Mapping New Terrain: Service-Learning Across the Disciplines

By Edward Zlotkowski

In the March 1996 issue of the AAHE Bulletin, former AAHE Vice President Ted Marchese interviewed John Abbott, director of Britain's Education 2000 Trust and the leader of "an international effort to link experts in disciplines such as neurology and evolutionary psychology and leading educational innovators in a search for new learning strategies that 'go with the grain of the brain.'" In a section of the interview entitled "Learning for the 21st Century," Abbott notes that "people worldwide need a whole series of new competencies." Following Marchese's reply that "we see all kinds of movements today to add these to the curriculum," Abbott introduces a critical distinction:

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Well, not to prejudge, but I doubt such abilities can be taught solely in the classroom, or be developed solely by teachers. Higher order thinking and problem-solving skills grow out of direct experience, not simply teaching; they require more than a classroom activity. They develop through active involvement and real-life experiences in workplaces and the community [emphasis added].

At almost exactly the same time that Marchese's interview with Abbott was going to press, AAHE was launching what would turn out to be the largest publishing venture in its history: an 18-volume series on service-learning in the academic disciplines. Although at the time no one linked the interview with the prospective series, in retrospect the latter can almost be viewed as a response to Abbott's injunction.

It is curious how vigorously many in higher education defend both their programs and their students from "more than...classroom activity." Not infre-
It is in the “swampy lowlands” of “real world” experiences that real complexity resides. The academy’s problems, in contrast, are the “manageable” ones.

In the varied topography of professional practice, there is a hard, high ground overlooking a swamp. On the high ground, manageable problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands, problems are messy and confusing and incapable of technical solution. The irony of this situation is that the problems of the high ground tend to be relatively unimportant to individuals or to society at large, however great their technical interest may be, while in the swamp lie the problems of greatest human concern.

In other words, widespread assumptions to the contrary, it is in the “swampy lowlands” of “real-world” experiences that real complexity resides. The academy’s problems, in contrast, are the “manageable” ones.

In the very first volume of the AAHE series, Writing the Community: Concepts and Models for Service-Learning in Composition (1997), Nora Bacon tells the story of a pair of students who chose to write for a nearby recycling center. After the pair had gotten feedback from Bacon on a draft of their work, they also brought it to the center’s director for critique. As it turned out, his recommendations were quite different.

The student writers wisely ignored my suggestions and accepted the director’s, recognizing that his criteria were grounded in intimate knowledge of the audience and purpose of the text. In their next conference with me, they presented their revision and explained the rationale for their choices. It was an awkward meeting. All of us felt that my authority had been undermined, and though we finally worked our way into some interesting conversation about the assumptions behind the two evaluations, I had to struggle against the impulse to defend my response. I was embarrassed by what I did not know.

I cannot help wondering how many academics bar the door to “real-world” experiences because of an underlying fear that students will return to the classroom with questions and answers that are “messy and confusing” and challenge their authority, if not their actual expertise.

The over 400 contributors to the 18-volume series have all, at least to some degree, indicated their willingness to risk such “embarrassment.” In doing so, they have helped meet the challenge identified by William Plater, dean of the faculties and executive vice chancellor at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, when he writes: “The metaphor of the classroom is a powerful one. This most basic and fundamental unit of academic life—the sanctity of the classroom and the authority of the teacher within it—is about to be turned inside out.” By discussing and documenting what happens when the classroom door is deliberately opened—and in some cases, taken off its hinges—the series’s contributors have created at least one rudimentary map to a renewed vision of American higher education.

**Series Background**

Since the early 1990s, educators interested in reconnecting higher education not only with communities beyond the campus but also with the American tradition of education for service have recognized the critical importance of winning faculty support for this work. As Tim Stanton, former director of Stanford’s Haas Center, noted in a 1990 Campus Compact report, despite student and presidential interest in service, relatively “[little attention has been paid] to the faculty role in supporting student service efforts.” But unless faculty could be persuaded to join this effort, the prospects for academically and socially significant long-term academy-community partnerships seemed dim. Hence, a new effort was launched to develop faculty interest in community-based work.

One initiative to build such interest was the creation, under the Compact’s auspices, of a new national association. The “Invisible College,” as this new association called itself, would function as a faculty-based organization which would provide a free space for faculty to explore the difficult issues raised by service-learning. This organization would create a national faculty voice that could speak alongside the COOL’s [Campus Outreach Opportunity League] national student voice and the Compact’s national college president voice.

