

CHAPTER 9.

**MULTIPLYING IMPACT:  
COMBINING THIRD  
AND FOURTHSPACES TO  
HOLISTICALLY ENGAGE  
BASIC WRITERS**

**Karen Gabrielle Johnson**  
Shippensburg University

Early in the spring semester, Cassie's<sup>1</sup> familiar face peeked around my office door. She was beaming with excitement, anxious to share her good news: She had just been offered a fulltime summer position in a nonprofit organization that would begin as soon as finals were over. As a writing center director who supervises studio programs, having a student visit three years later to share employment news is a bit unusual, and what makes Cassie's situation unique is that she began working for this nonprofit as part of a service-learning requirement in our basic writing course supported by Studio. Her connection to the organization was so strong that she continued to work for it even after her service learning course concluded, ultimately taking on an administrative role.

Of course, not all basic writers who enter a fourthspace, the place where students go to fulfill service, will connect so strongly with community partners, but Cassie's experience suggests deeper connections to university, community, classmates, and instructors can result when students reflect on service experiences in Studio. During studio sessions, Cassie and her classmates learned to link academic writing to their individual interests and experiences. Studio groups offer spaces for rich communication exchanges, and the addition of a fourthspace in the form of a service-learning site creates even greater opportunities for empowering writers to explore tangible, complex issues present in nearby communities while developing a network of relationships within and nearby the academy. Extending learning conversations to a fourthspace enriches thirdspace writing opportunities, further enhancing the learning atmosphere in the writing classroom. The synergy between thirdspace

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1 All students' name in this chapter have been changed.

and fourthspace not only helps students improve their writing, it also extends possibilities for reflecting on interactions with classmates, studio leaders, instructors, and community partners. This additional reflection can create community and inspire writers to fully engage in complex issues embedded in their research writing assignments.

I begin this chapter by discussing the rationale for developing a different kind of Studio, a service-learning hybrid. Students enrolled in a basic writing course at a mid-sized comprehensive state-supported university located in the Mid-Atlantic region participated in the development and refinement of this hybrid program. Next, I review a process for setting up and institutionalizing a service-learning studio. Beginning with the first-year pilot, I give a year-by-year description of studio leader training and roles, classroom structure, service-learning requirements, writing assignments, assessments, and assessment results that guided improvements over a three-year period. I conclude with a discussion about how a centralized theme improved interactional inquiry, reduced service options enhanced community spirit and studio-classroom discourse, and redesigned leader trainings helped leaders build competency and networking opportunities.

## **RATIONALE FOR A SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

### **ENGAGING THE WRITER**

Designers of basic writing courses face nontrivial challenges to motivate and engage writers who are required to take noncredit, developmental courses. Although engaging and motivating basic writers can be difficult, student engagement is possible if instructors create meaningful contexts for writing and incorporate issues and experiences that centrally involve students (Rose, 1983). Essentially, writing contexts—discussions about ideas, writing spaces, and writing topics—can either stimulate or suppress writers' motivation to complete writing assignments.

At the same time, and even when classroom discussions spark lively discourse based on course readings and student experiences, basic writing students may still lack motivation to complete assignments. This lack of motivation may be related to diminished confidence in academic writing abilities. Helping basic writers gain confidence and become motivated to complete writing assignments may be accomplished through Studio. In Writing Studios, leaders can mentor, guide, and engage students in the writing process.

Service-learning also engages writers by challenging them to solve complex problems, research issues, and respond to the community through service proj-

ects. According to Light (2001), extending learning outside of class is vital, as four out of five students report that the most specific, critical incident or moment that profoundly changed them actually occurred outside the classroom. Composition courses that integrate service-learning can allow for connections to the kinds of outside experiences that improve students' motivation, satisfaction, and writing development. Through the dual pedagogies of service-learning and Studio, students can collaboratively examine service experiences before taking on the complex issues presented by writing process. This additional opportunity for reflection can position students to become more engaged and empowered, and thus more open to writing growth.

