me to step in and keep the students on task. I often warred with my own definition of reciprocity and thought that when I relinquished “control” of my classroom to one of the community members, that it was then their responsibility to keep the students focused. However, I have since learned how complex reciprocity is, and it is appropriate for me to step in as the teacher at times to make sure my students are on task and are respecting the community members who graciously accepted our invitation to join our class that day.

...

*October 2014*

*Today, our class went to the Indiana Historical and Genealogical Society for a tour and background to the history of Indiana and the surrounding towns. I had a few students in the class who were really interested in history, so for the most part, people seemed excited to go. We arrived early and were met by our tour guides. They both asked me how much English my students knew and whether or not I thought this tour would be appropriate for them. As I sit and think about this case now, I am unsure whether this was beneficial to the students in any way or if it was an unwillingness to aid my students with their historical understanding of Indiana.*

*Actually, while I am thinking of it, is knowing the history of the town they are in beneficial to them either? I will come back to that...Anyway, I keep wrestling with the idea of asking if my students could handle the tour—beneficial or misunderstanding? For the sake of my understanding of reciprocity, I will say that it is not beneficial in this case because it almost created a situation that would not allow understanding from either perspective to develop. What I mean is this: my students were highly capable of understanding the tour and even made it a learning opportunity as they began saying how things were similar or different in their countries. This allowed us all to learn from each other and our own experiences. If I had answered that, no, my students were not capable of participating in the tour, I would have robbed them of the opportunity they had to teach our class, and our tour guides, about their own country's history. Furthermore, had I said they were capable, yet the tour guides thought differently, we may have endured a three-hour tour from hell as students stood there quietly wishing they did not show up for class that day because it was so boring. My students' willingness to participate coupled with the tour guides' willingness to engage in discussion not completely focused on Indiana history, allowed for a good learning experience on both sides. Granted, this situation was not entirely reciprocal because we were taking a tour, and the students did not have the ability to show us artifacts from their countries, but students were allowed to be co-creators of knowledge as they added input and stories from their family members during WWII, etc.*

...

Even though this situation had a good outcome that even led towards greater reciprocity, it was due to the students' willingness to share their insight with the rest of us and not due to the "knowledgeable authority," which, in this case, was the community member. I share this experience in the section on failure because I think this is a perfect example of situations our

class found ourselves in quite frequently. As has already been noted, researchers like Ver Beek (2002) and Cushman (2002) state that difficulties arise in program sustainability when the community becomes the “served”. In this unique case, the community members were more knowledgeable than the students about certain issues, and an interesting dynamic arose as students were treated as the “served”—especially in this case where the tour guide was teaching them. I realize that this was his job. The problem was not with him teaching but with his questioning whether or not they could even follow along. I am not saying he did this with any ill-will—I am just saying that it could have hindered a positive community experience if the students had let it. Furthermore, this interaction, as well as the one with the master gardener at the Indiana Community Garden above, shows an example of language bias that we often saw in our interactions with the community members. While my students handled it well and even made a lesson of cross-cultural exploration out of the tour, these interactions are still a reminder that “native” English speakers can often have a superior attitude. Nevertheless, my students are a reminder to me that understanding can be established as both parties (my students and the community members) negotiate that understanding through dialogue.

### **Suggestions for Implementing Successful Reciprocal Relationships in International Service Learning**

Now I know that the overall goal of this book was to analyze my teaching experiences, but I also wanted to potentially contribute to the field of international service-learning with this scholarship as well. As a result, this section is one in which I am aim to make a contribution. I am aware that my experiences are only one in a multitude of teachers’ experiences, and are therefore not generalizable; however, through my experiences, I have learned valuable information that may still be able to be adopted into various service-learning programs. As a

result, this sections details suggestions for encouraging greater reciprocity within service-learning programs (both with domestic and international students).

### **Focus on MORE Diversity in the Program**

When I first started this project, the goal was to make international service-learning truly international, i.e. students from one country would serve in another while students from the second country would simultaneously serve in the first (so, in essence, the students from the two countries would swap and learn from the different communities). However, I did not have the resources to implement a program like this, but the goal has always been to move away from U.S. based international service learning programs, as suggested by researchers like Cushman (2002), Welch (2002), Acquaye and Crewe (2010), and Ver Beek (2002). Therefore, as a result of a lack of resources paired with a change in focus for my service-learning project, and subsequently, my dissertation, I learned that there is still immense value in promoting more diversity into the service project. This project was successful in its implementation due to the fact that the majority of contributors were international students. However, 90% of these international students were from Japan. I did have one student for the full year from Taiwan, and every once in a while, I would get a student from the Middle East, yet the majority were from one country. While I know they have unique experiences, one of my main suggestions for improved reciprocity is continually adding more diversity to the program. From new instructors with diverse backgrounds, to students and community members from different walks of life, I feel that service projects will greatly benefit from added diversity, which will force everyone involved to leave their comfort zones if they truly want to promote truer reciprocity.

### **Focus on Community-Level and Personal-Level Reciprocity**

Researchers within the field of service-learning have distinguished between community-level and personal-level reciprocity, and I believe that both are necessary to successfully reciprocal service projects. Dirk Remley allows focuses on community-level and personal-level reciprocity and states [in reference to Ellen Cushman's work on reciprocity] that, "Cushman also recognizes that 'the very same position as scholars that distances us from the community also invests us with resources that we can make available to others' (p. 19). Activism, here, includes both community- level and personal-level reciprocity" (as cited in Remley, 2010, p. 119). This community-level and personal-level reciprocity is necessary because it can help build relationships that might otherwise suffer from issues of power. Therefore, Cushman suggests, "instructors to engage their community by considering '...our own *positions* [emphasis hers] in the academy, of what we do with our knowledge, for whom and for what means'(p. 12, as cited in Remley, 2010, p. 119). Again, the idea is that instructors have to understand how their roles affect the relationships they build with students and community members. Cushman states, "The degree to which we gain entrance into the daily lives of people outside the university in some measure depends upon who we are. The boundaries of our access must be negotiated with the people" (p. 20). Therefore, we must constantly negotiate our relationships with community members in order to truly encourage reciprocity.

In order to encourage true reciprocity, the needs of all members of the project must be met. Takayoshi and Powell (2003) "Reciprocity requires that researchers pay close attention to their participants' needs as they evolve and be ready to embrace moments for reciprocity as they emerge" (p. 414). While Takayoshi and Powell state that researchers must understand their participants needs, Cushman states that researchers must understand how much the participants

will allow them into their lives. She states:

Reciprocity also requires that researchers understand what access their participants give researchers to their lives, whether the reciprocal relationship be established “a priori” or not. So, in this essay, I call attention to this personal to institutional-level, non-activist agency while observing other kinds of agency for reciprocation to help researchers—scholars and students— understand the range of their agency and the importance of benefits across that range for participants. Such an understanding may help researchers better engage participants and make them aware of potential benefits of participation. This understanding also carries implications for service learning projects, wherein the teacher may know of opportunities for organizations to benefit from service learning projects and a student has the ability to share knowledge beyond putting together a document for an organization (p. 117).

Therefore, through this research, and through my experiences teaching international service-learning, I am calling for reciprocity that spans professional relationships (i.e. the community leader and instructor), as well as personal relationships (i.e. the friendships formed between students in the class and with community members) in order to make sure there is greater understanding among the project participants, and also to ensure that the needs of the participants are being met more equally than just the institution’s needs being met. Furthermore, in “Sustainable Service Learning Programs,” Ellen Cushman acknowledges that “professors in service learning courses can better sustain these initiatives when they view the community site as a place where their research, teaching, and service contribute to a community’s self- defined needs and students’ learning” (p. 40) (as cited in Remley, 2010, p. 127). Therefore, the goal for better meeting reciprocity throughout the entire program, specifically from the role of the

teacher, is to learn from the community—what their needs are, etc.—and then use the instructor’s research to help meet those needs. In order to be more reciprocal, and in order to be more sustainable, a service program needs to meet the needs of all involved while also allowing the instructor to research, teach, and conduct service in the same place.

### **Be Intentional**

While this may seem like a no-brainer, being intentional with the assignments in the course is necessary to meeting the needs of the entire project community. With that said, it is important that instructors create assignments that allow students to learn and teach each other as well as the instructor. The instructor should be intentional to allow others to teach the course as well, as was done when the Community Garden master gardeners taught our class (that class ended up being one of the best learning opportunities for all of us involved in the project because the experts were teaching instead of me trying to keep control).

Not only is it important to be intentional with the assignments in the course, it is also beneficial to be intentional with the desired learning outcomes. Wayne State’s Community Engagement site lists focuses on the benefits to students from their service learning projects, including:

Makes learning more useful and relevant. Heightens awareness of community needs. Provides real-life application of what students are learning in the classroom. Provides an opportunity for students to learn about and give back to the community. Enhances sensitivity to diversity. Strengthens critical thinking skills and communication skills. Promotes personal and social growth. Fosters a sense of civic responsibility. Allows students to serve as involved citizens in their communities.

Facilitates the development of a lifelong commitment to service (as cited in Remley,



2010, p. 127).

I chose to quote extensively here from Wayne State's service-learning program because each of these suggestions are very intentional in how they attempt to foster critical consciousness and social responsibility in the classroom and within the students' lives. I have found out in my own experience that it is vital that I, as the teacher, am very intentional with the lessons I plan and the places we serve. There must be intentional communication between instructors, students, and community members, and we must be working toward meeting the needs of the community in order to be effective.

### **Collaborate**

International service-learning projects are a great platform for collaboration between many different people. I hope that it is obvious that I am calling for greater collaboration between the class and community members. Dirk Remley (2010) echoes this need for collaboration by focusing on the work in Ellen Cushman's article "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change." He says:

There is a] perceived gap that exists between the community and the academy...Cushman states, 'The very same position as scholars that distances us from the community also invests us with resources that we can make available to others' (19). So, she suggests that this distance can be overcome by inviting community members to take part in scholarship by making them aware of publications that may be interested in their work and by offering assistance to facilitate developing manuscripts for publication consideration reduces that gap further. Community members are able to recognize the value their voice brings to the scholarship that enhances the field (p. 129)" (p. 117).

Even more so though is the notion that classes can collaborate with more than the community.

Classes can collaborate with other service courses (in my case the anthropology class working at the Community Garden). When encouraging collaboration, reciprocity is met due to the fact that there is a greater chance of the project being relevant to everyone involved. Sandra Wetig states, “First, the service provided in the community must be relevant and meaningful to all stakeholders involved. Second, the course must enhance student academic learning, and third, it must directly and intentionally prepare students for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society (p. 31). Overall, collaboration may seem like a no-brainer as well, but it is vitally important because it encourages greater reciprocity over a larger population of people. Lukenchuk (2009) states, “Service-learning is different because it necessarily entails reciprocity and mutuality which are —two-way relationships. Service-learning is about serving *and* learning—learning by doing, acting, affecting, intervening, problem-solving, reflecting, and acting again” (p. 247). In order to effectively learn by doing, collaboration must occur so that we are truly learning from those around us as we wrestle with the idea of critical consciousness.

### **Help Students See Past the Service**

This is a controversial one; however, it is important because service learning **MUST** be more than the service itself or it would be called community service. I am in agreement with Ellen Cushman (1998) who states that students and community members already have developed critical consciousness, but I think there is always room for continued discussion about that critical consciousness, which the teacher should encouraged inside and outside of the classroom. Lukenchuk (2009) states:

Throughout this paper, I have developed the notion of service as essentially different from servitude or subservience, and service-learning as essentially different from other similar activities. Service-learning is more than occasional visits to soup kitchens,

shelters, or resource centers; it is a philosophy of human growth and purpose, a social vision, and a way of knowing. The conception of service-learning, although grounded in the progressive tradition, certainly moves beyond its limitations. Service-learning is compatible with what Arendt calls *praxis*—the condition of plurality, the power of our collective action in public-political affairs. As a counterpoint of social escapism and nihilism, service-learning is a life-giving force that seeks an outlet to move, touch, change, and transform people's lives. Serving others brings forth our humanity which is defined by our responsibility and care for the Other. Encountering the Other reawakens our sense of selfhood and shows not what we are but what we ought to be—sources of infinite compassion and reciprocal solidarity. Conceived as unconditional service and moral responsibility, service-learning is an ideal worthy to strive for and approximate (p. 254).

Therefore, the service is excellent not because students are helping the community, but because they are learning from the community at the same time that empathy and critical consciousness are developing in them through the service.

However, I realize that getting students to see past the service is extremely difficult, and I was surely not always successful. In order to begin helping students see past the service, there should be many discussions focused on what the students see in the community. This is also where critical reflection comes in and must be done on a regular basis to help students make connections with their own communities as well. One way my class did this was to begin each session with some journal time where they answered questions about their communities and the Indiana community as a means of making connections. While it will not always be successful, allowing them to reflect as much as possible aids in moving them past seeing the course as a

community service project.

### **Encourage Student Resistance**

I am taking this notion right from Wallace and Ewald's book on Mutuality theory. In order to encourage through mutuality within a service project, there must be allowance for student and community member resistance. If I were to force my students to agree with my theory and pedagogy, I would not be allowing mutuality to foster whatsoever. However, encouraging resistance allows this to happen as long as the teacher is also aiming to move students in the direction toward mutuality. Wallace and Ewald state that writing students "continually struggle to attain authority" in the classroom where the discipline knowledge is often subjected to social relations (p. 132). Furthermore, they say:

Thus, pedagogy that strives for mutuality faces the additional problem of assigning value to the knowledge that is being constructed. If disciplinary knowledge exists only as it is reconstructed in the discursive landscape of the classroom, then there is no received interpretation that exists to provide an immediate and stable read on conflicting perspectives. As a result, reconstructions of disciplinary knowledge are contested to the extent that classroom participants' individual interpretive agencies are engaged (p. 135). Thus, because knowledge is seen as subjective in the theory of mutuality, resistance comes when everyone involved in the project has their own conflicting perspective that they are working out. They go on to say, "...the concept of mutuality, at least, as we have defined it, demands pedagogy that explicitly recognizes the constructed and unstable nature of disciplinary knowledge and of the cultural expectations, but at the same time, entails pedagogy that values subjectivity" (p. 137). Therefore, a theory of mutuality recognizes this potential for resistance as students wrestle with different perspectives they run into in the classroom and at the service site.

Instructors implementing mutuality should encourage this resistance because it allows students to take charge of their own learning as they wrestle with their own subjectivities. Overall, resistance allows an international service learning course to learn about preconceived notions and cultural relations as we work through the knowledge presented. Resistance allows students to keep some of their agency that would otherwise be lost if they had no choice but to reflect in a way the instructor asked. Instead, a student now has the opportunity to reflect and work through the issues him or herself while also bringing a new perspective to the entire class to discuss.

### **Final Thoughts on Reciprocity**

This chapter was by far the most difficult for me to write, and I think it was so difficult because I still feel like there is so much more to discuss in terms of reciprocity. In fact, I am sure that my entire book could have focused on the redefinition of reciprocity alone. However, the larger goal of this study is to analyze my own evolution as an international service-learning instructor as I attempted to create a program that was more sustainable through a redefinition of reciprocity and through a focus on the relationship between location and the service project. Therefore, even though I feel like there is so much more to be said concerning reciprocity in the service-learning classroom, I know that for the purpose of this book, a discussion focused specifically on the link between reciprocity and locality in terms of sustainability of programs is discussed further in the final chapter. However, this chapter has allowed me to focus on how care and mutuality encourage greater reciprocity, and I can learn from my mistakes, as well as successes, in implementing this type of reciprocity in my classroom. It is my hope that I, and others, can learn and develop more theory on reciprocity in the future.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROLE OF LOCALITY IN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING

“But if you’re from a place that no one knows, you have to invent it on the page. Place is often something you don’t see because you’re so familiar with it that you devalue it or dismiss it or ignore it. But in fact it is the information your reader most wants to know. Your reader comes into your narrative to steal knowledge—who you are and what is all around you, what you use, or don’t use, what you need, or fear, or want—all that sweet reverberating detail... Your stuff provides telling details from which I can derive all kinds of information about you” (Dorothy Allen, “Place”).