Since, moreover, faculty tend to define themselves and their responsibilities largely in terms of the academic disciplinary/interdisciplinary areas in which they have been trained, early in 1995 the new association decided to support development of a series of volumes on service-learning in individual academic areas. Not surprisingly, many of the association’s original members became leading contributors to the series when it eventually began to take shape.

If the Invisible College helped generate the initial impetus for the series, AAHE made its realization possible. Not only was AAHE in a better position to obtain the funding needed to get the project off the ground, it was also able to lend the project sufficient academic credibility to garner critical disciplinary support.

No one at AAHE did more to win backing for this undertaking than former Vice President Lou Albert. Albert’s commitment to an engaged academy manifested itself in the pivotal role he played throughout the 1980s and early 1990s in mounting national conferences related to this topic. For Albert, community engagement was not just a matter of personal interest; it was a professional obligation. In post-Cold War America, the commitment of academic expertise to public problems...
solving and to the education of students for more than individual success appeared critical. Only in this way could the academy remain a vital national institution by building upon the tradition of education for service originally staked out by colonial colleges, land-grant institutions, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and even research universities as they were originally conceived.

Hence, when Albert found out about the proposed series, it struck a deeply resonant chord. He immediately began looking for ways to obtain the necessary funding and to obtain the buy-in of other AAHE senior staff. Since the Invisible College had already appointed me to oversee the project, and I was about to go on sabbatical, Lou also facilitated my appointment as an AAHE senior associate. Besides serving as series editor, I would help identify opportunities to link community-based teaching and learning with other AAHE interests—such as the Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards, K-16 continuities, the scholarship of teaching, and total quality management. In this way, activities related to the series could have an impact beyond the publications themselves.

**INCLUSIVENESS AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

At this point, a few words need to be said about the series's overall design. As even a cursory glance at the volume's titles will immediately make clear, that design did not correspond to any obvious disciplinary groupings. Guiding the selection strategy was a straightforward effort to ensure that the series embraced a truly wide spectrum of approaches to integrating community-based work and higher education. Hence, the interests of humanists (philosophy and Spanish), social scientists (sociology and psychology), natural scientists (biology and environmental studies), those in "helping professions" (nursing and teacher education)—as well as those in technical areas (accounting and engineering)—are all reflected in the final product. Academic areas with a long historical pedigree such as composition/rhetoric and communication/public speaking share space with areas that have only recently emerged within the academy like peace studies and women's studies. Indeed, even professional graduate education (such as medical education) is represented.

Achieving broad inclusiveness was sufficiently important to justify limits on the number of disciplines that could be accommodated from any one general area. Thus, some rather natural choices for selection—including anthropology, geography, and religious studies—were passed over in favor of other, less obvious choices. Furthermore, within each general area, the specific disciplines selected depended largely on the availability of qualified and interested volume editors. Inclusiveness as a design principle also made itself felt within each volume. Not only were editors encouraged to seek course and program models from a broad range of institutional types and instructional levels (first-year through graduate), but they themselves were deliberately chosen to represent diverse types of schools.

A more detailed analysis of the series's contributors reveals just how varied a group they are. According to the Carnegie Classification system, 107 contributors come from Research 1 universities; 73 from other PhD-granting institutions; 97 from Master's I and II schools; 58 from liberal arts colleges; 16 from community colleges; and 14 from schools in other categories. Public and private institutions are almost equally represented: 54 percent and 46 percent respectively. Of the 411 individual contributors, 262 hold exclusively faculty positions while another 30 serve as faculty program directors. Non-faculty program directors, administrators, and students make up the bulk of the remaining group.

Inclusiveness has been important in other ways. To help ensure that each volume was more than a "show and tell" anthology of courses, editors were asked to solicit historical, theoretical, and contextual pieces as well as course and program models. Ira Harkavy's essay on the role public problem-solving played in the agenda of the early research university; Carla Howery's speculations on service-learning's potential importance for sociology at this point in that discipline's development; several essays in the psychology volume drawing upon research on altruism and philanthropic motivation; Judith Samuelson's review of societal issues facing business education—these and dozens of other contributions provide a rich introduction to the academic context within which service-learning has emerged.

**DISCIPLINARY LEGITIMACY AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

A second major principle guiding development of the series was disciplinary credibility and utility. To this end, each volume was both produced by and primarily aimed at academics working in a particular disciplinary/interdisciplinary area. Indeed, several of the volumes were developed with the encouragement and active support of relevant discipline-specific national societies and/or particular divisions within those societies.