### **BENEFITS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

Pine (2008) believes that writing for and about the community, a type of service-learning described by Deans (2000), can help basic writers learn academic literacies, especially when basic writers develop a personal investment in service. She discovered that students used their sites of service as primary sources of investigation and integrated their experiences with secondary sources, which helped them develop more complex, less formulaic writing. Pine believes this model of service can academicize students' work in research writing, even if they have negative or less than ideal service experiences. However, Pine cautions instructors to make explicit connections between the service and course content "by and for students in multiple forms of writing and speaking" (2008, p. 53). She notes that service-learning has the potential to make basic writing coursework more meaningful, but care must be taken to help students link their experiences to classroom discussions and writing assignments.

### **A LAYERED APPROACH: SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

Incorporating service-learning into a basic writing course appears to encourage writers' engagement and writing proficiencies (Astin, Volgelsand, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000), but basic writers will still need additional support to help them develop academic writing skills. Studios provide writers a thirdspace for sharing experiences in smaller groups where they receive feedback on papers and learn from each other, yet unless writers find appealing topics that link academic writing to their interests, students may not fully engage in dialogue. Service-learning helps engage writers in exploring tangible, complex issues present in nearby communities. When writers participate in service events and later discuss and write about their experiences in studios, they can become more engaged and improve their academic literacies (Pine, 2008). To build a

course that promotes engagement while helping students develop their writing, I developed a Service-Learning Studio hybrid for one class of 20 students. In this pilot, students participated in classroom-sponsored service projects and attended weekly meetings.

## **YEAR ONE: INITIATING A SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

Funding constraints and the institution of a single studio class limited full adherence to Grego and Thompson's Studio. Like Mary Gray's (this volume) hybrid/studio for first-year writing that located online writing studios in the discussion board function for each writing class and required one undergraduate facilitator per class, I too could not draw students from multiple sections of basic writing. My pilot required one studio leader for my single course. In contrast to my fellow authors in this collection who received funding to launch initial studio initiatives, I began our first studio program without any funding at all. As a result, I had to deviate from Grego and Thompson's (2008) staffing model of an experienced teacher or graduate student. Instead, I recruited an experienced writing tutor, who volunteered his time through the AmeriCorps VISTA Scholar-in-Service program.

Before the semester began, we met for three one-hour sessions to discuss how he should lead interactive, small group discussions, manage groups, and participate in class. We also set up a schedule for half hour, biweekly meetings to discuss course material, student concerns, service-learning components, and studio strategies. Once the semester began, the studio leader attended class so he could better understand writing assignments and course content. Attending class allowed him to contribute to classroom discussions, teach selected lessons, and meet informally with students before and after class. He formed seven studio groups of two to three students who met for weekly one-hour sessions. Students were encouraged to remain in their initial groups but could change times if they encountered schedule or personality conflicts.

Throughout the fall semester, the leader built trust and fostered student interactions. Meetings were student-driven and led by their needs for guidance on completing writing assignments, service-learning requirements, or another writing assignment in a different course. A typical session encouraged peer reviews, helped students understand and interpret assignments, and provided feedback on drafts. According to the leader, the majority of sessions focused on the current writing assignment for the course, but his role was not limited to mere academics—students frequently discussed other concerns.

As a senior student, the leader also served as a mentor to provide “insider

information,” or rather, guidance about how to experience success in classes, study for exams, find information on the university’s website, or how to register for classes. Similar to Gray’s online studio, students received full course credit for fully participating as a writer and responder. Because attendance was required, the leader sent me a feedback form that briefly summarized students’ activities. Students received full credit for sessions if they brought their writing assignments, engaged in peer review, and interacted in discussions. Attendance accounted for 10% of students’ total course grade, which was calculated based on participation in 10 out of 12 possible weekly meetings.