*August 2016*

*In the epigraph above, Dorothy Allen states that “place is often something you don’t see because you’re so familiar with it.” Isn’t that the case for so much of our lives? I think back to the times when I first moved from California to Pennsylvania and how I really did not notice the almond orchards that surrounded my house (aside from prime allergy season when they were blossoming, and I couldn’t breathe as I ran by them) until I moved away. I actually started missing the orchards within a few weeks of being in Pennsylvania—something I never thought I would do. I also started comparing Indiana, PA to Escalon, CA, and things that I saw in Pennsylvania, like the chipmunk running across the trail I was running on, were so different from what I was used to. Leaving my place and moving somewhere else, somewhere new, made me appreciate all the things I had looked over or ignored while in California—they were just part of everyday life, and it took them no longer being so, for me to realize they were important to me and to my story. That same almond orchard was the one I used to play hide and seek in with my brother, sister, and our friends. It’s the place where we used to run through when I was*

*training with my sister for her college soccer try-outs, and it's the place where I remember walking with my dad after one of his panic attacks. He had PTSD after he was part of an officer-involved shooting (he was a police-officer for twenty-six years before retiring in 2015), and I remember walking with him after a bad spell, and him telling me he needed God. That orchard was the place where I started to get my dad back, and the place where he would start talking to me about Jesus Christ. That orchard holds a lot of precious memories, but I took it for granted until I was no longer near it. Before I began writing this book, I think I did the same thing with my experiences teaching international service-learning while living in Indiana, PA. Most of the time, I thought of these experiences as everyday—the experiences I had while teaching. Yes, I was documenting them, and I was learning from my time teaching, but it took me moving to Colorado and taking some time to decompress after classes ended before I realized just how much these experiences have influenced me and shaped my teaching.*

...

I knew that I wanted to write this book based on my experience as an international service-learning participant (both student and teacher), as well as my evolution as an instructor as a direct result of that experience. Through those experiences, I wanted to also examine what it means for an international service-learning program to be sustainable. I knew that I wanted to focus on place-based writing because I was interested in the link between writing about a place and the practice of sustainability, but when I went into my three-chapter defense, one of my readers said that I was focusing more on locality than I was place-based writing. I didn't understand that at first—I thought that I just wasn't articulating myself well and that he misunderstood my intended focus, but when I really sat down and thought about it, he was right. Up until moving to Pennsylvania for graduate school, I had lived in the same town and in the

same house, for all twenty-three years of my life. Fast forward three years later, and I am currently living in Colorado, which means that I have lived in three different states these past three years. I began noticing that I really was interested in how location affects students because I know how it affected me. Once I understood that I was really focused on locality and sustainable international service-learning, I was able to see that place-based writing really could develop out of a focus on locality (which was my ultimate goal). I just had to take a step back first, and better understand how focusing on locality can then lead to place-based writing. As a result, this chapter is dedicated to looking at the current research on the role of location within service-learning, as well as its relation to place-based writing. I also address the reasoning behind the focus on locality within the setup of the Community Participation Workshop. Finally, I share suggestions for implementing a focus on locality within future international service-learning programs.

### **Choosing to Focus on Locality within the Community Participation Workshop**

There were two things that made me focus on locality within the Community Participation Workshop. The first was the fact that I was simultaneously taking a graduate seminar on Ecocomposition that made me interested in the role place plays within writing. The second reason was that when I was researching locality and place-based writing, I also attempted to analyze my own writing with a focus on place in order to consider my location's effect on me because I had never consciously done so before. So, as I was teaching this course and asking students to make connections with the Indiana community as well as their home community, I saw the need to do so myself. I realized that when I first moved across the country, I was immensely homesick and found it difficult to focus on sustainability within the Indiana context when I wanted to be in California. So, when I started teaching this course, I went back to my



journals to see how my feelings about place changed over the two years I had been in Indiana. Furthermore, as I continued researching the effect of place within writing and service learning, I also began to consider perspectives such as Dorothy Allen's above. If we are largely unaware of the social, spatial, and time oriented aspects that make up our place, how does writing about a new location (in this case Indiana—for both my students and myself) allow one to make connections with their own home location in order to learn more about themselves? And is this connection necessary to encourage student participation in sustainable service practices? There has been research within the field of international service-learning that focuses on what students have learned and how their lives have been transformed from the local community in which they work (Crabtree, 2013; Kiely, 2005), yet the focus remains on U.S.-based students and not international students studying in a U.S. university. As a result, I began to wonder if these students would have similar experiences as I did writing in a new location. I wanted to know if the feelings I had about this new place were universal, and if so, how could I use place-based writing in our class to help students make connections with the community in order to truly benefit from the service and subsequent reflection. I share with you two journal entries that show my growth from a homesick woman to one who was able to find connections between my hometown of Escalon, California and Indiana, Pennsylvania. I wrote the first entry when I arrived back to Indiana after being home for winter break, and I wrote the second one the week I returned home for Summer in April of 2014.

*January 18, 2014*

*I am not home. I look outside my window, and I do not see almond orchards. I walk out my door, and I see snow—not sunshine and 75 degrees in January. I see chipmunks and deer running around on a daily basis, but I do not see the ocean. I do not feel it move, and I do not*

*feel at home because I am 2,600 miles away from my home. Yet, I am here and life must go on.  
Will I ever be able to call anywhere else home? Does that matter?*

...

This journal entry was written during my first winter away from home. I remember that I had just returned to school from spending five weeks in California for Christmas break, and I was so homesick. I was trying to wrestle with the idea of my place in the world, and I was wondering if I could ever truly belong in Pennsylvania when my heart wanted to be back “home” in California. Now, as I look back on this time with a concern for sustainability, I ask: Do I not still have a responsibility to be sustainable and make wise decisions in a threatened world even if I do not feel at “home?” And, can I still do so when my mind is focused on my place so far away? These are important questions that I wanted to consider in this study, especially as I teach students from various places around the world. As an advocate of international service learning, I have been considering place’s effect on service meaningfulness—especially considering the fact that working with an international population means that students will come from a variety of places with no end of differences and ties to different parts of the world. Yet, even so, it is important that we advocate care for the environment no matter where we are in the world because environmental change affects everyone on this planet.

...

*April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014<sup>11</sup>*

*I am home from my first year in Pennsylvania, and I survived a crazy winter. I got off the plane today and noticed that California is drier than usual. We are in the middle of a drought. Lakes are lower than they’ve been in years, and we are rationing our water even more than*

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<sup>11</sup> After returning from St. Petersburg at the end of the Spring semester, my mother had a medical emergency, so I went home two weeks early to be with my family.

*usual, so people's lawns are extremely dry—so dry that they are probably fire risks. I really hope there are no wildfires near our home this summer, and I hope that we have enough water for our yearly summer garden. It would be so weird not planting next month with dad and then harvesting in July before returning to school. Anyway, it is so good to be back. Home looks different, but it smells the same. I've missed this place.*

...

The two journal entries that I am sharing with you were both written during my first year away from home—a home that I had lived in since I was nine months old. These journal entries, written three months apart and focusing on leaving and returning to my place, were both written with an unintentional focus on water, which leads me to believe that our environment, or place, contributes to how we see the world (Dobrin, 2001; Elder, 1998; Owens, 2001; Pennycook, 2010; Raill Jayanandhan, 2009). I am most content and most in awe of this planet when I am near the ocean—an expansive body of water that makes me feel so small. When I moved across the country, I became “land-locked” for the first time in my life, and I began to miss the ocean and my favorite lake. Also during this time, California began experiencing one of the worst droughts on record, which only furthered my desire to return home to my beautiful place, especially as I saw more and more pictures on the news and social media depicting water loss at a rapid rate. I knew that I was learning about sustainability while here in Pennsylvania, and I began wondering how I could transfer that knowledge from this place to my home. Pennsylvania, like California, is filled with agriculture, and I wondered how knowledge of both areas could benefit my writing for sustainability. Furthermore, I began wondering how my students could make connections with this place based on the ones they already associated with their “homes.” My own epiphany about water conservation reminded me that my students, who are from a

variety of places, are storehouses of knowledge and resources and that focusing on service-learning could contribute to reciprocity between students and community members that just might lead to lasting change—especially as students participate in the service while here and then take what they learned back to their contexts as well.

All of these different reflections about my place and sustainable issues, paired with a focus on place-based writing and sustainability within international service-learning research, began to shape my own thinking practices, which in turn, shaped my teaching practices over the course of the next two semesters, which is evident in this teaching reflection I wrote concerning our class's time at the Community Garden.

...

*September 26, 2014*

*Today my class and I went to the local Community Garden. It was so beautiful and such a wonderful reminder that even in the midst of all of mankind's unsustainable practices, there are those people willing to make a difference. I truly think these people are making a difference, and they are doing so by educating people about garden-fresh food and water conservation one step at a time. I've talked to Kay and Lisa (master gardeners) about conserving water in a more sustainable way. The garden uses rain water that can be stored as long as needed. That may work for me, but it would have to be saved this winter and used in the summer. I wonder how much rain we'll get. I also wonder if the drought will end soon.*

...

There is no denying that our world is in need of smarter decisions and actions from humans. We have long used and abused our environments and each other without a second glance, but there will come a day when such practices will demolish any semblance of hope that

we still have for change if we are not careful. Therefore, a continued look at the effect of international service-learning on the promotion of sustainability should be an important research endeavor. Furthermore, it is my goal to continue researching how international service-learning programs become sustainable through reciprocity<sup>12</sup> and by seeking to enact change through a focus on place/locality<sup>13</sup>. I am a firm believer in the power of writing, and I am a firm believer in the value of one's place. As we have seen in my students, and myself, place (home) matters, but people can also adapt to new places because of our traveling natures in this globalized world (Drew, 2001, p. 63). Therefore, it is even more important that we remember that places and people are part of this interconnected world, and while Pennsylvania may never truly be my home, as you can see from my final journal entry, I learned a valuable lesson in conservation while here, and I did so because I made connections with this community in such a way that it reminded me a lot of home. Therefore, my goal was, and still is, to continue to bridge cultures and communities together in the international service-learning classroom in an effort to enact change that is lasting and sustainable.

### **Growing in My Understanding of Place**

*March 2016*

*I shared an excerpt from my personal journal above about how I felt when moving to Pennsylvania from California and the issues I had as a result of not feeling like I was at home in a place I still wanted to make a difference in (through service-learning). Now, as I reflect on these journal entries, I am struck by one question: why did I feel that it was so important to my task that I felt home in Pennsylvania? If I were really so into helping the community in which I lived at the time, should it matter that I never felt like it was 'home'? I ask this because after*

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<sup>12</sup> In the context of this project, reciprocity will be theorized using an ethic of care and mutuality.

<sup>13</sup> Place and locality will be examined in regard to the field of ecocomposition, as well as current international service-learning theory.

*finishing my coursework from my Ph.D. program, I soon moved to Colorado (where my parents are now living) to work on this book. I moved to a place that I had never been to before; however, within a week of moving to Monument, Colorado, I immediately felt at home in a way I never did in Pennsylvania. Was it because my parents were here? I had a great support group in Pennsylvania, but it never felt the same. Do I feel at home in Colorado because I cannot get over the beauty of the Front Range when I drive down the mountain I live on? Or because when I walk outside, I feel the fresh mountain air rush by me at 7,400 ft., and it reminds me of years of camping and hunting in the Sierras? Whatever the reason, before I moved to Colorado, I assumed that, because I was not feeling at home in Pennsylvania, none of my students would/could either, which could affect their desire to participate in service learning as well. Or rather, I made the excuse for them that they would never be able to make connections with this community because I, myself, was having a difficult time doing so too (self-centered, I know). Instead, what I learned is that even though I had lessons plans focused on explicitly discussing both Indiana and students' home communities, my students made those connections on their own a lot of the time because, in my opinion, they were very aware of locality at the time. Now, as I sit in my new home in the beautiful state of Colorado, not missing everything about California I had missed so much before, I, myself, am further struck with the thought about locality. How does locality, and our place—the place we call home—affect our desire to participate in sustainable service learning, and how does our place affect us as people, as students, and as writers? And even more so, how does locality affect who we are as people? What language we speak, the words we say, but even more than that. How does my place affect my relationships with those around me—how does the time and space I am currently in affect me—shape me into the person I am?*

...

In order to look at these questions further, I must first back up in time to the beginning of the Community Participation Workshop course. I understand that hindsight gives me new perspective on the role locality played in the course (and the role I hope it plays in future courses), but in order to meet my goals of examining my evolution as a teacher, I must also examine the evolution of the Community Participation Workshop as well.

...

*September 2014*

*Today is the first day of the Community Participation Workshop and the first day that I am ever teaching a course on international service learning. I have all these high and lofty goals about extending service pedagogy, but in reality, I really just want students to see the value in the class and to have fun while helping others. And even more so, this is my first time teaching a service-learning course—period. Yes, I have done plenty of reading on the field of service-learning, but who am I kidding? Reading about different programs and critiquing them based off of zero experience myself is silly and rude. I think this will be a very challenging and eye-opening experience for me [understatement of the year]. Due to students wanting to know about American culture, I was advised by the ALI administration to keep the name of the course and not “brand” it as service learning as much as learning about culture while speaking English with community members. I am a little nervous that this course will become a way for the international students to become indoctrinated with American culture and expectations instead of all of our cultures learning from each other.*

I must interrupt this narrative to remind my readers that at the time I was experiencing this incident, I had just read a ton of literature on western imperialism and was discouraged that

my students may not have responded positively to a course that was not focused on learning American culture as the goal of the service. However, while I did not want the class to focus completely on culture, I did learn that I was better able to focus on community and what that means to each student, community member, and myself. Even though I seemed to have a superior attitude—at least I thought that I knew the administration was encouraging international students to learn American culture as a way of learning English, it actually worked out for the best as our class used culture and community as a starting point for delving deeper into what those terms mean to each of us and how they shape our worldview—which made it easier to introduce service learning once students explained the value of their own culture to the class. ...

*I found this quote during my research on reciprocity that really resonated with me because of its focus on both reciprocity and the assets that community members are. It says, “The reciprocal nature of these learning encounters resonates strongly with the notion of asset-based approaches to service learning, which promote respect for community members as capable agents and partners rather than ‘people in need of being saved’ (Molnar, 2010, p. 11)” (Thompson, Ruthmann, Anttila, & Doan, 2014, p. 13).*

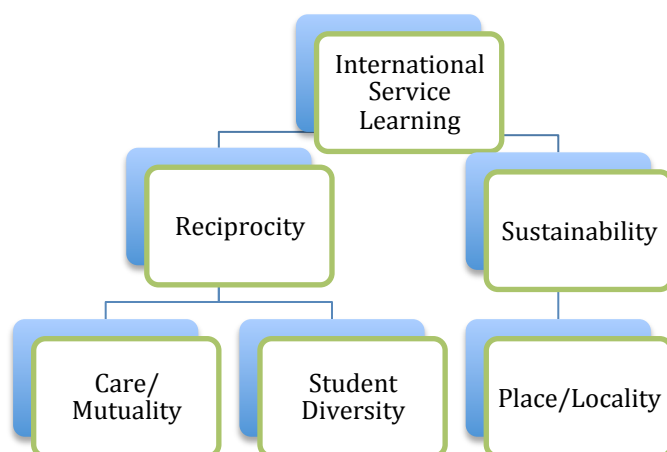
*I have been reading a lot of research on reciprocity within service learning while teaching this Community Participation course. At first, I was a little nervous about finding anything new to focus my research on because so many scholars are discussing the importance of reciprocal programs. I wholeheartedly agree with them, and while their work is useful to me as I attempt to implement reciprocity into this course, agreeing with them will not potentially contribute anything new to the field and will not provide me with a very useful dissertation project. Anyway, after reading for a couple of weeks, I noticed that a lot of the research on*



*reciprocity states that the community members need to be treated as equal partners in the project. It has been noted that many service programs are unsuccessful in promoting true reciprocity because those coming from the university often have their needs met first, or even over those in the community period. I definitely agree, but here is where I first noticed a gap in the research. What if the community members are in a position of power over the students? In the case of our course, my students come from different countries, speak with an accent different to the American community members, and speak English as an additional language rather than as their “native” language like the community members they are working with. In fact, many community members we worked with asked the students if they understood what was being said on an almost daily basis. So the question I am left with now is how does reciprocity work within these dynamics? How do I, as the instructor, implement reciprocity between community members and students in a way that allows for mutual learning and understanding among different languages, cultures, and countries?*

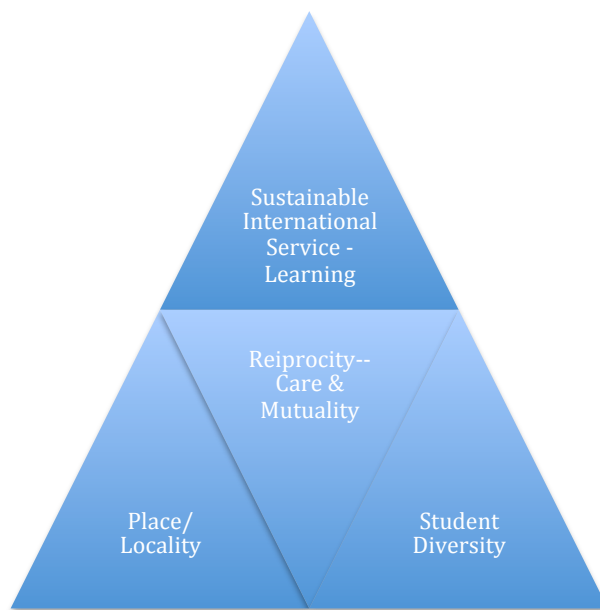
...

