Letter from the Guest Editor

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Service learning initiatives have taken seed in universities across the United States in light of different, yet overlapping, calls for change in the ways university professors and students go about their work. Administrators at the nation's top colleges and universities who collaborate in the Campus Compact issue one call for change (see their statement of principles at http://www.compact.org/about/about-main.html). They ask for improved social accountability of faculty and deeper university connection to the community. Founded in 1985, The Campus Compact's efforts were bolstered through the national funds set aside first by George Bush in 1990 via the National and Community Service Act, and then increased in 1993 when President Clinton signed the National Service Trust Act. Interestingly, these administrative efforts ran in tandem with a groundswell of change over the last decade as freshly minted PhDs encountered unforgiving job markets across the disciplines (Readings 1996). Academic job markets have moved away from offering tenure track jobs to ultra specialized professors, and have instead moved toward offering jobs for generalists. Those whose research, teaching, and service activities dovetail to form a unified set of institutional roles, and whose research interests are transdisciplinary, often have better employment prospects in academe. Bill Readings (1996) notes this change and sees the tendency of hiring generalists as not abating anytime soon:

> The apparent horizon in arts and letters for the North American University can be roughly sketched as the development of an increasingly interdisciplinary general humanities department amid a cluster of vocational schools, which will themselves include devolved areas of expertise traditionally centered in the humanities. Such vocational schools will tend to increase the social science component in traditionally humanistic fields of inquiry. (pp. 174)

As an interdisciplinary, applied, and collaborative line of inquiry, service learning initiatives present viable, alternative roles for scholars, at the same time as they present administrators and decision makers with programs that enact their calls for greater community responsibility. With all its promise, though, service learning as a relatively new activity alters traditional institutional structures, shifts intellectual missions, and risks marginalization at every turn.

Because service learning initiatives are fairly recent, research remains to be done on the kinds of day-to-day interactions that lead to the institutionalization of long-term programs, a lacuna this special issue seeks to address. To begin with, the institutional standing of service learning initiatives remains difficult to legitimize—service learning is the fringe bordering the fabric of academic work. Some faculty and administrators do not value nor support their colleagues' efforts to start and sustain service learning programs because they perceive these programs as dispensable to the main work of the university, a point made well in the Underwood, Welsh, Gauvain, and Duffy study of UC Links. A branch of the University of California Office of the President, UC Links offers research and administrative support to all the UC campuses that have service related programs. "Learning at the Edges: Challenges to the Sustainability of Service Learning in Higher Education" presents an ethnographic example of the expert-novice roles emerging out of University of California-community collaborations. The authors find that researchers, cast in the position of learners when on site, and perceived as servants when in the university, are challenged to develop and maintain viable outreach initiatives. Even when the faculty members and their programs are as established as Michael Cole who developed UC San Dieogo's 5th Dimension model, their service learning projects encounter harsh judgments about what counts as rigorous academic work for scholars and students. Because so little is known about the precise roles faculty play in sustaining service learning programs, Underwood et al. ask for more self-reflexive ethnographies on the researchers' parts. With more self-reflexive ethnographies, "we can begin to discern the precise division of labor and the necessary resources needed to overcome the institutional fragility of these efforts" (23).

One important way in which we can better understand the institutional fragility of these efforts is to examine the terms by which they identify themselves within the institution. Brooke Hessler addresses this topic in her essay "Composing an Institutional Identity: the Terms of Community Service in Higher Education." In her review of college and university mission statements and other institutional literacies, she finds that service learning programs might better institutionalize themselves if they were thought of as "applied scholarship." This name invokes both "*inquiry* and *action*, rather than *service* or *experience*" (emphasis in origi-

nal 39). Such a "rhetorical emphasis redirects our attention from the cultivation of students-as-citizens to that of students-as-scholars" (39). Terming service learning as a kind of applied scholarship not only shifts attention to students' work as knowledge makers, but also indexes the notion that service learning is a problem-solving activity, one that demands collaboration with community residents in order to identify the problems to be explored and perhaps ameliorated through mutually rewarding inquiry.