### **THE SERVICE-LEARNING CLASSROOM**

Students were required to serve for eight hours with an organization in a career field they were exploring. Most had not declared majors, so the service project gave students an opportunity to research a potential career while learning about a non-profit organization and the local community. During a regularly scheduled class session, students attended an annual Volunteer Service Organization Fair, organized by the university’s Volunteer Service Organization, to meet community partners and select service projects. They met with community partners at the Volunteer Fair and committed to a project they could reasonably expect to complete in eight hours. Because the students and I were free to meet with community partners during class time, we discussed project expectations and determined the scope and breadth of projects. Service commitments were documented in a contract, which was signed by both parties. Students served at a variety of sites: a homeless shelter, an after-school program, an environmental agency, a local food bank, a fundraiser for cancer awareness, and a home for individuals with disabilities.

Course activities included readings and discussions focused on the value of engaging in service as well as specific instructions for carrying out service. Students interviewed community partners to learn about the organization, details for completing service projects, the partner’s history and accomplishments with the organization, and additional information partners were willing to share. Using information gleaned from the interview, students wrote an oral history about their community partner. Students completed a number of other writing assignments closely linked to the service project: a rhetorical analysis essay on a service-learning article, an informal presentation about their service work, an annotated bibliography, and a final research essay that integrated experiences from their service-learning project. To complete this final essay, students conducted a literature review and developed a thesis and support for claims. Specifically, the instructions explained:

You will write a literature review where you will integrate three sources to provide background information about your organization, service, or a related topic. Following the literature review, you will discuss the service you fulfilled, results of your service, and the significance of your experience.

## **RESULTS OF THE STUDIO-SERVICE LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID, YEAR 1**

Students had difficulty connecting research and service, but the Studio helped them explore ideas. The leader guided writers in developing their thesis and support, helping them grow in their ability to develop strong arguments via interactional inquiry. For example, one student who initially struggled in generating a thesis developed a strong argument after discussing her topic in Studio: “I am going to show you how much after-school programs mutually benefit the children as well as the workers.” She then supported her thesis by using primary research from an interview with her community partner along with her secondary research.

### **EVALUATION OF STUDENT OUTCOMES**

To argue for future funding, I needed several types of data to provide multiple perspectives on the studio’s impact. An online survey provided feedback on students’ perceptions. Academic writing growth was measured via a pretest-posttest assignment that required students to summarize an academic article, thus assessing growth in students’ critical thinking and writing skills. Finally, a qualitative analysis of students’ writing assignments and the leader’s session notes provided insight concerning student perceptions of their experience.

#### **Student perceptions**

An anonymous, researcher-constructed Likert scale emailed to students during the last week of the semester asked them to rate their perceptions about their leader, future tutoring opportunities, and their personal growth as readers and writers. Scaled items ranged from the options of *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree* with values ranging from five for the *Strongly Agree* rating to one for the *Strongly Disagree* rating.

As Table 9.1 indicates, students positively perceived their leader, crediting him with their writing improvement. One interesting outcome was students’ positive response concerning their interest in meeting with the leader in the subsequent semester (4.95) as this reveals their strong bond with the leader and his support. Students also seemed to be highly motivated (4.80) to complete writing

assignments as they indicated putting an honest effort into their writing. Finally, the third highest score (4.70) reveals students gained confidence. Hence, these high scores suggest that relationships deepened, students remained motivated to complete writing assignments, and they gained confidence in their writing.

Open-ended survey questions confirmed Likert scale ratings and revealed additional benefits from Studio. Students’ comments confirmed their enjoyment in working with the leader (Number 4) and credited him with facilitating their writing growth (Numbers 3 and 5): “He was really great with helping me to improve my writing.” Yet, studio benefits stretched beyond writing growth; students also believed meetings nurtured the formation of friendships. As one student notes, the interactive nature of sessions contributed to friendship development: “[Studio sessions] helped me to meet new classmates, because we were all peer reviewing and talking to each other about assignments.” Evidently, interactional inquiry benefitted students holistically in their social and academic development, deepening relational connections.