As I look back now, I know that the link between reciprocity and locality, at least in this research, is more than just attempting to have two sides to sustainable international service-learning. Remember in the beginning of this project that I had created a figure depicting the terms used in this study and how they related to each other. In this figure, reciprocity and sustainability were two separate pillars that, when put together, created new and “better” international service learning theory and pedagogy. This figure is represented below:



*Figure 3.* The relationship between my key terms.

However, after much study of my teaching evolution, and the evolution of this project, I see a much more sophisticated relationship(s) between these terms that requires more unpacking before further discussion of locality. Therefore, the new figure I see is here:



*Figure 4.* A redefined relationship between my key terms.

My readers may be asking why I would continue to discuss reciprocity at the beginning of my chapter on locality, and the reason I am doing so is reflected above. I no longer see them as two

distinct terms that, on their own, can contribute to greater sustainable international service-learning. No, in order for them to contribute to greater sustainability, they must work together. Therefore, reciprocity between community members and students must be met in order to meet the goal of greater sustainability, and reciprocity must also be present in order for students, the instructor, and community members to truly make connections with the location and allow them to learn from each other and each other's experiences. I especially noticed this when members of the community garden were very helpful in trying to make those connections with, and for, the Community Participation Workshop students.

*October 2014*

*As I was standing near the tables at the Community Garden taking pictures of my students harvesting vegetables, pulling weeds, moving mulch, and watering plants, Kay walked up to me and asked, "Would your class be interested in working with an Anthropology class coming to the garden for their service hours for the next few weeks? It is a class focused on diversity, so they would love the chance to work with international students." I told her I would talk to the class that day and email her before 5pm. When we were back in our classroom that day, I asked the students, and they excitedly said yes. When I asked them what they hoped for most out of the experience, one of the students said, "I want to ask them why they volunteer. It is fun, and I have learned a lot, but what made them want to start?" I smiled at the student's enthusiasm and hoped that this was an opportunity for all of the students, both U.S. based and international, to learn from each other.*

...

*"We don't have this type of plant in Japan although we do have a garden at home. My dad is growing carrots, too. Do you have a garden?"*

*“No, my family just goes to the store for produce, or we might buy from the farmer’s market in the summer.”*

*“What is a farmer’s market?”*

*“It is a place for local farmers and gardeners to sell their fresh produce every week. There is one really close to here. I will have to find out the date and time, but maybe we can go there next week together?”*

*“Yes, that would be great. The store doesn’t always have the freshest vegetables.”*

...

Researchers have noted the discrepancy between white students, and minority students—specifically black students—within international service-learning programs. Acquaye and Crewe (2012), who are social workers at Howard University in Cape Town, South Africa, developed an international service-learning program aimed at encouraging minority student participation after noticing the lack of diversity within such programs. They state, “The social work profession has a long standing commitment to human rights and social justice, bridging the divide between national and international interests...yet international experiences are not within the grasp of nor embraced by all” (p. 763). As I have already noted, there has been little research done on international service- learning that focuses on international students in a U.S.-based program. As a result, a focus on interactions between international students and U.S.-based students is appropriate because, in order to be effective, international service-learning must be more diverse. Acquaye and Crewe go on to say that :

The practice of learning in the community through means of service has transformed continuously to meet the needs of both the academic arena and the community at large.

The move to add an international component to the service-learning model has been

beneficial to participants on multiple levels. ‘International contexts are likely to foster a greater problem-solving and critical thinking on the part of students due to the ways in which culture, language, religion, and beliefs are under constant challenge in foreign settings’” (Berry, 1990, pp. 304-305) (p. 769).

As I listened to the two female students interacting as they were pulling weeds, I was struck by how easily their conversation was going, and I was thankful that the Anthropology class had jumped right in with my students and were even making friends with them. While I only showed part of the students’ conversation, I did overhear some interesting talk about the different cultures (even among my international students), which was evidence of students’ abilities and interests in making connections with their current location. I don’t know why I was so surprised—it may have to do with the fact that I was too hesitant to make connections with the community myself at first, and I just assumed my students would do the same. However, my students truly wanted to make connections with Indiana, and when given the opportunity, they were very willing to work in and with the community, even when they themselves missed home.

*During the second week of class in the Fall 2014 semester, I asked my students to begin the class by freewriting about what the word home means to them. I asked them to describe their home including what type of community they felt their home was part of. I gave the students fifteen minutes to write about their topic and then they were asked to share if they felt comfortable. I also wrote for fifteen minutes about what the word home means to me. Before I discuss what we as a class talked about that day, I will share what I wrote during our freewriting exercise:*

*What does the word home mean to me? Home is where my family is. Home is where my dogs greet me when I come home from work and where I can be myself with no fear of being*

*labeled as a weirdo. More specifically, home for me is still in California. In little Escalon, California with a population of 7,000 and a greater focus on football than anything else. Home for me is the two-story house on the corner of Ullrey and Swanson with the ambulance building behind us and my childhood friends down the street. It is the place where I first learned to ride a bike, where I got the letter saying I was accepted to IUP, and was a place where I always wanted to leave (because it was so small), but I never thought I actually would. It is not lost on me that I moved to another rural, small town—this time in Pennsylvania. No matter what else I have learned, home is that house I have lived in since I was nine months old.*

...

*Now keep in mind that I just asked my students to define home as they see it. I did not ask them to focus on a childhood home or anything of that sort. So, it was very interesting to me that there were such a wide variety of definitions—especially ones so different from my own. Things were said such as: home is Japan; home is in my country with my parents and in walking distance to my grandma; home is my dorm room and here in Indiana; and I don't know where home is—I've traveled too much. Each of these answers shows me that while locality and place are useful and important to international service learning, place is not as well defined for some as it is for others, which makes it more difficult, as well as interesting, to research its affect on international service-learning. However, it is still necessary to conduct this research so that I can aid my students as they contemplate these definitions as much as possible.*

### **Linking Locality and Sustainable International Service-Learning**

You may have noticed a sense of uncertainty about the role of location within international service-learning within my narratives above. I think this was a result of many different factors, including my own understanding of place-based writing, but also because of my

inexperience and misunderstanding of the role of locality and how that role of locality then affects place-based writing. However, I am happy to say that those narratives represent an important journey I have taken in this book, one in which has allowed me to better understand myself as I study the affect of location on life in general down to language specifically. Especially since I am working primarily with international students, and I myself have now lived in three different states within the last three years, I am trying to better understand how the focus on locality can help us better understand ourselves, the communities in which we work, and the future places we hope to impact through service-learning. Therefore, through my research, and through my own experience, I know that there is a link between sustainable international service-learning and locality. The rest of this chapter is dedicated to analyzing that link(s) and suggestions for fostering the focus on locality within international service-learning programs.

When referring to location, I am borrowing heavily from Pennycook (2011) and Thrift (2007). Pennycook (2011) links language explicitly with location in his book *Language as a Local Practice*. He states:

A discussion of language in place will open up an understanding of the interactive nature of our physical environments, suggesting not so much that language happens in particular places, but rather that language use is part of a multifaceted interplay between humans and the world. What we do with language in a particular place is a result of our interpretation of that place; and the language practices we engage in reinforce that reading of place. What we do with language within different institutions – churches, schools, hospitals – for example, depends on our reading of these physical, institutional, social and cultural spaces (p. 2).

Therefore, the idea of locality within an international service-learning writing classroom suggests that how we reflect on the places we have been to says something about our views on that particular place. Furthermore, those views have been shaped by our own location (home communities) and has aided how we see the world. Therefore, our language and our identity can be linked with the place we call home. Pennycook goes on to say, “The ways in which we think about the local, therefore, should not be considered only in terms of embeddedness in time and place, but also in relational terms: The local is always defined in relation to something else regional, national, global, universal, modern, new, from elsewhere” (p. 4). Therefore, since the local is always defined in relation to something else, pairing locality with international service-learning allows connections to be made with other communities as students are looking to compare Indiana with what they are used to. This comparison can allow for growth as students (as well as everyone else involved in the service) learn to make these connections.

Like Pennycook, Thrift’s non-representational theory presents “a distinctive approach to the politics of everyday life. Ranging across a variety of the spaces in which politics and the political unfold, it questions what is meant by perception, representation and practice, with the aim of valuing the fugitive practices that exist on the margins of the known” (p. 1). This focus on space and place is also prevalent in composition research. Mahala and Swilky (2003), state:

It is not enough to merely focus on representation because a built environment is always more than either its sensuous local character or blueprint. That is, not only do built environments mean something; they also mediate the activity of people, patterning movement, connecting groups near and far, creating possibilities of visibility, social contact, and privacy (p. 294).



Therefore, the role of focusing on locality within international service-learning is two fold: 1. It allows participants to make connections between other locations (such as their home communities) and 2. It provides the platform for discussing those connections based on the different spaces students find themselves in. As a result, within this international service-learning course, the connection between locality and our class became evident within the students writing projects, which all focused on making connections between Indiana and their home communities. As a result, I see a direct correlation between focusing on locality in the service classroom and the adoption of place-based writing as well.

### **Place in Composition: The Role of Writing Focused on Locality**

*March 2014*

*I have been awake for almost 28 hours as of now. We landed in St. Petersburg about three hours ago, and it took us almost two hours to get a taxi and drive to our hotel. They told us we are about an hour away from the city now. All I could see when I got out of the van was a lot of trees and a few of the hotel buildings. I have already noticed so many differences here. One that was particularly jarring for me was stepping off the plane and hearing nothing but people speaking Russian. I have been out of the country before, but for some reason, this was different (maybe it is because I was/am sleep deprived). The hotel we are staying at has many different buildings. We sleep in one, eat in another, and meet for English class in another one down the trail. It's cold here, but there is no snow, and I have been told that I will not see any bears—I really have no idea what that comment was about—I wasn't expecting to see any. We had a brief team meeting, ate dinner, and now we are in our rooms. They let us go to sleep early because most of us could hardly keep our eyes open during the meeting. I got ready for bed, and now I am lying down in a small cot-type bed that smells a little funky. We were told not to drink the water—our Russian friends won't even do that. I am so tired...I really hope I can sleep and that I*

*don't wake up at 3am tomorrow. I am also so excited, and I feel really comfortable, which is so strange, because if you know me, you know I am usually homesick the moment I get ready for bed in a new place. I wonder if I will like it here. I sure hope so. I hope I learn a lot while I am here.*

...

The field of composition encourages pedagogy that is student-centered and focuses on engaging students through a variety of methods. Throughout the years, composition studies have included ecocomposition, service-learning, and other pedagogies intended to bring change to our world through writing (Cushman, 1998; Hurlbert, 2012; Owens, 2001). Through student-centered theory, researchers have realized that students desire to be heard, and by being heard, students may just be the advocates for this change the field of composition promotes. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that we focus on communication for change within the field of composition and even more than that, the world itself. The news, on a global scale, shows a world that is encompassed with violence, famine, global warming, and other major issues. Since English is a world-used language, it is even more important for the field of composition to develop theory that includes international writing pedagogy and the implementation of writing around the world for change. The ability to communicate through writing is extremely powerful, and everyone deserves the opportunity to develop his or her literacy skills. Communication for change starts when educators realize that students have something important to say and that what they say can lead to this desired change. Therefore, it is my hope that international service-learning builds bridges between cultures, classes, and countries and that we learn to work together and change our world through writing (as I hoped at the end of my narrative above).

In order to do so, change must start from within our students and their passions through reflective service-learning that extends well beyond students' classrooms and societies.

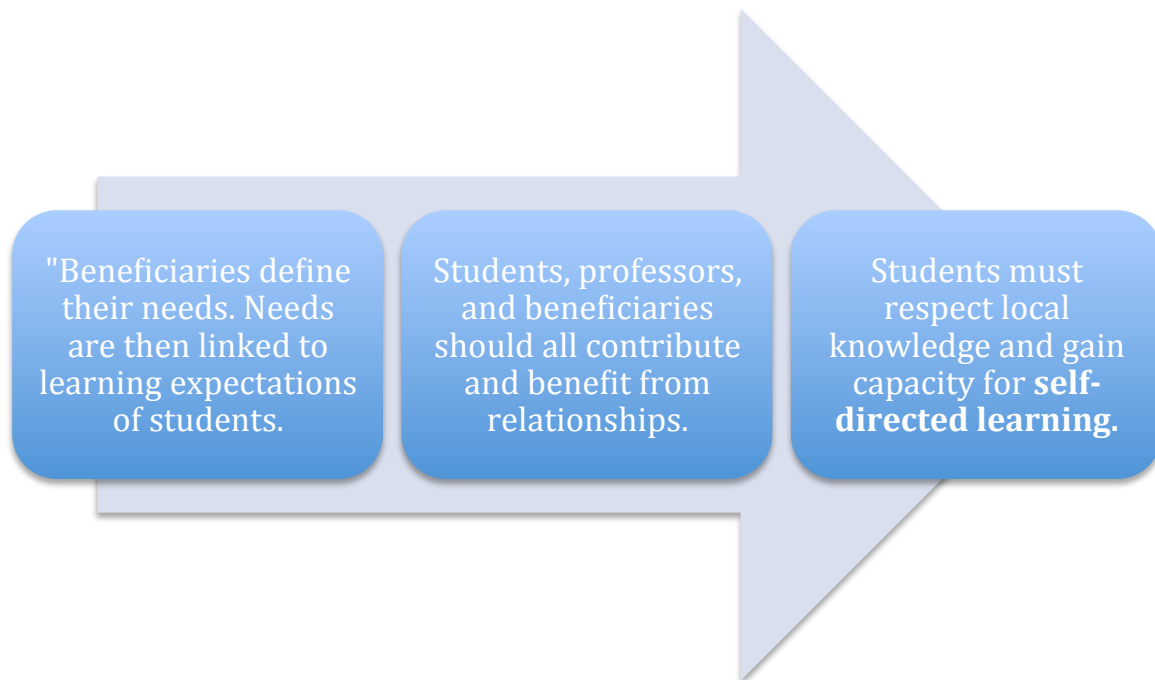
The field of composition has gone through many changes over the years. As the field has changed, new aspects of writing, or what it means to be a writer, have become the focus. However, it was not until the post-process movement that theories of place were seriously considered, and even more so, how students engage with their community in order to inform their writing on many different levels. The focus on community present in service-learning comes from the theory of place-based pedagogy. Composition researchers have established the value of understanding one's relationship to place in and through writing/literacy over the years (Cooper, 1986; Cushman, 1998; Mauk, 2003; Owens, 2001). Place-based pedagogy encourages students to examine "networks of relationships" in order to understand and reflect upon relationships in their environments and the power that is exercised within said relationships (*Relations*, p. 174). Marilyn Cooper (1986) suggests that focusing on the writer as solitary encourages him to direct writing to a "hostile other" (p. 184). Instead, she proposes seeing an ecology of writing that spans more than the writer and his immediate context, which leads her to state the need to explore how writers interact to form systems (p. 187). In the same regard, Jonathon Mauk (2003) investigates the issue of third space and how this real and imagined place designed for intellectual-social action can aid students in their investment of college courses (p. 201). In order to conceive of this third space, students and instructors must view life outside the classroom as academic, or ripe for learning opportunities, as well. In essence, instructors must meet students where they are at now. Even more so, the student must understand the relationship between the function of the classwork in relation to the student's place in the community. This type of learning was especially useful in our interactions with the community organizations, and

in particular, with the community garden because the garden staff really wanted to teach our class about sustainability. Since I was researching the link between locality and sustainable international service-learning, I excitedly agreed and watched as the garden workers explained the garden's sustainable practices while also allowing students to help and ask questions. The garden workers also asked students about sustainable practices in their own contexts, which helped solidify the learning material. This coincides with research on space-centered English language learning, which focuses on where learning occurs as much as what learning occurs. Brown and Long (2006) state, "If learning occurs everywhere, and it is our contention that it does, then we need to re-examine the role of classrooms and their relationship to other learning spaces as loci for learning" (qtd. in Kurt & Kurt, 2013, p 76). Therefore, service-learning can be viewed as an attempt to bridge the academic classroom with the community in which the student belongs. The space within which a student performs his or her service can become the third space through the understanding a student gains of place and community through the experience. The goal of service-learning is to move students from a strictly personal, individualistic view into a more social view—one that acknowledges the structural injustices present in society (Herzberg, 1994). So, place-based pedagogy enhances service-learning as students learn how they relate to their communities through the service and subsequent critical reflection.