The social problems that service learning as applied scholarship can research are found and understood only after researchers are invited into the community. Any kind of scholarly intervention in teaching or research that takes place without invitation and/or through a top-down application assumes an oppressive, and ultimately self-defeating, paternalistic superiority (Cushman 1998). The best kinds of research questions and problems for service learning programs are therefore located locally through careful, involved, inquiry with community members, through dialogue and risk-taking. In "Drawing on the Local: Collaboration and Community Expertise," Linda Flower and Shirley Brice Heath open with an illuminating exchange drawn from a problem solving dialogue among Pittsburgh community members, civic leaders, and city officials. The dialogue presents a theory for intervention and collaborative learning and scholarship, offering a clear understanding of the roles every collaborator must assume when practicing community-based inquiry. This theory is then illustrated through two cases: the first from Shirley Brice Heath's documentary Art*Show*, and the second from Linda Flower's research with the Carnegie Mellon University initiated Community Think Tank. In this Think Tank all of the stakeholders engage in problem solving dialogues with respect for the knowledge each participant brings to the table. These cases illustrate that in order to create sustainable service learning programs, all involved must enter into mutually rewarding, reciprocal relations. They "must recogniz[e] the history and contributions of community institutions,… commi[t] to a relationship not defined by a one-semester project," and "respect… community expertise that is expressed in the active practice of dialogue" (47).

Reciprocity of the kind seen in the Flower and Heath essay is hard won and not easily accounted for in final research reports on service learning activities. If researchers open up for scrutiny their tension-filled reciprocal relations with other participants and collaborators, they will likely have to refocus their research agenda, making it more about the *process* of research as opposed to the *findings* (Barton, 2000). Researchers also encounter an invasion of personal privacy when disclosing in great detail the terms of their reciprocal relations, especially when these disclosures demand that the researcher bare all his/her personal history and subjective positions (Kirsch and Lu, 2000). Yes, we need to avoid

reifying reciprocity as a god-term (Hessler; and Carrick, Himley, and Jacobi, this issue), but we also need to consider the problems researchers face when disclosing the nitty-gritty details of their reciprocal relations.

Perhaps a more socially reflexive account of the collaborative relations that make up service learning could help assuage these concerns about reciprocity. "A socially responsible reflexivity is an everyday practice that demands we continually reposition ourselves in relation to others and in relation to our own literate activities as scholars…." (Cushman and Guinsatao Monberg, 1998, p. 167). Social reflexivity in service learning relies on reflections from students, teachers, and community members. These reflections reveal the difficulties and accomplishments of individuals who often have to socially reposition themselves in service learning collaboratives, reflections that offer one place for collaborators to begin writing, teaching, and knowledge making together.

The Carrick, Himley, and Jacobi article, "Ruptura: Acknowledging the Lost Subjects of the Service Learning Story," provides a compelling example of these three teacher-researchers enacting social reflexivity. Through classroom data, anecdote, and observation, they chronicle the teachable moments in their respective service learning classrooms. In these teachable moments, or moments of "ruptura," relations between students and teachers, teachers and community members, and students and community members are objectified and critiqued. In this way, these collaborators in the Syracuse University service learning projects break from their routine ways of interacting together to reflect on, discuss, question, and challenge the terms of reciprocity. Doing so, they uncover the tensions and complexity of daily negotiating reciprocal relations. If reciprocity has become a god term for service learning, this socially reflexive account provides a model for the kind of writing, teaching, and scholarship that complicate this term. This paper reveals the situated, stressed-filled, and difficult relations that emerge in service learning programs, relations that sometimes are, and sometimes are not, mutually rewarding. "We are advocating for a method of narrative refraction —not treating stories as foundational, but as complex, meaningful, ongoing events that can be told and retold to keep learning and teaching in motion." Thus, this article presents a kind of social reflexivity that is a methodology in itself—a method for knowledge making, pedagogy, and community collaboration that relies on narrative and critique of particular service learning relations.

In all, this special issue presents the difficulties and successes of service learning programs with the goal of offering readers well-qualified, situated, and modest conclusions.

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