**Table 9.1. Year one basic writing survey of student perceptions**

Survey Statement	Mean Scores	Standard Deviation
1. My essays demonstrated a strong depth of analysis	4.25	0.44
2. I put an honest effort into writing my essay	4.80	0.41
3. As a result of my leader’s work with me, I am more confident in my writing	4.70	0.47
4. I enjoyed working with my leader in our Writing Studio sessions	4.65	0.49
5. My leader has helped me improve in my use of grammar	4.55	0.51
6. My work with my leader has helped me in my other classes	4.55	0.60
7. I like it that my leader comes to class with me	4.60	0.60
8. I would like to work with my leader next semester with my papers	4.95	0.22
9. I was motivated to complete my writing assignments	4.55	0.69

*Note.* Sample size was 20 students with 100% participation rate.

Interestingly, survey results from our pilot strongly correlate with research from this collection. Two outcomes from Gray’s survey findings are strikingly similar to ours, one of which includes the high ranking of student-perceived

confidence. Gray's survey prompt, "I am confident in my writing ability," is remarkably similar to number three in our survey. Both of our results revealed high student confidence on the same five-point Likert scale, as 72.1% of Gray's cohort Strongly Agreed or Agreed they were confident in their writing ability while the service-learning hybrid ranked 4.7 out of 5.0 on a similar prompt. Such findings suggest that studio participation can increase student confidence across institutions and modes of delivery. The second area of similar findings includes students' perceptions of the facilitator. Though each hybrid used different prompts to determine students' perceived helpfulness of their facilitator, both groups rated facilitators highly in their ability to support them. The service-learning hybrid cohort even expressed a continued desire to work with the facilitator in the next semester. Thus, even though both groups were mandated to participate in Studio as part of a course requirement, students did not negatively perceive their sessions or facilitators. Third, Aurora Matzke and Kelsey Huising and I both established the importance of instructor-facilitator communication. Not only do our models of constant instructor-facilitator communication embody studio methodology, clarify facilitator roles, and help facilitators model studio communication in their groups, our constant communication contributed to students' positive experiences.

### Academic Writing

Students summarized an academic article during the second and fifteenth week of classes. As a pretest measure, students summarized a research article without prior instruction. Students electronically submitted summaries, which I forwarded to a graduate assistant who coded them to eliminate identifying information. Posttest summaries were collected in the same manner, and both versions were scored when the semester ended.

To evaluate summaries, the Director of First-Year Writing and I developed a scale from one to five, with five ranking as the highest ability. Five criteria were used: (A) The summary is written in a coherent and consistent manner that reveals understanding about the topic; (B) The summary shows competence in the conventions of standard edited American English; (C) The article's main idea is clearly identified; (D) The summary contains only essential statements that relevantly support the article's main idea; (E) The summary is unbiased and does not contain the student's personal opinion. To maintain inter-rater reliability, we scored two essays together, compared ratings, and discussed our rationales for scores. After achieving reliability on two more essays, we scored the remaining essays. Scores were averaged and statistically calculated for differences by utilizing paired samples *t*-tests. Paired samples *t*-test results revealed an overall significant difference,  $t(19) = 3.80, p < .05$ , suggesting significant writing improvement.



## Service-Learning Impact on Students

Results of the service-learning component were mixed. According to students' feedback on reflection activities, document analysis of research papers, and the leader's session notes, students enjoyed service events, although many struggled to generate research questions related to their organization and experienced difficulty integrating information from service experiences with research essays. Despite these connective complications, they remained motivated and wrote meaningful research essays. Three students expressed a desire to submit their research essays about service-learning to the university's undergraduate academic journal. One student's essay was accepted, and she introduced her essay with a reflective tribute about the value of her studio leader and service-learning project:

My writing level . . . has drastically changed . . . Going into the class I had no faith in my writing skills . . . Never before in my life did I like writing as much as I did in this class . . . He [leader] was such a help to my writing skills and my confidence in my own work . . . In the class I got to work on writing skills, build relationships with new people, and do my service-learning project, while I was learning about myself as well. This class gave me insight into my own capabilities as a writer, as an overall student in any class, and more confidence with myself in any situation life may throw at me.