Unfortunately, within the field of composition, there have only been a few articles written about sustainable service programs. However, researchers like Ellen Cushman (2002) have determined ways for service programs to be sustainable in both the university and community setting. Cushman states that in order for a service-learning program to be sustainable, the instructor must be present at the service site with the students because service-learning programs

are often tied to one or a few faculty members. Furthermore, programs must be sustainable in such a way that they can be fully operative whether the creator of the program remains at its location or not. Even more so, service-learning theory can be more sustainable as it looks at the roles of the instructor, students, and community as a whole instead of just the students or members of the community, as is often the case in current service learning research. Cushman also states, “Professors in service learning courses can better sustain these initiatives when they view the community site as a place where their research, teaching, and service contribute to community needs and students’ learning” (p. 41). Therefore, the goal of sustainable service-learning is to enrich the lives of all the people involved in the program instead of becoming a site for meeting the instructor’s research or teaching goals above all else. Robert Sigmon (2000) argues:

that the best of these service-learning opportunities have three characteristics in common: (1) “Beneficiaries” define their needs, which are then linked to learning expectations for students. The individuals, communities, or agencies seeking assistance should define their needs and requests and then enter into dialogue with the professors and students to match their needs to student’s interventions. (2) All involved are learners and teachers as well as servers and served. The students, professors, and beneficiaries should all be both contributing and benefiting from the relationships. (3) Students are challenged to both learn and contribute. They must respect the local knowledge and culture, listen and explore as well as share from their emerging capacity, and gain increased capacity for self-directed learning.



*Figure 5.* Beneficiaries of service-learning.

Overall, the goal of sustainable service-learning is to promote learning and understanding within a community in order to develop progressive action and engagement from both the community and students involved in the process. Since service projects are developed within a particular community, it is important that members of the community, and resources applicable to the community's context, are utilized in order to promote the value and importance of the community's place without changing the inherent structure of the community itself. Therefore, most studies state that long-term projects are ideal because they promote sustainability as the community members and project staff members work together to enact change that is lasting and developed over time (Crabtree, 2013; Ver Beek, 2002). However, long-term projects are not always feasible in international service-learning, which is why further research needs to be conducted on implementing sustainable service-learning—even if students are only available for one semester. Overall, international service-learning can be applied to the field of composition,

especially in its role in promoting sustainability through writing, which can be further explored through ecocomposition. Now, before I begin focusing on ecocomposition, I have to remind you that focusing on the need for sustainability because of environmental issues was not my ultimate goal in this research, but I still turn to ecocomposition because the subfield deals directly with looking at how place affects writing and learning, as well as the fact that sustainable international service-learning programs must not do harm to the environment in order to be considered sustainable.

As a subfield of composition, ecocomposition promotes writing for environmental change and awareness, as well as interdisciplinary learning that is both relevant and needed in international service-learning. Dobrin and Weisser (2002) state, “Ecocomposition’s focus on discourse takes in more than just textual interpretation; it looks at discourse as the most powerful, indeed, perhaps the only, tool for social and political change” (p. 26). Since social and politic awareness that leads to change (Freire’s praxis) is a goal of service-learning, it is even more important that students focus on discourse that enables this change within environmental contexts. Furthermore, Dobrin and Weisser state, “Ecocomposition identifies that nature is a text, not only a text that we may learn and read, but one we may write, or more precisely, one we may write in, on, with, or about” (p. 52). So, the goal of applying ecocomposition to the writing classroom is to bring an awareness of nature to the students—whether that be a desire to know how their place effects their writing or how writing about their place could lead to change.

Composition researchers have established the value of understanding one’s relationship to place in and through writing/literacy over the years. Raill Jayanandhan (2009) states, “Place does not only refer to physical landscapes, landmarks, buildings, towns, cities, and ecologies; place is also differentiated from space by the meanings it signifies for people (individual

emotional bonds, positive and negative) and societies (social constructions, positive and negative) (p. 104). Therefore, place involves much more than the physical area that a person calls home. While a focus on place within writing practices is not a new development within the field of composition, place's role in sustainability is a continually-needed research topic, as well as its role in service-learning programs. Derek Owens (2001) states, "...because students are genuinely interested in learning about each other's communities... an awareness of sustainability cannot exist without a developing awareness of the conditions and limitations of one's immediate environment" (p. 37). Therefore, place is important for students to understand in order to make their writing meaningful to themselves and to the specific audience and environment in which they are writing. However, research on place has often warned instructors that a focus on the local may be too narrow in order to truly benefit the environment world-wide. Owens states, "As educators we pride ourselves on teaching something called critical thinking, but often at the cost of promoting local thinking" (p. 75). In order to promote thinking that surpasses the local, research has suggested that instructors focus on a more global agenda while also focusing on the local. As already mentioned, Marilyn Cooper (1986) suggests that focusing on the writer as solitary encourages him to direct writing to a "hostile other" (p. 184). In my opinion, a lack of global awareness can also create a "hostile other," which is why I see the benefit of using place-based writing as a platform to then think more globally thereafter. A student should know the value of his or her own place, but they should also be able to have understanding on a national level as well. Therefore, it is by this need to focus on an international perspective that I derive the international service-learning pedagogy that I uphold in my classroom. Finally, Raill Jayanandhan (2009) states that "in a mobile and globalized world, we would do well to share the skills and strategies of learning about place with students: to make place-based learning



portable” (p. 110). Therefore, place-based pedagogy must become portable, as well as international, in order to truly promote international exchange among students.

### **When You Succeed and Fail at the Same Time**

I realize that studying the successes and failures of implementing a focus on locality in an international service-learning course is a little more difficult to do than in the previous chapter when I analyzed effective and ineffective uses of reciprocity in my classroom. However, I do have one particular case that gave me greater insight into the effectiveness of implementing this focus. I detail it below in order to then provide further suggestions for better implementation in future courses.

I had one female student from Taiwan who was faithful to come to class almost every week (aside from the week I had no one show up), and when she could not make it to class, she was responsible to email me she would not be in class. She was productive in class, and she was always one of the first students to try to make connections between the Indiana Community and her home. She had also studied in England for a while, so she often shared with the class the connections she saw there as well. During the second week of class in our Fall semester, I asked the students to do some research on places we could conduct service at within the community. I had a running list, but I wanted to see what they came up with as well. This student, Ann<sup>14</sup>, came back with a list of four places, including one she really wanted to serve at: the theatre on campus at IUP. They had positions for ushers all throughout the semester, and she had already signed up for a spot. She said she loved theatre and music, and couldn't wait to get started. She was also the only student to join the class both semesters. She was diligent in her work and did not miss any of the assignments during the entire two semesters. In fact, when I assigned the two weeks of

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<sup>14</sup> The student's name has been changed for her protection.

individual service (before the final week of class, which was a presentation day on what they learned throughout the semester), she brought back detailed journal entries and a signed paper from her boss saying she had been present. Her final presentations were thoughtful and well-done, and at the end of the Spring semester, when she was due to return home in June, she said that she was already researching places she could serve at. She really made me want to continue this line of teaching because I could tell she was making connections and that she was enjoying what she was doing. She was my best-case scenario (and even then, I had so much to learn and improve upon). However, she was one of the only ones to finish her individual work, and in the Spring semester, she was one of three that showed up for the final presentation (there were 15 in my class). So, how could I seemingly succeed and fail at the same time? And what did Ann have that the other students didn't (if anything)? It was frustrating having one student very involved, some involved in certain areas, and some who really just wanted to use the class as a fun way to learn about the community.

### **Suggestions for Future Courses**

You may be asking me how I could research how to implement sustainable international service-learning when my course was not self-sustaining. I was the only instructor who taught the course, and I left before training anyone else. However, I was asked to write a detailed report on the course and my suggestions for improving it the next semester. I did so, and I recently heard back from one of the administrators that there are going to offer the course in the fall 2016 semester. So while my goal of creating a sustainable international service-learning course was not entirely met, I still learned very valuable information about teaching international service-learning in the writing classroom that can inform better sustainable practices in the future. After

analyzing my experiences and the current research on locality, I have come away with ideas for implementing this theory more successfully. Those suggestions are:

1. Design the course focusing on the local community,
2. Learn about the community and befriend local organizations,
3. Allow students to be part of a community-wide project, and
4. Encourage connections between different service courses.

Each of these suggestions were ways our course was able to focus on location successfully, and when the suggestions are used together, there is a much greater chance for sustainability because of the layers of responsibility within a project. For example, our class worked with the Indiana Community Garden—a local organization that we learned about and befriended—and became part of a community-wide project, which was the Seedling Project that I discussed earlier. This project was a fundraiser that paired IUP, the ALI, the community garden, local farmers, and the food bank in town together to aid the community with better food choices. The IUP biology department aided farmers as they chose the best seeds to include in the project, while the anthropology department (and the cultural diversity class we worked with) and our Community Participation Workshop worked together to sort seeds and put all the packets together. What makes this design more conducive to sustainability is, once again, the layering of responsibility. Every class had was responsible for a different part of the project; however, if one class was unable to finish their part, another could take over if necessary. Therefore, the project would not fall through because there were enough people and classes to handle the workload.

I know that I mention the Indiana Community Garden quite frequently in this book, but I do so because my class' relationship with this organization, and the fundraiser we helped them with, are reminders that the more an international service-learning course partners with the local community, the more likely it is to have sustainable attributes. Therefore, the suggestions given

above may not work for every course, but they can hopefully be adapted for different needs. The more a class can integrate with local organizations and aid in projects that are ongoing, the more that class will be able to make connections with the local as well—as opposed to going to new organizations week after week with no connections. Since the above literature states that connections will be made with the local and something else, such as home community or global perspective (Pennycook, 2010; Thrift, 2007), it is important that students be given the opportunity to make those connections in the local community. In order to give students those opportunities, the entire course—from the assignment to the service project—must be focused on the local. Yes, the idea is to get students to make connections with their home communities, but in order to be successful, the course must use its resources, which happen to be in the local community. Which brings me to the most important point: learn from the community and befriend them. Our class would not have learned half as much if we didn't partner with the Indiana Community Garden and learn from their sustainable practices. Partnering with a local organization allows students to take part in community-wide service while also allowing them to consistently learn at one site. Even further more, it allows both the students and the researcher/instructor to be present, which Cushman (2002) and Welch (2002) state is important to reciprocity so that the project members all learn from each other. Finally, as with our course, partnering with the local community also allows for opportunities to partner with other service courses in different disciplines. Our class partnered with an Anthropology course, and they were able to reflect on different aspects of the service and then discuss them in small groups while at the community garden. Overall, taking advantage of the opportunities to learn from the local community will enhance the service-learning course as students are able to learn from community members and make easier connections with the place in their writing.

### **Final Thoughts on Locality**

I mentioned in my final thoughts on reciprocity, that I could write an entire book on reciprocity, and I feel the same way about locality. Actually, it is true—many people have written books on the effect location has on students. ‘Final thoughts’ sounds like an ending, and for the purpose of this book, it is, but my research on locality and sustainable international service-learning is not finished. This chapter has allowed me to explore the link between location and international service-learning in-depth, and has made me realize that, in order to be reciprocal, a service-learning program has to focus on the local community, which also means writing about the local community. Even in an international context, it is important that the local is not forgotten, and I hope that this chapter is the beginning of more research focused on locality and sustainable international service-learning in the future.

## CHAPTER VI

### BEING AND BECOMING AN INTERNATIONAL SERVICE-LEARNING TEACHER

*May 2014*

*Even before my family became Christians in 2004, I was raised to be respectful of others—to do something with my life that was honorable and helped others. I was taught this by both of my parents, who both taught all three of us McKee children that we were not the center of the universe. Now, as I sit in the audience as my brother graduates from Seattle’s Police Academy and gets sworn in as a peace officer, I am once again struck by the idea that we are not the center of the universe. My dad has been a cop for over 22 years now and will retire from Stockton PD soon. All my life, he has taught me about the bravery it takes to run into danger when others are fleeing. He didn’t teach me this through talking to me about bravery. No, I learned through his actions and by experience. I watched him leave for S.W.A.T. calls in the middle of the night, knowing he was walking into an active-shooter situation. I didn’t like him going to work sometimes, but he reminded me that he became a cop, as most did, to protect and serve his community—a community he loves and believes in. As I look up, I see my brother smile at me, and I know it’s the same for him. He is standing in front of us, a rookie cop, because he wants to help the people of Seattle. Honorable. Courageous. Humbling. He recites the Oath of Honor: On my honor, I will never betray my badge, my integrity, my character, or the public trust. I will always have the courage to hold myself and others accountable for our actions. I will always uphold the constitution, my community, and the agency I serve (Oaths of Office). I think to myself: What have I ever done that looks like this? I know for a fact he didn’t go into this occupation because he thought it would be easy. We learned at a young age that it’s a thankless job. I look over at my mom, who is not new to this. Her father was a cop, her husband is a cop,*

*and now her son. I look over and watch her face. She looks proud, and she looks like a mom watching her only son enter a dangerous occupation. She looks at me and smiles. I know she worries about him, but I also know she trusts Christ and so does my brother. I face my brother again and watch him try not to smile when he looks at us.*

*Now, as a believer in Christ, I am sitting here thinking about how what you do for a living can make a difference in your community. I just finished the first year of coursework for my doctoral degree, and I sit here wondering how my teaching can make a difference. I really feel that those I come into contact with will have more of an impact on me, but I can still hope that I can bring something to the classroom. No one becomes a cop to destroy life but to save it, just like I hope that no teacher becomes a teacher to squash hope but to encourage it.*

...

*August 2016*

*As I sit here reflecting on that moment at my brother's graduation, I am once again so thankful for the experience of watching my baby brother choose a career that constantly forces him to grow and learn as he interacts with his community (and I know I will feel the same way when my sister graduates from nursing school next year). He taught me a lot in that moment, and in the moments since. For the last two years, I have watched him grow in so many ways and become someone who risks his life to protect the people he swore he would. I was a little leery to share the narrative above (as I have been at times throughout this entire process—but this time for different reasons). I wrote this narrative with no intention of reflecting on the current social and political tensions in the United States, and I almost didn't include it because I didn't even want to go there. However, I am reminded about something my advisor told me recently as we met to discuss my revisions for this book. She told me to stop being so apologetic, and I am doing*

*so here. I am from a third-generation police family. I was raised by a Marine turned police officer and a policeman's daughter. I was raised to respect law enforcement, and I have always seen them as good. In fact, I chose to call them peace officers above because that was the original name given to police officers—or any government agent working in law enforcement. Earlier I said did not want to comment on the social or political happenings in the United States at the time I am writing this book, but again, that is due to my desire to tell you only what I think you need to know for the sake of this research. I want to go further in this analysis here because I do think it is important, and I would like to be the one to say it. There are thousands of police officers in this country. Good, courageous men and women who sacrifice their safety for the good of their communities. It is devastating to me that the media has been able to discount their bravery over the sake of a few recent public cases. Now, I do know that these cases raise questions the country needs to wrestle with; however, to devalue an entire occupation is ridiculous. I believe in the term 'peace officer' because I have seen not only my grandpa, my dad, and my brother serve in this thankless job, but also countless other friends that did not become peace officers for the desire for recognition or the ability to carry a gun, but rather, for the chance to serve and protect as they promised to do.*

*The experiences I have had growing up in this environment have shaped me to be the person I am today, and I am thankful for them. I have watched my family over the years go through heartache and sacrifice because of the job, and I was always reminded to be thankful but never satisfied with where I am (meaning that I always have room to grow as a person). My family made me consider what service actually is, and they also made me wonder why I felt (feel) it is so important. Do I serve because I want recognition or do I serve because I want to help and make some sort of difference in the world around me?*



...

*When I became a Christian, this took on new meaning because the ultimate goal is to grow in Christ-likeness (and I do not even need to say that I am no where near finished). Christ, who is God of this universe, was also a servant and told His followers that they would be recognized as His by how they serve and love each other (John 13). I do not say this lightly. When I say I'm a Christian, I mean much more than this is what I believe. Believing in Christ is who I am and dictates how I live my entire life. Therefore, these experiences, and so much more, have taught me life lessons and have helped shape and grow me into the person, and teacher, I now am. The work is not finished, but I have learned to value learning through experience, which I hope is evident to my readers throughout this entire book.*

### **Learning from Experience**

Learning from experience has always been one of the ways that I learn best, so it is not really a big surprise to me that I would value service-learning pedagogy so much. Service-learning pedagogy relies fully on learning through experience, and as this book has shown, learning is possible through both negative and positive experiences. John Dewey states that not all experiences are worthwhile because we don't always learn from them; therefore, as I conclude this book, I am even more thankful than when I started for the opportunity to study my own teaching and experiences in order to learn and grow from them. I am thankful because a lot of the times when I was reflecting on experiences that occurred at the service sites, I would think to myself that something did not work or it was a waste of time because my students were bored or not participating like I would have liked them to, etc. Now, as I look back at all of these different experiences and analyze them through an experiential learning lens, I can see that even those experiences I thought were negative were learning opportunities, which means they are still

worthwhile (according to Dewey). Therefore, I leave the reader with one final chapter dedicated to interweaving the theories dealt with in previous chapters with narratives and a discussion about my evolution as a means of seeing how far I've come, as well as how far I still have to go.