Two key points emerge in her reflection: the benefits of working with a leader and service-learning. She mentions thrice that the leader enhanced her confidence, an attribute important for helping students persevere in writing. Additionally, she attributes the development of her friendships, self-awareness, and skill development for other courses to the studio, class, and service activities. Her analysis reveals her deep connections to others, a peripheral benefit of this hybrid program.

Although direct measures indicated students improved in writing and higher order thinking skills, they struggled with integrating service experiences into their research essays. As Pine (2008) cautions, writing assignments must carefully and intentionally connect the service and writing. I revised my writing assignments and service projects for the second year to strengthen connections between service-learning and writing projects.

## YEAR TWO: THE LAUNCH OF AN INSTITUTIONALIZED STUDIO PROGRAM

Miley (this volume) notes that success is not merely measured by students' development, but success is also measured by the number of newly formed part-

nerships because partnerships provide crucial funding for program survival. In my case, I found partnerships essential to program creation. I had an established partnership with the Director of First-Year Writing who desired to expand Studio to all basic writing courses. When we presented the assessment report to the Associate Provost in the spring, the Director of First-Year Writing appealed to the Associate Provost to fund all fall courses. I had merely hoped for funding one paid studio leader for my course, but the Associate Provost was thrilled with the results and granted seven *paid* leader positions. The following fall semester, I mentored six instructors who began integrating Studio while I continued incorporating the only service-learning studio hybrid.

### **STUDIO TRAINING FOR A LARGER COHORT**

News of funded leaders came at the end of the spring semester, which did not allow time for development of a leader training program; however, selected leaders were trained tutors, so they possessed a pedagogical foundation. Throughout the fall semester, leaders attended six biweekly writing tutor training meetings, but most training topics discussed applications for one-to-one peer tutoring rather than studio groups. I met separately with leaders twice to address questions and concerns, but my limited availability prevented more frequent meetings. Meeting separately with leaders on a consistent basis would have been beneficial because even though leaders understood their studio roles, they still yearned for guidance in navigating complex situations. For example, some leaders struggled with engaging a group of students or managing a group peer review.

### **RESHAPING THE SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

I revised the course from its original configuration by modifying the theme, class readings, and service sites. A new theme of *poverty* replaced the generic topic of *service-learning*, offering unique opportunities for exploring complex issues. Assigned readings explored factors that contribute to poverty, programs that seek to help individuals escape poverty, and attempts to improve the conditions overall. Additionally, service venues were limited to two sites in order to create more cohesive experiences and to cultivate stronger discourse in the classroom and Studio. Service sites were selected based on students' positive experiences in Year One. Finally, both the leader and I took a more active role by attending all service events with students. One service-learning trip, organized by the Catholic Campus Minister, was made to a privately-funded homeless shelter. At that site, students painted fences, cleaned houses, worked in a large community garden, and interviewed shelter residents and community partners. The second

option, which had two separate service dates, included serving a free breakfast to townspeople in a church basement and interviewing community partners and individuals attending the event.

On class days following service events, class discussions served as reflective sessions. Students discussed the people they met and issues related to poverty. As students shared experiences, the classroom climate was noticeably different from Year One's discussions—some students were more subdued while others were more vocal, but they appeared alert and engaged in dialogue about the fourthspace. Students were affected by service experiences, and a cohesive classroom community began to emerge.

Similar to Year One, changes in students' thinking and development of relationships were not limited to the classroom. According to the leader, sessions following service events also became more engaging as students shared out-of-classroom experiences and applied learning to interview essays, annotated bibliographies, and research papers. Service-learning projects seemed to enhance student engagement and provide valuable experiences for conducting primary research that helped them traverse into the unfamiliar genre of academic writing.