Overall, as I finish this book, I am struck by the fact that there is still so much more to research. I have said before in this book that I think, on some level, I thought writing about my experiences would be easy, and it sure has not been! Even now, as I move toward analyzing all of this information and concluding this book, I am not quite sure how to do so because my narrative is still ongoing. This chapter, by far, has taken me the longest to write because I keep warring with how to end it. I have to remember that this is a small ending of sorts, but in reality, it is also a beginning. A beginning to my career and a beginning to research I will continue to conduct for as long as I can. With this focus, it is easier for me to look at this concluding chapter as an analysis that summarizes this study and looks forward to the next. As a result, in this chapter, I focus on what I have learned, specifically by analyzing how my teaching philosophy has evolved from my time working in the Community Participation Workshop, followed by a narrative account of my teaching evolution paired with my analysis using current research in order to conclude this study. It is my hope that this concluding discussion further enriches this study in theory and allows the readers to see the potential benefits of implementing international service-learning that focuses on greater sustainability within the writing classroom. Now, it is time to look at the evolution present in my teaching philosophy.

## Teaching Philosophy—11/2012<sup>15</sup>:

*My classroom will be student-oriented. The needs of the students will be my first priority, and I will make sure that the classroom environment is open and comfortable. I want my students to be aware that I care for them as individuals and that I want each of them to succeed in my class and in all of their future writing endeavors. In order to promote this caring, I have established policies and assignments that allow for “life moments,” i.e. illnesses, emergencies, etc., while also requiring students to take responsibility for their work in this course in order to succeed. Since I care for my students, I want to give them every opportunity to succeed and improve their writing skills through this course.*

*My goal as a writing instructor is to provide the necessary instruction in order for my students to gain proficiency in the use of Standard Written English. My approach to writing instruction is based prevalently upon the notion that students will need writing in many facets of their lives and that the type of writing used will be dependent upon who is reading the work. As a result, my classroom will be one that focuses on the development of the awareness of audience and purpose in writing. With that said, I also want to foster critical thinking skills as a foundation for good writing. Therefore, in my composition course, I aim to provide a classroom environment that aids students as they contemplate audience, purpose, and genre through critical reading, thinking, and writing in regard to their own work and others, so they can become active and responsible members of the university and society.*

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<sup>15</sup> I originally wrote this teaching philosophy in a class for teaching first-year composition at CSU Stanislaus. I had not taught writing yet, and I worked primarily as a writing tutor at this time. This philosophy has been updated in recent years, but I did not keep the dates. Also, the last time I updated this teaching philosophy was before I entered the graduate program at IUP in the August of 2013. It is outdated, but I share because it is the only philosophy I have ever written besides the current one below.

*Since critical thinking is such a vital skill, it is important that it is implemented in a variety of different class exercises so that it can become meaningful to the different types of students in my classroom. Since I am predominately an ESL instructor, I adhere to Ausubel's Meaningful Language Theory, as well as Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. The combination of these two principles allows me to build off of information already learned by the students in a way to make the new material useful and meaningful, while also teaching in a way that provides opportunities for students from different learning intelligences to learn the material as well. For example, a student who is more of a visual learner may do better with visual examples, while the student who is more dominantly a linguistic learner will do better in a lecture as he or she writes down notes. Each of these students are important, as well as their dominate learning styles, so it is important that I incorporate different activities that can appeal to my wide range of students.*

...

For some reason, rereading this teaching philosophy reminds me of the time when I saw a video of myself from my first season of travel volleyball in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. I think I was a sophomore in high school when I watched the video, and I remember laughing so hard as I watched my ten-year-old self confidently set up for a serve before hitting it under the net...not even into the net...under it. As a sophomore playing travel and high school volleyball, I laughed because I could tell just by watching the video that I had thrown the ball too low and too far in front of me. I had terrible form—even though I looked like I thought I was going to ace the serve. Was I a perfect server as a sophomore now? Of course not, but I had practiced for five years and definitely could make it over the net now. So why does this teaching philosophy remind me of my first season of travel volleyball? Because I sound like I know what I'm doing, or even

attempting to do, when I have absolutely no clue. I was twenty-two years old when I wrote this philosophy and in my first semester of graduate school (for my Master's degree). I had only team-taught a beginning English course to international students that focused on vocabulary development up until this point. It should also be noted that I was still really unsure of myself as a teacher, and I let my co-teacher take lead on almost all teaching days. I had zero experience teaching English composition, but I still tried to develop a philosophy I could use in the English writing classroom.

I do not want to say that I was completely wrong in this philosophy. I see hints of my current teaching philosophy taking shape here, such as my desire to show my students I care for them and that I want my classroom to be student-oriented, but there are a lot of areas present in this document that show me how far I had come even before teaching the Community Participation Workshop. As an example, I say that I care about my students, yet I say that I need to teach them Standard Written English as a means of preparing them for the academic writing they will be doing at the university level. At this time, I still did not quite understand that I wanted to work against this rhetoric—this “standard” English that marginalizes certain people. In my mind, preparing students to right in this way was giving them a chance at succeeding. Jeff Frank states, “We need to understand the potential for conflicts between truth and privilege, and see the difficulty of accepting a truth that destabilizes our status and threatens the benefits that follow from that status” (p. 365). In my mind, at this time, I was the teacher—I was the knowledge authority (Freire, 1970). Yes, I wanted to show them I cared, but in my eyes, a teacher could be the knowledge authority in the classroom and still be student-oriented. Furthermore, I bought into the notion that there is a Standard English that should be taught and that by teaching this, I really had the students' best interests at heart—thereby perpetuating

language imperialism and marginalization even if I thought I was trying to help (Cushman, 1998; Llurda, 2009). Arrogant and naïve, I know. I do not feel this way anymore, and that has taken four years of research, teaching, and growing for me to get to that point, and I know that I still have so much growing as a teacher to do. However, I do see growth between the two philosophies, so I find it necessary to analyze the progression I see from the initial philosophy to my updated philosophy of teaching.

### **Philosophy of Teaching: Ravyn McKee<sup>16</sup>**

*I am a firm believer in three things: 1. Students respond to what I do as much as what I say; 2. A caring classroom can promote growth (both student and instructor growth); and 3. Experience that is meaningful will make learning more worthwhile to students.*

*My teaching philosophy stems primarily from my desire to let my actions reflect my words and vice versa in the classroom. I have been an instructor who was so fixated on course content that students' needs and experiences were not always taken into consideration even though I said I cared for them as people and that I wanted them to come to me with if they had issues with the course. Because of my past failures to be a caring teaching, my goal as of now is to always utilize students' experiences and always value their needs in my writing classroom. Furthermore, my teaching philosophy also stems from my own experiences as both student and teacher—ones that encouraged my own growth as I learned from others' perspectives while in the classroom. As a result, I would say that my philosophy is a convergence of two main points: an ethic of care as proposed by Nel Noddings and experiential learning as developed by John Dewey.*

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<sup>16</sup> Updated on May 20, 2016

*I chose to adopt an ethic of care in my classroom because “...an ethic of caring prefers acts done out of love and natural inclination. Acting out of caring, one calls on a sense of duty or special obligation only when love or inclination fails” (Noddings, 1988, pg. 219). As a result, I aim to show my students that I care about them first and foremost as fellow human beings and second as students. It is my goal that students understand that I am a facilitator in the classroom, and that they have the opportunity to be teachers just as much as I do. I want to learn from my students as they learn from each other through classroom experiences that are meaningful. Furthermore, it is my goal that my students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives in the classroom because I want them to see the classroom as a safe place where they can use writing to project their voices. Using experiential learning as a foundational theory for my writing pedagogy furthers my desire to promote care in the classroom because experiential learning begins with the knowledge the students already possess and then moves from there. Dewey states “When we experience something we act upon it, we do something with it; then we suffer or undergo the consequences...the connection of these two phases of experience measures the fruitfulness or value of the experience... the measure of value of an experience lies in the perception of relationships or continuities to which it leads up” (John Dewey, Experience and Education, pg. 31). In order to be truly caring, and successful in my own eyes, I must meet the students where they are now, and I must allow for varying opinions and perspectives to permeate the classroom discussions.*

*Therefore, it is vital that my classroom be student-oriented. The needs of the students will be my first priority, and I will make sure that the classroom environment is open and comfortable. I want my students to be aware that I care for them as individuals and that I want each of them to succeed in my class and in all of their future writing endeavors. In order to*

*promote this caring, I have established policies and assignments that allow for “life moments,” i.e. illnesses, emergencies, etc., while also requiring students to take responsibility for their work in our course in order to succeed. Since I care for my students, I want to give them every opportunity to succeed and improve their writing skills through this course.*

*My goal as a writing instructor is to provide the necessary instruction in order for my students to feel comfortable writing at the university level. My approach to writing instruction is based prevalently upon the notion that students will need writing in many facets of their lives and that the type of writing used will be dependent upon who is reading the work. As a result, my classroom will be one that focuses on the development of the awareness of audience and purpose in writing. With that said, I also want to foster critical thinking skills as a foundation for good writing, and as a means for knowing when it is appropriate for students to deviate from the normative genre with the intent of showing creativity of mastery over their writing. Therefore, in my composition course, I aim to provide a classroom environment that aids students as they contemplate audience, purpose, and genre through critical reading, thinking, and writing in regard to their own work and others, so they can become active and responsible members of the university and society. Furthermore, my students are assessed based on their growth as writers in these areas from the beginning to the end of the course.*

*Overall, I encourage a critical classroom that allows students to take responsibility for their education seriously. While I will still be seen as the instructor, and while I will make the final decisions about assignments, attendance, etc., I do want my students to focus on their places in the university and society. I want them to become responsible students who take charge of their education, and I want them to have an outlet of expressing their opinions in their writing. While I encourage self-reflecting, honest, and informal writing in the students’ journals, I would*



*also like to give them a strong research foundation that will aid them as they continue in the university and beyond. It is my greatest desire to provide a course that enables my students to become the best critical thinkers that they can be in order to make them aware of the world around them through reading and writing.*

### **When I See Progress**

Now, if I am being honest, my one-page teaching philosophy ends at the sentence that says, “In order to be truly caring, and successful in my own eyes, I must meet the students where they are now, and I must allow for varying opinions and perspectives to permeate the classroom discussions.” This is the page I send if employers want to see my teaching philosophy, so why did I include the rest? I included the rest because it was my original teaching philosophy, and now that I better understand what I am trying to do in the classroom as a teacher, I can include a revision of that part of my teaching philosophy as well. This updated version of my teaching philosophy was developed through experience. Part of the problem with my first version was that fact that I had never taught writing before, and I just assumed it would be like teaching vocabulary. I was wrong. In *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey states:

We get so thoroughly used to a kind of pseudo-idea, a half perception, that we are not aware how half-dead our mental action is, and how much keener and more extensive our observations and ideas would be if we formed them under conditions of a vital experience which required us to use judgment: to hunt for the connections of the thing dealt with (p. 110).

In order to truly know more about the kind of writing teacher I wanted to be, I actually had to start teaching. Once I did, I knew that I wanted my students to learn from experience and that I wanted them to teach each other, and me, through experience as well. As I continued to develop

this desire to teach from experience, care and critical thinking fell into place much better than they did in my original philosophy. I learned that care and critical thinking could not truly be expressed in a classroom environment developed using my original philosophy because true caring allows for critical thinking that would expose the marginalization present in a “Standard English” classroom (Freire, 1974; Noddings, 1988). Once again, I learned this through the experience of trying to implement care theory into my writing classroom. Dewey goes on to say that “An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance” (p. 110). For me, this is why my teaching philosophy has changed so much in the last four years. Through experience teaching writing and teaching service-learning, I have seen the value in treating students as a knowledge authority and allowing them to make connections with the community as they critically reflect on the learning material. I am glad that I included both of these teaching philosophies in my teaching evolution because that is exactly what they show: they show the progression of thinking I have to have all the answers in the classroom to the freeing thought: No, I don’t! Through my research, and practice, of focusing on sustainable international service-learning through a definition of reciprocity through care and mutuality, as well as locality, I have arrived at a place where I have learned/am learning the value of learning with and from my students. Therefore, in this next section, I analyze in greater detail my teaching evolution in conjunction with what it means for an international service-learning course to be sustainable.

### **A Teacher’s Evolution**

The goal of this book was to examine my evolution as an international service-learning instructor who attempted/is attempting to redefine reciprocity through the implementation of care and mutuality theories, as well as focusing on the effect locality has on the project participants in

order to provide suggestions for service program improvement (especially in the case of program sustainability). We have already discussed at length the role(s) of care and mutuality, as well as locality in sustainable service-learning programs, and we have already discussed suggestions and ways of improvement for future programs, and now it is time to explicitly discuss the effect this study has had on me as a student, researcher, instructor, and even as a human being. As I hope the reader can see from my above teaching philosophies, I have evolved a lot over the past few years as a teacher, and while I have not always been successful in meeting my teaching goals, I have learned that it is much more important to me to focus on creating a reciprocal, sustainable service classroom than it is for me to make sure my students are proficient in Standard Written English (as I had thought was so important before). I can attest to the fact that this growth is a direct result of attempting to implement sustainable international service-learning through a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on locality. Doing so has allowed me to see the need for reciprocity between me and my students in any course that I teach, and it has given me even more of a desire to continue evolving as an instructor so that I can continually learn how to better meet the needs of my students. Overall, focusing on my two teaching philosophies above has shown me that I have not only grown as a teacher but also in how I think about teaching and in my ideology concerning the role of the teacher in the classroom as well.

...

*I started this doctoral program in August of 2013 at twenty-three years old with under a year of actual classroom teaching experience. Even more than that, I was young, relatively shy, and convinced I got in based on an error within IUP's English department. The thought of writing a dissertation terrified me—I had not had to write a thesis or defend one for my Master's degree. In fact, the English Composition students in my Master's program made fun of those of*

*us graduating with a concentration in TESOL because we took an hour-long test that consisted of us defining terms from Krashen's Natural Approach to second language acquisition. They told us our degrees weren't worth anything because we studied for a year and a half and only focused on theories from the 1980's. Their comments stuck with me as I prepared to move across the country to attend school at IUP.*

*I remember my first week of courses. I think I actually showed up to every class 30 minutes early so I wouldn't have to walk into a room full of people, and I sat way in the back (as much as was possible in a seminar with seats around a large table). I was friendly but quiet, and heaven forbid I volunteer any answers to the professors' questions. I remember I had an introduction to research course on Monday, and after I left that course, I know I felt confident that I could handle this program—until Wednesday when I walked into my second language literacy course. The professor told us that we were doctoral students and would be expected to turn in work at that level. He also introduced us to terms and theories we would be working with throughout the semester, and I swear I felt my stomach drop because I didn't know anything he was talking about. All I could keep thinking about were the comments my fellow classmates had made a few months earlier: your degree is worth nothing because you only learned about theories from the 80's. "They're right," I thought. I am going to fail out of this course and out of this program. I sat in class quietly wallowing in self-pity until my professor said, "On to the good stuff. If you will turn the page, we will now look at our presentation requirement and schedule." I did not hear a single word after that because, once I turned, the page, whose name did I see in the box for the first presentation? My own. Of course. And I kid you not, he looked at me and smiled.*

*After class, I called my mom crying that night saying I could not handle being here because the teacher was intimidating, I had a Master's degree in this stuff and knew nothing about what he was talking about, and worst of all, I had to present first in our class—in TWO WEEKS! My sweet mom told me she believed in me, and also lovingly told me I had already spent the money, and I wasn't coming home. I was still really unsure if I could handle the coursework, but I knew I at least had to try. I also knew that, while I might be playing catch-up with a lot of the theory in the classes, my intimidating professor told us on the first day of class that a Master's student thinks he or she knows everything while a doctoral student knows he or she does not. Remembering him saying that gave me a little confidence that maybe other students were feeling overwhelmed like I was.*

*Fast forward two weeks, and I ended up presenting much better than I thought I would (mostly because I practiced for that entire two weeks). I remember standing up there presenting, and my knee was shaking so badly it kept knocking into the podium. I just prayed I wasn't as red as a tomato, but once I finished, I was really glad I went first. I thought to myself, "If this is any indication of what is to come, good luck because you are going to be pushed past what you think you are capable of (and I was right)." I soon realized that this intimidating professor was one of the most helpful I have had throughout my entire academic career. He taught me so many valuable lessons—even how to present professionally in a conference environment. I had presented at conferences before, but it was really helpful learning about all the different roles people assume in academic conferences. I went into my first semester of my doctoral coursework a shy, overwhelmed, and nervous student. While, I wouldn't say that I have overcome those attributes completely, I will say that my time at IUP (as both a student and an instructor), has taught me so much and has allowed me to gain confidence in my teaching and in my learning.*

*Even more so, as I look back now and see where I started three years ago, I am amazed at my development within a short amount of time—largely in part to the rigorous nature of this program and my willingness to learn from all of these experiences.*

...

It probably comes as no surprise that this entire journey that I have documented here in this book stretched me further than I thought possible. When I say relatively shy, I mean it. I am friendly and outgoing once I get to know someone, but for some reason, when you put me in the classroom as a student, I would rather sit quietly than talk out loud. In fact, I am pretty sure I blushed every time I talked in a class discussion. So, it should really be no surprise to my readers that I struggled so much with letting you in in regard to this journey. I have been told multiple times that I am holding back when writing this book, and I know that is true. How many times have I already said in the different chapters of this book that I thought I chose an easy topic? I think, especially in the beginning, I jumped at the thought of analyzing my own teaching practices because that meant that I didn't need other participants in my study, I could analyze my experiences from anywhere (I didn't have to stay in Indiana), and I could get my Ph.D. faster. However, when I did commit to reflective inquiry, I still struggled with what my definition of "rigorous research" looked like—meaning that I struggled with committing to reflective inquiry because I kept thinking that it did not meet the requirements I thought were needed for my research to be taken seriously (i.e. quantitative research). For some reason, I doubted that people would take this book seriously, and so I held back from writing about my journey in a candid manner. I was afraid that this type of study might make it more difficult for me to publish and even eventually get a job. I eventually realized that if I was writing this study solely for a job at the end of it, then why even do it? I did not go to school for a Ph.D. only to get a job—I went

because I wanted to continue growing as a teacher, and that is what I learned most from this time.

I eventually learned that I am not alone in my fear of writing reflective, or narrative, inquiry. In her dissertation, *Trusting Narrative Beyond Theory: One Teacher's Story*, Jennifer McBride (2006) states, “I started this dissertation with a sense of being overwhelmed and the sense that studying stories was a bit too simplistic to fulfill rigorous the academic requirements of a dissertation” (p. 131). She goes on to discuss two events that happened in her life that led her to focus completely on narratives because she had to tell those stories. She continues:

I had been asleep. I knew stories were important because I had studied narrative theory and because my family communicates widely through the use of story, but I didn't really understand the power of a story...believe that I am a different person now—a better colleague, teacher, sister, daughter, and friend—because I know now that stories matter—everyone's stories matter (p. 133).

After reading McBride's work, I learned that I am not the only one that struggles to be vulnerable through narrative work in a dissertation, but I was also reminded of how important stories really are to us as humans. My experiences shape me as a woman, a Christian, a teacher and so much more. Those experiences are important, valuable, and worthy of study so that I can continue growing as a teacher-scholar. This is not the end of my evolution, but I know that I have evolved because I am no longer afraid of my reflection or afraid of my narratives. I value them because they allow me to see how far I have come and how far I still have left to go. I began this journey focused on honesty and transparency as a means of making my research 'rigorous.' However, I learned that honesty is problematic, especially since I did not want to share certain things with my readers. Instead, I focused on creating this idea of transparency in this book.

I told you what you needed to know in order to see my evolution, and I did so, so that I could see that evolution as well. I sometimes have a hard time taking a step back and seeing how far I've come and what I've learned. However, through my attempt at showing narratives that I would rather not discuss (some of the emotional ones are still hard for me to read), I learned what it means to be a reflective inquirer. I learned that I must choose those stories that are hard to share because I learned so much for them. Writing this book has allowed me to choose the more difficult path, and I am rewarded by seeing the start of an evolution that I hope spans my entire teaching career.

I was the woman sitting in class the first week of school thinking I would fail because I did not know much about current research within the fields of Composition or TESOL. I am the woman who had to read extra every semester just to try to catch-up to my colleagues because I felt like I did not understand half of what I had read. I am the woman who had no confidence to speak about teaching methodology because I had never really taught more than one class, and I am the woman who thought I had to know everything in order to make a contribution to current research. I have changed a lot throughout this study, and I do not want to make it seem like I am overconfident or anything like that. Trust me, I know I have so much growing left—especially because I am at the start of my career. I know there is so much left to be done, but I can say that conducting this study has made me more confident in my unfinishedness. Before, I would have lamented the fact that this book ends with questions for further research. In my naivety, I would have thought that I had to have all the answers. Now, I know better. I know that I do not have to have all the answers in this book or in my classroom. My students bring experiences and perspectives that I am lucky to have as learning material in the classroom, and I need to give them opportunities for reflection—just like writing this book gave me. Through writing this



book, I have learned the value in reflection, and that experience alone has helped shape and solidify my desire to continue practicing and studying international service-learning. This practice of studying my own evolution has taught me a lot about myself and my teaching—especially as I look to continue researching international service-learning in the future. Overall, my experiences have shown me that, while I am still growing, I can still say I am a teacher. I am, and am becoming, an international service-learning teacher.

### **Being and Becoming**

Ever since I read Frances Giampapa's "The Politics of 'Being and Becoming' a Researcher," I have wrestled with this idea of 'being and becoming.' In the abstract of her article, she states, "I hope to move beyond a prescriptive view of the researcher in the field and to critically reveal ways in which researcher identities are constructed through the social practices and discourses in which we are embedded as we conduct critical ethnographic research." This idea of revealing ways in which identities are constructed was an important focus of this research as I looked at how my teaching has evolved, specifically through international service-learning. For me personally, the different intersections of my life shape my teaching pedagogy and theory, but I have also learned that my teaching informs these intersections. The intersections I want to focus on now are my Christianity coupled with my being a teacher-scholar who is also an international service-learning teacher. I chose to focus on these aspects of my life specifically because my faith defines me, they inform each other, and they are the best representatives of being and becoming at this point in my life.

## **A Christian**

I am currently finishing a book called *The Pursuit of Holiness* by Jerry Bridges. I am reading this in the women's bible study I attend at my church. In the last chapter, titled "The Joy of Holiness," Bridges states, "The choice is ours. What will we choose? Will we accept our responsibility and discipline ourselves to live in habitual obedience to the will of God? Will we persevere in the face of frequent failure, resolving to never give up?" (p. 152). As I end this chapter with this section on being and becoming, I am reminded that I am being and becoming in different parts of my life that intersect together. First and foremost, I am a Christian. As I mentioned in the prologue, this fact is one of my reasons for wanting to be a caring teacher. However, like my teaching, the growth of my faith has to be continual. Yes, Jesus said, "It is finished," as he died on the cross (John 19:30). My salvation is secure, but I am not done growing as a believer. I can never stop and think, "I am Christ-like enough," like I cannot think that I am done growing as a teacher. Throughout this journey you have seen in this book, I have grown as a believer. I went on my first mission's project during my time at IUP. This project forced me to rely on God more than I ever had, and even after I returned home, the hits kept coming. My mom got sick, I got sick, I dealt with homesickness, and so much more. For the first two years I spent at IUP, my life looked completely different than it had before. I lived alone for the first time and missed my family terribly. I saw glimpses of what it was like for my international students to be away from home, and it made me more compassionate toward them. I believe in Christ now more so than ever, and as I look at this book that is comprised of narratives about my journey, I can see His hand and faithfulness so clearly. I share more about my faith in this book here because it is the foundation for all that I am. I would not be able to tell you how and why I have grown as a teacher-scholar and international service-learning teacher if

I did not start from the very essence of who I am and what I believe. I am both a Christian and becoming a Christian day-by-day, and that being and becoming also informs how I teach and interact with my students (and community members) in the international service-learning classroom.

### **A Teacher-Scholar**

I began this book by stating that I've heard it said before that writing a book will either make you love your research more or make you realize you aren't as interested in it as you think. I am so glad I started this book with that thought. Do I really love this research as much as I thought? As I finish this book, I can finally answer this question truthfully. Yes, I love it. In fact, I love sustainable international service-learning more now than I did when I first started. Why? Because it is so multifaceted, and it is pretty illusive to meet the goals I had for implementing sustainable international service-learning through a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on locality (at least for me). I am okay with those goals being hard to meet because it shows me just how important they are. I want my theory to inform my practice (and vice versa), and I know that desiring a reciprocal relationship with my students (and community members) is a good goal to have. Furthermore, my desire to continue this research reminds me that I am a teacher-scholar.

I really value the idea of being a teacher-scholar because I think this term carries with it a certain amount of responsibility to be critically reflective of one's teaching and to allow practice and theory to inform each other. My being and becoming a teacher-scholar reminds me of my need to grow and allows me to practice reciprocity in both my teaching and researching I as look to meet the needs of my students, the community members, and myself instead of focusing on the privilege that I sometimes have above these people (Blee, 1999; Cushman, 2002). For example, when researching in a classroom environment, I need to put the needs of others above

my own. So, I will not make students feel like they have to participate in a study, but rather, allow them to do so if they wish. Furthermore, this idea of redefined reciprocity—of building equally beneficial relationships through caring for my students and practicing mutuality in the classroom—has helped me move closer to the teacher-scholar I want to be, but I am still becoming that teacher because I have not yet been able to design a course that meets all the needs of those involved in the service project (Jacobi, 2001). Therefore, true reciprocity may have been met in some of my interactions in the Community Participation Workshop, but it was not always reached, and as a result, I must continue my research and practice of reciprocity. This, like my faith, evolves as I continue to show students I care by allowing them to resist this pedagogy and come to their own understanding of their education as well (Wallace & Ewald, 2000). Nevertheless, I do see transformation. I am now more likely to encourage students to resist and challenge me. I no longer have to be the knowledge authority in the classroom—I value learning from my student, and I know that continuing my research on sustainable international service-learning will continue my growth as a teacher-scholar.

### **A Sustainable International Service-Learning Instructor**

Being a teacher-scholar has allowed me to attempt to design a sustainable international service-learning course because being a teacher-scholar has given me the ability to understand how international service-learning fits in with my overall ideology I have as a teacher. Overall, my ideology stems from my faith and the different intersections of my life I have explored throughout this book. I want to be a caring teacher who practices reciprocity in my classroom. I believe that I am not the only one in the class who has knowledge, and I also value learning through experience. When I started researching international service-learning, I knew that it was a theory and pedagogy I wanted to pursue because of its focus on experiential learning and

because of researchers' desire for reciprocity. Had I not consulted literature from other international service-learning researchers, I would not have been able to understand my desire for more sustainable programs. Actually, I probably would not be able to see the need for sustainable service-learning in the first place. However, because I researched international service-learning before I taught it, I knew that many programs failed to meet their desired outcomes because of unsustainable issues that included lack of reciprocity, diversity, and a willingness to work with, and learn from, the local community. Focusing on sustainable international service-learning has made me aware that the field of service-learning has a lot of room for growth (as do I as a service-learning teacher). *In Pedagogy of Freedom*, Paulo Freire (2000) states:

Teacher preparation should go beyond the technical preparation of teachers and be rooted in the ethical formation both of selves and of history...critical reflection on practice is a requirement of the relationship between theory and practice. Otherwise theory becomes simply 'blah' 'blah' 'blah,' and practice, pure activism...there is, in fact, no teaching without learning.

As Freire states, I had to approach this book using research already conducted on international service-learning (history) combined with critical reflection on my own practice in order to truly learn from the results I found. This critical reflection is absolutely necessary to my growth as an international service-learning instructor because learning from my successes, and my failures, allows me to better meet the needs of my students. Throughout this book, I have stated that sustainable international service-learning is developed through encouraging diverse student participation (Acquaye and Crewe, 2010; Green, 2003), collaboration with the local community (Crabtree, 2008; Lukenchuck, 2009), and allowing and anticipating student resistance (Wallace

& Ewald, 2000). In order for international service-learning to be considered sustainable through a redefinition of reciprocity and a focus on locality, the goal must be to encourage consistent service within the local community and allow for critical reflection on that service week after week. Students must be given opportunities to find meaningful experiences in their service, and they must be given opportunities to build upon that service (and experiences) in order to continue their learning through reflection.

The opportunity to find meaningful experiences and learn and build upon them through critical reflection is one of the reasons I label myself as an international service-learning instructor, and one of the areas I see growth in my teaching as well. I have learned a lot about service-learning theory and pedagogy through writing this book and teaching the Community Participation Workshop. Through my experiences, I began to understand the steps necessary for learning in an international service-learning environment. You must be given opportunities for meaningful experience and then reflect on that experience critically. I was able to do so through this book and, subsequently, value learning through experience more so than I ever did before. I noticed that in the beginning of my time teaching international service-learning, I was more focused on getting students out in the community and being okay with them not finding the service opportunities useful and worthwhile—I was just happy they were out in the community. Now, as I contemplate sustainable international service-learning practices, I value meaningful experiences, and I know that it is necessary for programs to allow students to serve at the same site for consecutive weeks in order to build upon those experiences in meaningful ways (Cushman, 2002; Herzberg, 1994; Welch, 2002). I understand now that allowing students to experience a service site more than once gives them more opportunities to learn from and with the members of that organization.

Furthermore, students must be allowed to resist this pedagogy—teachers can never force them to critically reflect. The hope is that even though students initially resist, they will eventually find reflection useful. I am a perfect example. Even though I asked my students to critically reflect on their lives and their places, I was very reluctant to do so in my own work. It took me a long time to see the benefits of doing so—I could not get past my fear of vulnerability. However, when I finally did, I noticed that the learning material (my evolution) became much more real to me and my experiences and reflections were more insightful than they had been before. I grew during the time I wrote this book as a teacher because I would have never noticed the resistance in my own life, and I would never have wanted to write about it. Nevertheless, seeing my own resistance encourages me to not interfere when my students resist critical reflection or learning through service. This book, and this research, reminds me that learning from experience starts as students are allowed to use their experiences and perspectives in the classroom and as they get to see the learning material firsthand (like when my students harvested carrots). So, while they may resist at first, the hope is that they continue making connections with their own experiences.

Sustainable international service-learning allows participants to focus on the local and learn as they make connections with their place. Through writing this book, I have been able to do just that, and it has shown me that I am an international service-learning teacher. I have grown in my desire to study how place affects sustainable international service-learning. Furthermore, through teaching the Community Participation Workshop, I learned the value and importance of working with the local community, and I will make sure to always develop relationships with the local community as I continue attempting to design sustainable international service-learning courses. Since I recognize the valuable resources my students and

the local community members and organizations are, I know an international service-learning course should encourage learning from multiple avenues (with, from, and about students and the local community).

Sustainable international service-learning must be reciprocal and beneficial to the local community. While my class cannot be considered sustainable, I did learn a lot through writing this book, and I would even venture to say I moved closer to designing a sustainable international service-learning course. I am happy with the outcomes of this study because I am being and becoming an international service-learning teacher. I have learned that student diversity, valuing the local community, and encouraging mutually beneficial relationships in the service course are vital in moving toward sustainability, but I cannot say I am there yet. However, I am okay with that because being and becoming an international service-learning teacher (and in other intersections of my life) takes practice and perseverance—I am not finished, nor do I want to be, but I am one step closer to my goal. It has taken me time to get to this place—this place where I am okay ending my book with a sense of unfinishedness because even in its unfinishedness, I have learned and I have grown. It is just the beginning for my research, and I have arrived at this place because of this study and because of my attempt to foster sustainable international service-learning, and I am encouraged to pursue this theory and pedagogy more so than I ever have been before.