## **EXAMINING WRITING GROWTH OF STUDENTS IN THE SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

Because the service component had been redesigned, assignments were modified and shifted, which did not allow time for a summary assignment to be given early in the semester. To ensure that authentic writing growth was measured, students' original placement test, taken during the summer prior to admission, was used as a pretest. Students who scored below 445 on their SAT Writing subtest had taken a written placement test. They responded to a prompt and were evaluated on their ability to follow the prompt, write a coherent and reasonably well-organized essay, and control errors. Students were placed in basic writing if they received a score of 2 or below by both reviewers (See Figure 9.1 for ENG 050 Basic Writing Grading Rubric). If there was a lack of consensus between reviewers, a third evaluator scored the essay to break the tie. For the posttest, students retook the test under the same constraints at the end of the semester. Processes for collecting and coding essays, establishing inter-rater reliability, and scoring procedures remained consistent with the previous year's processes.

Scores were collected and statistically evaluated for differences through paired samples *t*-tests. Results indicated a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores,  $t(19) = 12.46$ ,  $p < .05$ . Students' marked growth in writing skills seemed to have been a result of Year Two modifications. Students appeared

more empowered to integrate information and service experiences into their research essays than they were in Year One, indicating that a more focused theme and fewer service sites may have improved their ability to integrate primary and secondary research into a cohesive research paper.

Assessed Skills	Score
Essay is short, disorganized, and filled with global errors. Essay lacks overall structure and a clear focus. Ideas are incomplete and hard to understand. Writer tends to list benefits and drawbacks without taking a stand.	1
Essay has some sentence level errors, but the focus is a bit stronger. Writer tried to develop a clear thesis, but still fails to do so. Writers try to take a stand.	2
Essay has a clear focus and not as many sentence-level errors. Writer is able to create a thesis and developed at least 3 or 4 clear points/examples. Writer uses some interesting or useful examples to create a clear argument. Writer takes a clear stand, but not always.	3
Essay has few or no grammatical errors, but the argument is especially compelling. Examples are original and very persuasive.	4

Figure 9.1. ENG 050 Basic Writing Grading Rubric.

Changes in Year Two’s course and service-learning designs confirmed students’ improvement in engagement, interactional inquiry, and learning. However, even though Year Two’s design appeared effective, improvements needed to be addressed in leader training and on-going leader support. Providing leaders with studio-specific training could help them direct sessions while developing a supportive network of fellow leaders.

## **YEAR THREE: GROWTH OF SERVICE-LEARNING STUDIO HYBRID**

### **BUILDING A STRONGER STUDIO**

Although much of the structure of Studio remained unchanged, several modifications were made. First, the Director of First-Year Writing adopted the

service-learning hybrid; therefore, in Year Three, three classes conducted service-learning projects. The three service-learning courses adopted a common syllabus, keeping the assignments largely the same as the previous year. All three classes traveled together on service days where they worked at homeless shelters, one to the same privately-funded shelter organized by the Catholic Campus Ministeries and the other to a publicly-funded, county shelter. Second, pre-semester training was improved to address leaders' need for more specific knowledge and skills. In this training, leaders read *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* to gain an understanding of basic tutoring pedagogy. Before the fall semester began, leaders attended an all-day training co-led by the Director of First-Year Writing and me. Leaders learned how to help writers set goals, respond to student writing, and engage writers in dialogue and peer reviews. Leaders practiced directing mock studio sessions with participants who played the roles of basic writers with actual first-draft essays. Third, we held biweekly meetings with leaders to discuss tutoring methodology and troubleshoot difficulties, providing leaders with opportunities to circumvent problems and learn strategies for improving sessions' productiveness.