## EPILOGUE

### IS THIS REALLY THE END?

*August 1, 2016*

*Once again, I find myself sitting at the kitchen table staring outside into the backyard at the pine trees moving lazily in the wind. I love this place. I am currently working on my final edits for this book—this book that is the last step between me and earning my doctorate. I am at the end of a three-year period of my life that was insightful, fun, trying, and so much more. I am a little sad to see it end. I learned a lot about myself through pursuing my Ph.D., and especially through writing this book. I’ve learned that it is okay that all of my goals for my class were not met, and I’ve learned to be okay with the fact that I have a lot of research left to do on this topic. I find myself pausing in between sentences and looking to my right. My favorite tree, the one that looks like a giant Christmas tree, is right in my line of vision. It’s pretty to look at, but it really hurts when those needles stab you in the arms or legs. I don’t look forward to picking them all up this winter. The snow will be here before I know it. It snowed in October last year. For some reason, I don’t hate snow here like I did in Indiana. Indiana. A place that I came to directly after finishing my Master’s degree—a place I came to with one semester worth of teaching. Indiana—a place where I feel like I did some growing up—even though I was already twenty-three when I arrived—and eventually realized that I am a teacher-scholar. I turned twenty-six a few months ago, and I went through a period where I was feeling sorry for myself because I am four years from thirty, unmarried, and still not in a stable career. During this time, I thought to myself that I would have been perfectly content graduating with my BA and getting married young. Or maybe I wouldn’t have really been content. God knows me better than I know myself. Maybe he called*

*me to Indiana because He knew I wanted this. Not that it makes me any better or that having the 'Dr.' in front of my name changes anything about me. My degree does change where I can go though. It does change how I see the world. It already has. It has strengthened my faith because I can look back and see God's presence in all that happened while I was at IUP—in school and in my personal life. You know, I just said that being a Dr. won't make me better, but maybe I am wrong. I am not even a Dr. yet, but I am a better teacher than when I started this program. My time at IUP has taught me that my students matter—even more so than I knew before, and that what they have to say, matters. It has taught me that what I have to say, here in this book, matters. This book matters because it shows me I am, and am becoming, a teacher. Always growing, always analyzing. Indiana, the small town that changed my life. I look out my window, and I don't see the trees anymore. I see IUP. I see Leonard Hall. I imagine myself back in my first class. I remember the butterflies in my stomach, or maybe they really are here now because I know I am so close to finishing. But it isn't really an ending, is it? It is just the beginning, really.*

### **Where Do I Go From Here?**

As I conclude this study, I am reminded that, in order to be effective, sustainable international service-learning must include an adoption of reciprocity focused on the local community. Students must be able to make connections between the service they are conducting in the local community and with their own community in order to be effective. They have to move past the idea that they are conducting community service for fun in a new place into seeing why they are doing so and how it relates to other aspects of their lives. Mahala and Swilky (2003) state, "If we hope to sustain the possibility of critical discourse and action in our classrooms and campuses, we will have to broaden our vision beyond romanticized border-

crossing...and come to grips with the full range of factors that construct place in our communities” (p. 323). This book is my attempt at doing so—at linking reciprocity and locality to sustainable international service-learning through the messiness of studying my actual attempt at doing so. This book has shown, mostly through my failures, how I have evolved as an international service-learning teacher, and has hopefully provided useful suggestions for better implementing this type of theory and pedagogy in the future. However, there is so much research left to be done, and while at first, this drove me nuts, I soon realized that this ‘unfinishedness’ meant that this topic is valuable to continue studying. Why would I want to use a theory and pedagogy I have all the answers to? So, for me, I am concluding this book, but the research does not end here. In *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Paulo Freire (2002) states, “Unfinishedness is essential to our human condition...Education does not make us educable. It is our awareness of being unfinished that makes us educable.” Therefore, this research topic is not finished because there is so much more to learn about sustainable international service-learning. In fact, researchers should have a greater focus on student resistance in the international service-learning classroom and studies can be conducted to make the connection between mutuality and service-learning even more explicit. Even more so, a greater focus on the role of language in international service-learning could be taken as well. For researchers interested in sustainable international service-learning, I suggest looking at characteristics of international service-learning programs that are actually sustainable in order to continue and build upon this work. I did also mention that community member perspectives are often left out of service-learning research, and while they were not the focus of this book, future research should include community member perspectives.

As far as my work within international service-learning, I want to continue developing this idea of redefining reciprocity by researching other members of the projects’ (aside from my

own) perspectives. I also want to continue refining my definition of sustainable international service-learning, and I hope I have the opportunity to develop a course or program that meets the criteria in the future. I have had a hard time ending this book because, in my mind, an ending means finished, but my work is not finished—it is just beginning. International service-learning must continue toward meeting the needs of all involved; it must continue toward eradicating power and privilege in the different relationships present in the project, and I look forward to continuing my research on how to do so.

*Father,*

*I thank you for this journey you have taken me on. I thank you for your leading and for your faithfulness. I thank you that you will never leave me nor forsake me. I dedicate this book to you because I know that without you, I never could have written it. I once again surrender my life, my goals, and my all to you. I am yours. Please use me for your glory. I love you, Lord. It is in the mighty name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.*

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## Appendix A

### Community Participation Workshop Syllabus

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
American Language Institute  
Community Participation Workshop**

**Instructor: Ravyn McKee**

**E-mail: [gylt@iup.edu](mailto:gylt@iup.edu)**

**Class Time: F 9:30-12:00 pm**

**Eicher 206**

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#### **Course Description:**

This course provides students with opportunities to make connections between cultures, learn about culture and practice language skills, and learn through experience by interacting with people in the community. In this class, students engage in service learning by volunteering with community organizations in order to develop language proficiency and insights into civic and social life in Indiana.

#### **Course Objectives:**

1. Foster writing development through critical reflection of service opportunities
2. To gain fluency when conversing in English within the community.
3. To increase awareness of volunteer opportunities within the Indiana area community in order to compare & contrast opportunities with home community environment.
4. To increase cultural and social awareness through discussions and interactions within the community.

#### **Skills:** The student will be able to:

1. Develop critical thinking skills through writing;
2. Integrate into their new community;
3. Appreciate and understand various types of American cultures;
4. Discuss American culture in relation to students' home culture(s);
5. Express thought and feelings pertaining to their community experiences.

#### **Required Texts / Course Materials:**

- Notebook for reflections and note taking.
- Flash Drive/Jump Drive for saving work

- Folder for class handouts
- Dictionary (recommended)

### **Course Requirements:**

The requirements of this class have been broken down by points that total 200. While this course is not graded, it is important that you participate in all of the course activities in order to get your completion certificate at the end of the semester.

**1. Class Participation (60 pts.)**—Please come to class on time and be prepared to participate in classwork and community activities. This course is designed around community participation, so it is vital that you attend class ready and willing to participate. Therefore, in order to get your certificate for completing the course at the end of the semester, you must not miss more than 3 workshops.

**2. Homework/Journals (30 pts.)**—Homework and journaling provide you with the chance to reflect on what you have learned during your service, as well as practice your English language skills. We will begin each class session with a journal reflection, and these, as well as any homework assignments, will be written in students' notebooks. Assignments will be given throughout the semester, although you will be given ample classroom time to complete the assignments and discuss any questions you may have.

**3. Service Learning Work (60 pts.)** – During the first half of the semester, as a class, we will visit different sites for service learning. During the second half of the semester, you will visit a service site on your own (or with a small group) in order to complete your final project. Your participation and performance will allow you to have the opportunity to reflect on what you have learned and to receive valuable feedback on how to improve your English language skills.

**4. Portfolio (25 pts.)**—The portfolio is a collection of artifacts, reflections, and selective journal entries that document the experience of service learning. This portfolio will be collected as the midterm and will reflect the students' abilities to assemble a portfolio in preparation for the final project/presentation.

**5. Final Project/Presentations (25 pts.)**—At the end of the semester, students will choose cultural and/or academic events hosted by the IUP or Indiana communities to attend on their own (or in a small group) for 1 class session. The students will need to write reflections on their time spent at these sites (reflections prompts will be given the week before) and will need to prepare a presentation based on their experience. Questions that can be answered are: why did you choose this site; What did you do while there; what did you learn, etc. Then, each student will give a 10 minute presentation using any technology they prefer (podcast, PowerPoint, etc.) that focus not only on his or her experience at the site, but also on his or her experience within the entire course. The objective of this final project is to reflect on what students have learned as well as compare this knowledge to their own home community, i.e. could they participate in similar projects at home?

## **Student Policies and Responsibilities**

### **Attendance**

Students who actively participate in this workshop will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the term.

### **Personal Electronics and Acceptable Use**

Personal electronics such as cell phones and MP3 players should be turned off and put away during classes unless the instructor has specifically given permission for students to use them. If students do not follow this policy, teachers may count them absent or ask them to leave the class. Students should use IUP computers for educational purposes and use the IUP network in a responsible fashion. When in the computer lab for class, students need to focus on instruction and not use the computer for personal purposes.

### **IUP Email**

Students are responsible for checking their IUP email regularly. It is the university's preferred method for official communication, so important information about classes, billing, etc. will be sent to students through email. Students should never give their IUP email password to anyone, especially if the request comes through an email. The university will never ask for a student's password, and responding to such requests may lead to the student's account being suspended.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

IUP has a policy of reciprocal courtesy known as IUP Civility. This policy states that a classroom is a place where everyone should feel safe and respected. Tolerance, understanding, fair treatment, and open-mindedness should be maintained at all times when interacting with fellow students and instructors. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior towards other students or the instructor will not be tolerated and may lead to removal from a class. Serious offenses may lead to academic probation or dismissal from the program. Students also need to follow IUP rules for classroom spaces. These rules include not smoking in any university building.

### **Course Schedule**

The schedule is subject to change based on students' academic needs. Changes will be communicated in class.

Week	Class Topic and Activities	Homework Due
	<b>First week of classes</b>	
1- 1/30	Workshop overview / Community introduction / Ice breaker activities/Journaling	Get supplies for class Brainstorm list of places student would like to visit
2- 2/6	Go over lists and decide on two places we will serve at this semester	
3-	Field Activity—Indiana Humane Society	

2/13		
4- 2/20	Field Activity- Indiana Humane Society	
5- 2/27	Field Activity—Indiana Humane Society	
6- 3/6	Posters or Podcasts & Time to Work on Class Assignments/ Scavenger Hunt (OIE, trips, and events, etc.)	Portfolios & Written Reflections on Service Experience
7- 3/13	Spring Break	
8- 3/20	Field Activity—Community Gardens	
9- 3/27	Field Activity—Community Gardens	
10- 4/3	Field Activity—Community Gardens	
11- 4/10	Field Activity—Community Gardens	
12- 4/17	Field Activity—Individual or Group	
13- 4/24	Final Presentations—based on their time in the field and based on their reflections	



## Appendix B

### Rationale for Changes to the Course for Spring 2015

#### Second Language Teaching Final Project: Reflections & Changes to my Service-Learning Syllabus

##### **I. Introduction**

I was hired to teach a service-learning course in the American Language Institute (ALI) this Fall 2014 semester. This branch of Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) prepares international students to enter the American university after passing either the TOEFL or IELTS. As a preparatory step for university education, the ALI focuses on English language development, as well as academic and cultural literacy development. As a result, the ALI offers a workshop every Friday during the semester called Community Participation—one that focuses on taking students to different community sites and participating in different service opportunities in order to foster their understanding of American culture. Although this was the description of the course before I started teaching it, I was told that I could design the service component of the course any way that I saw fit. So, since this was my first time teaching a service-learning course, I tried to move the course away from just learning about American culture and instead tried to focus on the interconnectedness between communities and cultures. I learned a lot throughout this semester that I would like to explore within this final project. More specifically, for this final project, I would like to present my rationale for designing my syllabus by reflecting on current service-learning and place-based theory, as well as use the syllabus as a way of reflecting on my teaching experience. Furthermore, I will also incorporate all of these areas into a revision of my current syllabus in order to make it more relevant, useful, and meaningful to my students next semester.

##### **II. Course Background Information**

ALI 305: Community Participation Workshop is a service-learning course for international students in the ALI program. This course was once offered as a credited class but has recently been offered as a workshop where students sign up voluntarily and then are given a certificate of completion at the end of the semester. Since the course is voluntary, there are no grades given for assignments and no repercussions for missing class, which are areas I did not take into consideration while developing my course syllabus for the fall 2014 semester. Since it was my first time teaching this course, I designed the class with the intention of one lesson building off of the next, which is a large component of sustainable service-learning theory and pedagogy (Cushman, 2002). I developed the course around two main topics: 1. Community and 2. Sustainability, and every assignment we did and every site we went to throughout the semester was chosen with the intention of fostering further understanding of both main topics of our class. The idea behind developing a course around community and sustainability was to examine what ‘community’ means to people in different countries and cultures, as well as analyze how these communities are practicing sustainability. In order to do so, we began by working in the Indiana community and learning more about it as well. Then, the overall goal was to get students to make

connections between the Indiana community and their home communities in order to take more from the class than just learning about American culture. The course was designed to use service as a means for more critical analysis and exploration of the ways communities shape our language practices and us. Therefore, in the next section, I will briefly share my rationale for utilizing service-learning theory in a second language teaching environment.

### **III. Community Participation Workshop Rationale & Theory**

Since the Community Participation Workshop is a service-learning course, the theory applied to the course focuses almost entirely on the field of composition because service-learning within a second language context is a more recent endeavor due to little research on the effect of service-learning on students who are not white Americans (Grassi, 2004; Minor). However, because I was teaching this course while simultaneously taking Second Language Teaching, I found using service-learning pedagogy in the second language classroom easily justifiable through research on space-based learning, as well as a focus on second language critical pedagogy. Even more so, since I am working with international students, international service-learning theory is important to the development of my course because it focuses on the interconnectedness of communities, as well as a global context for service projects (Alonso Garcia & Longo, 2013; Prins & Webster, 2010; Kiely, 2004; Ver Beek, 2002; Deans, 2000). Therefore, I will apply both international and domestic service-learning theory to this course because I believe that they are both relevant. Finally, service-learning within the field of composition can be looked at as it applies to place-based theory and writing—both of which are important to this particular service-learning course because we focused on community (place) and writing within and for the community as a means of awareness and change.

Service-learning theory has developed over the years out of research on experiential learning by John Dewey (1938) and critical pedagogy that focuses on social justice issues, specifically a need to develop critical consciousness in students and community members (Freire, 1974). In the field of second language teaching, Graham Crookes (2010) focuses on the practicality and relevance of critical pedagogy to the field. He cites Pennycook's statement that, "critical pedagogy seeks to understand and critique the historical and sociopolitical context of schooling and to develop pedagogical practices that aim not only to change the nature of schooling, but also the wider society" (Pennycook 1990: 24, qtd. in Crookes, 334), yet he states that critical pedagogues often "lack tangibility concerning the broader goals" (342). Even though this critique is within the field of second language teaching, it is not a new critique of critical pedagogy because researchers have noted that a critical classroom can have lofty goals that are unreachable or support political notions moved by the instructor instead of promoting social change within the community. Nevertheless, in a service-learning course, critical pedagogy is needed because it promotes critical consciousness in students—or an ability to understand and see social inequalities and marginalization within communities and institutions that may not be fostered in other courses (Freire, 1974; Cushman, 1998). In my case, I only saw my students for 3 hours a week for 12 weeks, so I was not using this course as a means of developing students' understanding of social inequalities within a country they would be leaving after the fall semester. Instead, I wanted to bridge cultures and communication within the classroom and in the service sites as a means of bringing understanding between the students and the community as members of a globalized world. As a result, I was trying to uphold Kumaravadivelu's notion of critical cultural consciousness, or the recognition that "there is no one culture that embodies

all and only the best of human experience; and, there is no one culture that embodies all and only the worst of human experience” (271). Instead, I wanted students to develop critical cultural consciousness that allowed them to form connections between communities in an effort of becoming more globally-minded individuals. This was a large goal for me because my students kept admiring American culture, and I wanted them to teach each other about their cultures, customs, and knowledge as well, which led me to incorporate place-based theory in an effort to meet students where they were when they entered the classroom.

While service-learning is used in many different fields and disciplines, it is particularly focused on civic engagement, social awareness, critical reflection, and transformative experience (Kiely, 2004; Ver Beek, 2002; Welch, 2002; Cushman, 1998, 2002; Giles, 1994; Deans, 2000). Since there is a focus on civic and social awareness and responsibility, there is also a focus on the community in which the service is being conducted. As such, the focus on community present in service-learning in the field of composition comes from the theory of place-based pedagogy. Composition researchers have established the value of understanding how place effects people and their literacy practices over the years (Owens, 2001; Cushman, 1998, 2002; Mauk, 2003). More specifically, place-based pedagogy encourages students to examine how their place has shaped their understanding of the world, particularly through writing, in order to critically examine the relationships in their environments and the power that is exercised within said relationships. Researchers like Marilyn Cooper (1986) suggest that writing, and the writing classroom, should not be solitary and should instead focus on exploring how writers interact to form systems (187). In the same regard, Jonathon Mauk (2003) investigates the issue of third space and how this real and imagined place designed for intellectual-social action can aid students in their investment of college courses (201). The idea of third space reminds us to view life outside of the classroom as fit for learning opportunities as well. In essence, instructors must meet students where they are at now. Even more so, the student must understand the relationship between the function of the classwork in relation to the student’s place in the community. This coincides with research on space-centered English language learning, which focuses on where learning occurs as much as what learning occurs. Brown and Long (2006) state, “If learning occurs everywhere, and it is our contention that it does, then we need to re-examine the role of classrooms and their relationship to other learning spaces as loci for learning” (qtd. in Kurt & Kurt, 2013, p 76). Therefore, service-learning can be viewed as an attempt to bridge the academic classroom with the community in which the student belongs. The space within which a student performs his or her service can become the third space through the understanding a student gleaned of place and community through the experience. So, place-based pedagogy enhances service-learning as students learn how they relate to their communities through the service and critical reflection on the service. Furthermore, adopting this pedagogy into my service-learning course was important because it allowed the students to learn in a more authentic environment than the classroom alone, which enabled them to better reflect critically on their experiences. Through critical reflection, student writing has the potential impact for influence within a student’s community, which is directly applied in service-learning, and is one of the main reasons I choose to use service-learning pedagogy in my own classroom. I want my students to understand that their writing is meaningful and that what they have to say is worth hearing.

#### **IV. Syllabus + Revisions**

For this section, I will present the original syllabus with revisions made in red (the track changes will be left on). Furthermore, I will provide justification for these changes based on

classroom experience and theory that will hopefully improve the course for the next semester and will allow me to better foster service-learning pedagogy in my classroom.

**Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
American Language Institute  
Community Participation Workshop  
Fall 2014 Spring 2014**

**Instructor: Ravyn McKee**

**E-mail: [gylt@iup.edu](mailto:gylt@iup.edu)**

**Class Time: F 9:30-12:1530 pm**

**Eicher 206**

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**Course Description:**

This course provides students with opportunities to make connections between cultures, learn I wanted the course to be more focused on making connections between cultures instead of just learning about American culture (which is what the original wording sounded like). A focus on cultures as opposed to culture (i.e. American) will aid in developing critical cultural consciousness and an awareness that all cultures are valuable—especially as we learn about sustainability and community throughout the course. about culture and practice language skills, and learn through experience by interacting with people in the community. In this class, students engage in service learning by volunteering with community organizations in order to develop language proficiency and insights into civic and social life in Indiana.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Foster writing development through critical reflection of service opportunities Critical reflection is vital to service-learning and to our classroom. This objective was too big to be left out of the syllabus because it is foundational to the coursework. The students write journal reflections during every class meeting.
2. To gain fluency when conversing in English within the community.
3. To increase awareness of volunteer opportunities within the Indiana area community in order to compare & contrast opportunities with home community environment.
4. To increase cultural and social awareness through discussions and interactions within the community.

**Skills:** The student will be able to:

Develop critical thinking skills through writing; Again, students liked to write in the course because they could think about what they wanted to say before they were asked to speak in the larger group. As a foundation to service-learning, it is important that students know a lot of writing will be expected of them.

1. Integrate into their new community;
2. Appreciate and understand various types of American cultures;
3. Discuss American culture in relation to students' home culture(s);
4. Express thoughts and feelings pertaining to their community experiences.

#### **Required Texts / Course Materials:**

- Notebook for reflections and note taking.
- Flash Drive/Jump Drive for saving work
- Folder for class handouts
- Dictionary (recommended) **We have computers in the classroom, so a dictionary is not really necessary. Plus, I kept this as required from the instructor before me, but we were not so concerned with individual word meanings for most of the course.**

#### **Course Requirements:**

The requirements of this class have been broken down by points that total 200 . While this course is not graded, it is important that you participate in all of the assignments and requirements in order to get your completion certificate. Therefore, in order to receive your completion certificate, you must complete at least 140 points out of 200.

**1. Class Participation (60 pts.)** –Please come to class on time and be prepared to participate in classwork and community activities. This course is designed around community participation, so it is vital that you attend class ready and willing to participate. Therefore, in order to get your certificate for completing the course at the end of the semester, you must not miss more than 3 workshops.

**2. Homework/Journals (30 pts.)**– Homework and journaling provide you with the chance to reflect on what you have learned during your service, as well as practice your English language skills. We will begin each class session with a journal reflection, and these, as well as any homework assignments, will be written in students' notebooks. Assignments will be given throughout the semester, although you will be given ample classroom time to complete the assignments and discuss any questions you may have. **I may not be able to give students an actual grade, but I will give points toward completing their course certificates so that I can keep better track of student participation.**

**3. Service Learning Work (60 pts.)** – During the first half of the semester, as a class, we will visit different sites for service learning. During the second half of the semester, you will visit a service site on your own (or with a small group) in order to complete your final project. Your participation and performance will allow you to have the opportunity to reflect on what you have learned and to receive valuable feedback on how to improve your English language skills.

**4. Portfolio (25 pts.)**– The portfolio is a collection of artifacts, reflections, and selective journal entries that document the experience of service learning. This portfolio will be collected as the midterm and will reflect the students' abilities to assemble a portfolio in preparation for the final project/presentation. **I did not collect a portfolio for the fall semester because my students did not ever buy a notebook—no matter how many times I told them to. A few students kept all of their work, but I think the others threw them away after each class. I would like**

to look at a portfolio during midterm though and allow students to reflect on what they have learned thus far in the semester.

**5. Final Project/Presentations (25 pts.)**– At the end of the semester, students will choose a ~~service-site~~ cultural and/or academic events hosted by the IUP or Indiana communities to attend on their own (or in a small group) for 2 class sessions. The students will need to write reflections on their time spent at these sites (reflections prompts will be given the week before) and will need to prepare a presentation based on their ~~service~~-experience. Questions that can be answered are: why did you choose this site; What did you do while there; what did you learn, etc. Then, each student will give a 10 minute presentation using any technology they prefer (podcast, PowerPoint, etc.) that focus not only on his or her experience at the site, but also on his or her experience within the entire course. The objective of this final project is to reflect on what students have learned as well as compare this knowledge to their own home community, i.e. could they participate in similar projects at home? **This assignment was based on Ellen Cushman's (2002) article Sustainable Service Learning. In this article, she states that sustainable service-learning requires instructors to attend the service site with students throughout the semester instead of allowing students to turn in a final project with no accountability. Therefore, throughout the entire semester I went with students to the service sites; however, I also wanted to explore the other method of service-learning pedagogy, which is allowing students to go to a site on their own. Furthermore, I also wanted students to have the experience & understanding of signing up for service projects on their own. I could tell that the students were not very interested in doing service projects on their own. They were nervous about their English skills and liked having me there to help communicate with people at the sites. Therefore, I asked students how they would like to complete the final project. They said that they would prefer to attend cultural events of any kind hosted by IUP instead of just having service opportunities. I agreed and allowed them to attend two cultural events during the two weeks instead of attending class. However, my students all signed up for 3-4, and three of the students helped with events directly related to teaching IUP students about their cultures.**

## **Student Policies and Responsibilities**

### **Attendance**

Students who actively participate in this workshop will receive a certificate of completion at the end of the term.

### **Personal Electronics and Acceptable Use**

Personal electronics such as cell phones and MP3 players should be turned off and put away during classes unless the instructor has specifically given permission for students to use them. If students do not follow this policy, teachers may count them absent or ask them to leave the class. Students should use IUP computers for educational purposes and use the IUP network in a responsible fashion. When in the computer lab for class, students need to focus on instruction and not use the computer for personal purposes.

### **IUP Email**

Students are responsible for checking their IUP email regularly. It is the university's preferred method for official communication, so important information about classes, billing, etc. will be sent to students through email. Students should never give their IUP email password to anyone, especially if the request comes through an email. The university will never ask for a student's password, and responding to such requests may lead to the student's account being suspended.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

IUP has a policy of reciprocal courtesy known as IUP Civility. This policy states that a classroom is a place where everyone should feel safe and respected. Tolerance, understanding, fair treatment, and open-mindedness should be maintained at all times when interacting with fellow students and instructors. Disrespectful and disruptive behavior towards other students or the instructor will not be tolerated and may lead to removal from a class. Serious offenses may lead to academic probation or dismissal from the program. Students also need to follow IUP rules for classroom spaces. These rules include not smoking in any university building.

### **Course Schedule**

The schedule is subject to change based on students' academic needs. Changes will be communicated in class.

Week	Class Topic and Activities	Homework Due
	<b>First week of classes</b>	
1- 9/5	Workshop overview / Community introduction / Ice breaker activities/Journaling	Get supplies for class
2- 9/12	Field Activity –Art Galleries/Kipp Gallery Sprowls Hall	Students did not show up for class on this day because they all went to New York on a trip through OIE.
3- 9/19	Field Activity – Community Garden	
4- 9/26	Field Activity- Community Garden	
5- 10/3	Field Activity—Community Garden	The community garden was the most useful service site we participated in this semester for many reasons. <b>The students enjoyed working with the community garden community, as well as with anthropology students also working in a service-learning course through the</b>

		<p>garden. We have ties with the garden now, and I think that the next course will spend even more time at the garden because there was so much verbal communication involved between the students and community members, and the students really enjoyed learning about sustainable gardening practices. They learned how to sow seeds, harvest carrots, and many other practices during their time. They also reflected on how such a garden could be proposed back home and if it would be worth their communities' time.</p>
6-10/10	Portfolios & Written Reflections on Service Experience	
7-10/17	<p>Field Activity—Indiana Historical Society</p> <p>This was a useful site to visit for learning about American culture, but it was very difficult for the students because it was 3 hours of American history that was irrelevant to most of them. As a result, the cultural events will be more aimed at relevance to student interests as well next time.</p>	Portfolios & Written Reflections on Service Experience
8-10/24	Field Activity- Indiana Humane Society	<p>The Indiana Humane Society moved during the semester, and we were not able to drive out to serve at this time. However, it is a good site to focus on for Spring 2015 because it is a site many of my students had never been to before but expressed interest in attending.</p>
9-10/31	Field Activity-Art Galleries & Posters	



10-11/7	Posters & Time to Work on Class Assignments/ Scavenger Hunt (OIE, trips, and events, etc.)	This was a successful assignment, but it should have been conducted at the beginning of the semester.
11-11/14	Field Activity—Individual or Group	
12-11/21	Field Activity—Individual or Group	
13-11/21	Final Presentations	

## V. Sample Journal Reflection and Teacher Response

For this section, I will provide an example of a journal reflection and classroom in order to show how the assignments relate to service-learning theory within the second language classroom. Furthermore, I will also provide observations from my teaching reflections on the usefulness and meaningfulness of the assignment to my students in order to critically reflect on my own teaching practices in the same manner that I ask my students to critically reflect on their experience in the Indiana community.

### 1. *Journal Reflections for Art Gallery day*

- *Do you like art?*
- *Is it important for us to visit art galleries and other cultural spots in Indiana? Why or why not?*
- *Do you think learning about culture helps with English? Why or why not?*

This journal reflection was assigned during the second week of the workshop, but since the students were in New York that day, we did not get to the art galleries until later in the semester. Nevertheless, on the day we visited the art galleries (the gallery on campus and The Artist's Hand), we began class by talking about art in different communities. The students were assigned to find their favorite piece of art from their home community and explain to the class why it is their favorite, as well as the teach the class a little about the piece's significance in the community. This assignment was used in order to get students thinking about local art and the meaningfulness of place to different people. So after presenting their art pieces and discussing them as a class, the students took time to reflect on these questions in their journals. I tried to make the questions personal enough so that students could honestly answer without being led to a specific answer based on what they thought I wanted to hear. This was done with the theory of mutuality in mind. According to Wallace & Ewald, mutuality allows for student resistance and disagreement in the classroom as a platform for more critical discussion (2000). As a result, I tried to make all of the journal reflections focused on student's opinions with the hope that it might generate critical discussion as we negotiate meaning between different perspectives and opinions.

In this case, my students were very interested in discussing art because they found it meaningful to them. All of my students expressed appreciation for the art from their home communities and wanted to teach their fellow classmates about why they found it so important. As I was observing my students share their favorite art pieces, I was reminded of the importance of starting with their expertise and knowledge. My students were much more willing to participate in the class discussions when the questions were relevant to them (as opposed to if I had just taught them about the local art in the gallery we would be seeing). In an effort to explore place and community in our lives, I started with the local from my students' perspectives and then we went to the art gallery and explored the art there. I chose this assignment to reflect on because the students made wonderful connections between the art in Indiana and the art back home. They discussed how it was similar, different, the prices on the pieces, and the communities' perspectives on local artists. Furthermore, at the art gallery, the students were able to talk to a local artist and ask her questions about her work as well. While the journal reflection questions are not perfect, and may not always generate a lot of critical responses, they are a starting point for students to express their view on the experience that will hopefully then generate critical responses from the entire class as people have varying opinions and experiences to add to the discussion. Our journal reflections have not always generated discussion that moves past superficiality, but in the case of this assignment, they did.

## VI. Revised Course Schedule for Spring 2015

### Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change based on students' academic needs. Changes will be communicated in class.

Week	Class Topic and Activities	Homework Due
	<b>First week of classes</b>	
1	Workshop overview / Community introduction / Ice breaker activities/Journaling	Get supplies for class
2	Field Activity –Campus & Community Scavenger Hunt	This is helpful for the students wanting more information on cultural events and places to visit while living in Indiana. It also gives them time to familiarize themselves with the campus and surrounding areas.
3	Field Activity – Community Gardens	
4	Field Activity- Community Gardens Galleries	
5	Field Activity—Community Gardens	
6	Field Activity—Community Gardens	Our time at the community garden was the most

		successful for the most amount of students. We will be there for an entire month because the students enjoyed working with the Anthropology students and will be doing so again. Also, since the focus of the course is on community and sustainability, it is important to serve at a community-run site that promotes sustainability.
7	Portfolios & Written Reflections on Service Experience Indiana Gazette/Art Galleries like the idea of showing students that their words matter and will be asking staff members to share how they became journalists.	Portfolios Due
8	Spring Break	
9	Field Activity—Indiana Humane Society	
10	Field Activity- Indiana Humane Society or Posters/Podcasts/Videos for chosen sites	This semester the students created posters for their chosen sites at the end of the semester. They researched the mission statements of the service sites and developed a poster geared toward generating interest of people their age. I like the idea of trying new things in the classroom, and I know that my students were very interested in using different technology each week, so I think allowing them to create a poster, podcast, or video gives them more creative options. This was a fun assignment for me and the students because it allowed them to produce something that could be seen by the public and was useful to all the sites we had

		been serving at over the semester. This would be assigned earlier in the semester, and the 10 <sup>th</sup> week would be a work day.
11	Field Activity—Individual or Group	
12	Field Activity—Individual or Group	Again, Cushman says that sustainable service projects involve the instructor as well, but I also like the idea of giving my students some freedom in choosing where they will serve for these two weeks. I will have them sign up for their service site during week 7 and will help them notify the necessary people as well.
13	Final Presentations & Final Reflections	
14	<b>EXIT TOEFL Exam</b>	

## VII. Sample Coursework for Week 1 in Spring 2015

- *Define the word community. What does it mean to you?*
- *What do you hope to learn most from this course?*
- *Have you ever participated in volunteer work for school before? If not, what made you decide to now?*

I chose to start with this journal reflection as an introduction to the class because I want to make each lesson meaningful to each student and their own literacy practices (Hanauer, 2011). In essence, I want to meet students where they are now, and I want them to know that their knowledge is valued and is essential to our class working the way that it does. Furthermore, in an effort to be more mutual and student-centered, I take into consideration what the students want to learn and build off of those suggestions in subsequent lessons because I want to learn from them as well (Ver Beek, 2002). Overall, the first lesson is a chance to get to know each other and build rapport because, as we discuss and learn about community, we will hopefully form a community of our own.

### *Introductory Interview*

*Please interview your partner and write his/her answers in the spaces below.*

1. *What is your name?*
2. *What is your email address?*
3. *Do you live on campus or off?*
4. *Where are you from?*

5. *What languages do you speak?*
6. *What is your major?*
7. *What do you want to do when you're done with school?*
8. *What is an interesting fact about you?*
9. *Where is home to you?*

The first week of this course is crucial. A lot of my students dropped the course after the first week because they realized that it was not going to be an easy workshop with no assignments. However, while the course will be extra work to the students, I want them to know that they will learn a lot about the Indiana community and their own throughout the semester, as well as the fact that they will be teaching about their own community as well. Therefore, the idea of the first workshop is to just get students comfortable around each other and willing to communicate. As a result, we start with an introductory interview where two students are paired up and interview each other using the questions above. Then, the students take turns introducing their classmates to the entire class. I chose to give my students a meaningful task the first day that allows them to practice their communication skills without too much pressure because I want them to be comfortable in the classroom. Furthermore, by participating in the interview myself and giving students the chance to introduce each other, I am hoping to show students that I am not the authoritarian instructor but that we are a working, mutual community in this service-learning course.

### **VIII. Conclusion**

While I know that service-learning is not a pedagogy or theory without fault, I appreciate the opportunity this type of pedagogy allows all who are involved (student, instructor, community) to learn from each other and enact change in the community they are all a part of. Again, in the field of composition, researchers have called for a need for mutuality in the classroom, or rather, an allowance for student resistance and an allowance for student-centeredness that places students' needs above teachers' gains. Researchers like Wallace & Ewald (2000) and Welch (2002) state that a classroom focused on mutuality will not be a compliant classroom but instead will produce resistance, deep discussion, and critical reflection. Is the service-learning classroom perfect? Absolutely not. Did I make mistakes this semester? Absolutely. But more than anything, I learned a lot from my students, and I hope that they learned as well. During our final presentations for the course, two of my students ended with saying that they will return to their home country this December and sign-up for a volunteer program because they want to help change their communities. This made me remember why I love teaching—I want to be the instructor who allows her students to evaluate how, what, and why they are learning, and service-learning allows us to do so. I want to create a course that allows students to use their voices, and I want to generate discussion that is meaningful to them in more than the classroom alone. I want to recognize my students for the people they are—capable and full of knowledge that just may change their communities for good. Idealistic? Probably—but I can try.

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