### IMPACT OF SERVICE-LEARNING UPON STUDIO SESSIONS

Because studio classes were evenly distributed into traditional and hybrid groups, I wanted to determine if differences existed between groups. The Basic Writing Survey distributed in Year One was slightly revised to provide more specific prompts regarding student writing. One survey statement, which asked students if they would like to work with their leader in the subsequent semester, was deleted because some leaders would be unavailable for tutoring the following spring. As Table 9.2 shows, the Service-Learning Studio hybrid reported higher ratings on *all* items, with five of those significantly higher than the Traditional Studio groups. Almost all of the highest scores in the Service-Learning group are directly correlated with leader satisfaction, acknowledgement of leaders' assistance in helping students improve in writing, and students' positive relationship with the leader. These results mirrored Year One's scores, indicating that writer-leader interactions were strengthened during service activities and helped foster positive relationships.

Short-answer survey questions clarified students' perceptions. Students were asked if they believed meetings influenced their social interactions with classmates, both in and out of class. In the Service-Learning hybrid, 91% of students replied *yes* compared to 65% of students in traditional groups. This significant difference may be due to the early integration of fourthspace experiences into the course, allowing students to form friendships shortly after the semester be-

gan. One student explained that service-learning social interactions offered new opportunities for relationships at meetings: “I became more open and came to know my fellow classmates.” Students’ willingness to be “open” appeared to be a factor in the success of studio meetings.

**Table 9.2. Year three basic writing survey of students’ perceptions**

Survey Statement	Mean	
	S-L	Trad.
1. I put an honest effort into writing my essays.	<b>4.53*</b>	4.19
2. I will meet with a writing tutor for future essays.	<b>4.38*</b>	4.01
3. As a result of working with my leader, I am a more confident writer.	<b>4.56</b>	4.31
4. I enjoyed working with my leader in our Writing Studio sessions.	<b>4.64</b>	4.41
5. My leader has helped me improve my use of grammar.	<b>4.64*</b>	4.32
6. My work with my leader has helped me with my other classes.	<b>4.58*</b>	4.00
7. I like it that my leader comes to class with me.	<b>4.62*</b>	4.28
8. I was motivated to complete my writing assignments.	<b>4.13</b>	3.97
9. I usually make significant changes to my first draft of an essay.	<b>4.20</b>	3.99
10. In future papers I plan to incorporate the process of drafting, revising, and editing.	<b>4.32</b>	4.20

*Notes.* (1) S-L= Studio Groups that participated in Service-Learning. Trad. = Traditional Studio Groups. (2) Higher scores are indicated in bold font. (3) Sample size was 122 students with 95% participation rate. (4) \* Indicates a significant difference between groups: 1.  $t(120)=2.09$ ,  $p<.05$ ; 2.  $t(120)=2.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ; 5.  $t(120)=2.39$ ,  $p<.05$ ; 6.  $t(120)=3.02$ ,  $p<.05$ ; 7.  $t(120)=2.19$ ,  $p<.05$ .

**SPRING CONVERSATIONS**

In the spring, we held follow-up interviews to further research student perceptions of Studio. Two students responded to an email solicitation and consented to a digitally-recorded interview. Both interviews were transcribed and analyzed. One student, Adam, discussed how his leader helped him develop his writing skills by pushing him to “interpret [events] more clearly” and helping him to learn “writing techniques to become more professional.” Adam believed that writing about his service-learning experience improved his writing because he “became more descriptive, wanting people to feel like they are there.” Adam maintained motivation to refine his discourse to enhance reader interpretation of his ideas.

Another student, Bruce, noted the change in the classroom environment

after service trips. He credits the service experience for facilitating his development of relationships:

Before we went to the shelter, (laughing) I did not like some people in the class. At the shelter, we built connections and friendships. We got closer as a family, joked around together. I could be myself in class and learned a lot.

Working together, eating together, traveling together, and listening to stories of tragedy and triumph transforms not only the spirit of the classroom, but these experiences also invigorate dynamics in studio sessions and lead to better conversations about writing.

Overall, results from surveys and interviews suggest service-learning students rated their academic growth more highly, viewed their leader more positively, developed more interactions in the Studio and classroom, and carried their learning into the new semester. Engaging in whole-class service-learning projects synergized classroom and studio discussions, creating community and inspiring writers. Lastly, service impacted leaders as they enjoyed service activities and leading discussions about service experiences.

## **MULTIPLYING THE IMPACT OF THIRDSPACE-FOURTHSPACE COLLABORATIONS**

The thirdspace of the Studio can be enriched by a fourthspace: service-learning. Even so, combining service with Studio requires thoughtful planning. In this hybrid, three components enhanced studio experiences. A centralized theme, poverty, improved interactional inquiry because students learned different perspectives about their common topic when listening to peers. Building service experiences that coincide with complex issues cultivates interactional inquiry even further, ultimately helping writers become more engaged in writing, improve their writing skills, and apply learning to written assignments. Fourthspace conversations about poverty and direct involvement in service to organizations that work with individuals who live in poverty can help writers build stronger writing connections. The centralized theme helped students transport their ideas and experiences from the fourthspace to the thirdspace, enhancing interactional inquiry and their understanding of inquiry-based research.

Reducing service options to create shared service experiences enhanced the classroom's community spirit and cohesive studio-classroom discourse. In short, *collectively* listening to personal stories of committed volunteers dedicated to improving the conditions of the homeless or of a homeless man's advice to college students surely draws classroom members together in engaging discourse.

Working side-by-side with writers at service events also impacted leaders, which undoubtedly spilled over in studio conversations. Stories enter our human soul and provide meaningful, rhetorical contexts. Leaders connected with writers in fourthspace events, and later on, provided students with much more than help with writing assignments—leaders also gave advice, provided insider information about the university, and created a caring, safe environment. By serving together in fourthspaces, students began to develop relationships with leaders where they openly discussed ideas and requested feedback on writing projects. Students who participated in fourthspaces rated their leaders more positively and put more effort into their writing assignments than those without fourthspace experiences.

Finally, leader training must be uniquely designed, address theoretical foundations for practice, and establish protocols for studio sessions. Gray (this volume) highlights the investment of time and effort needed to support studio programs, arguing for the Writing Center's central role in developing and implementing Studio. Writing Center directors are uniquely positioned to educate facilitators and provide training opportunities to help facilitators build competency, ask specific questions, and provide networking opportunities where facilitators can form friendships, adding to *their* satisfaction. Regular staff meetings in our Writing Center provided leaders with support in working out complex situations, a forum for exchanging ideas, and a place to make their own knowledge, becoming a space for interactional inquiry. As Grego and Thompson (2008) note, staff meetings can keep participants "in touch with issues of conducting groups, while also bringing to the table issues related to student participants, making us all more reflective about the patterns and interactions that we are a part of" (p. 171). These ongoing communications help leaders become more effective in their roles.

Teaching with a service-learning component is time-intensive and requires coordination with community members. Coupling Studio with a service-learning project can be even more challenging, but after years of observing changes in students and leaders, the benefits of these combined spaces seem too compelling to relinquish. Students learn the discourse of the academy and use real world experiences to link research with writing, a process that helps them internalize important components for holistic success in college—engagement, critical thinking, and writing. Yet, benefits are not limited to students' learning and success; students' service-learning and studio experiences offer opportunities for expanding their understanding in new venues they will remember long after they leave the academy.

Before the Third Year ended, Andrew popped in my office to ask me to join him for coffee in the nearby Starbucks. Andrew, a first-generation student from



South Philadelphia, struggled with writing in our course. I quickly closed my laptop and joined him in a celebratory coffee chat. He had successfully passed all his first-year courses and was planning on studying abroad in the fall. We discussed how to access online writing support while he was overseas, and then suddenly, his thoughts flipped to a completely different topic: “I’d really like to go back to the shelter. Are you planning another trip?” With my heart dancing at his interest yet disappointed that I could not support a summer service project, I answered, “Not until the fall, Andrew, but if I come up with a project before then, I’ll let you know.”

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