Like higher education in general, disciplinary societies currently face important, and potentially destabilizing, internal issues. For some societies, a pressing issue involves the growing tension between a traditional research focus and new priorities grounded in the educational needs of a post-industrial, post-Cold War society. For others, questions of disciplinary legitimacy have acquired new urgency as distinctions among disciplines become increasingly blurred. For still others, a key issue is how best to address student achievement of new competencies articulated by powerful professional interests outside the academy.

Largely as a result of such internal developments, many (and perhaps most) disciplinary societies have begun to evince a new openness to activities and concerns that do not fit neatly within the traditional research paradigm. Indeed, even a quick glance at Robert Diamond and Bromwyn Adam's *The Disciplines Speak* (1995) will turn up many not-so-subtle indications that America's national disciplinary associations are hardly oblivious to an evolving set of societally driven demands. Thus, for example, a statement by the American Chemical Society explicitly recognizes that:

...the creation of new approaches to stimulating the interest of elementary school children in science and the communication of such insights through books, monographs, reports or publications represent an important form of scholarship. Interest in the area of outreach as an area of vital importance to the discipline of chemistry is relatively new and undeveloped [emphasis added].

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As a subset of experiential education, service-learning naturally provides faculty with a variety of ways to engage students in the learning process.

Such concern with educational outreach has become almost commonplace and reflects a new appreciation of the importance of speaking to those outside the discipline and, indeed, to those outside the academy.

Another new insight inextricably related to this broadening of the disciplinary agenda is the need to provide more opportunities for faculty development. Thus, by discussing and demonstrating ways in which service-learning as a mode of disciplinary study can effectively address pressing interests like outreach and the achievement of a broader set of competencies, the series can itself serve as a valuable faculty development resource.

Indeed, as was mentioned above, the AAHE service-learning series was never intended to serve as a stand-alone project. Rather, it was always seen as part of an effort to help AAHE reach and build a broader constituency. For unless the gap can be closed between the kinds of cutting-edge educational issues with which AAHE is concerned and the thousands of academicians whose only probable exposure to such issues is through the publications and programming of their national disciplinary societies, it is hard to see how higher education reform will ever become a reality. Through collaborations that impact each discipline's agenda there exists far greater likelihood that the change process can achieve critical mass.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

It is a truism among service-learning practitioners and researchers that we still have no comprehensive agreement on how the term should be defined. For the purpose of the series, definitional congruence was expected in only three key areas. The series would include and discuss academic programs, courses, and activities based on 1) engagement with underserved groups or organizations and projects focused on issues of the common good, 2) structured reflection on service-related as well as discipline-specific concerns, and 3) respect for the needs and interests of the community partner.

Although the approximately 200 programs and courses described vary considerably in the overt attention they pay to each of these constituent features, together the latter help generate considerable consistency throughout the 18 volumes. At the very least, agreement on these three features has helped preserve important distinctions between service-learning and both traditional community service and traditional pre-professional fieldwork.

In other respects, though, variations in understanding and practice only serve to make the series more interesting. Two variations in particular deserve notice: 1) the way in which a given course or program construes the relationship between traditional academic and community-generated knowledge, and 2) the sophistication of its reflective practice. Under the first variation, some instructors view work in the community essentially as a demonstration site for knowledge generated primarily (or even exclusively) in the classroom. In this case, the value of service-learning lies in the opportunity it affords students to test and confirm their academic mastery.

In contrast to this approach, we find other instructors for whom the community experience actively helps generate new knowledge. Service activities do not so much clarify, emphasize, and certify what already has been learned in the classroom as they serve to complement, question, and qualify such knowledge. The incident described by Bacon is an example of this other approach.

Clearly, this second alternative represents a more pedagogically risky and epistemologically radical undertaking. By implicitly redefining what counts as "expertise," it acknowledges limits on academic knowledge and the individual instructor's competence. In this way, it opens the door to a far more complex and substantive reciprocity between the academy and the community. But even the first, more conservative alternative embodies many of the principles of effective learning and teaching that educational researchers have begun to stress. For example, summarizing "what we know...about higher learning itself," Peter Ewell includes among seven key insights the observations that "Direct experience decisively shapes individual understanding" and "Learning occurs best in the context of a compelling 'presenting problem.'" Among his "parallel insights" about "the kinds of setting and techniques that foster such learning effectively," we find "Approaches that emphasize application and experience" and "Approaches that emphasize linking established concepts to new situations."

The second variation that deserves notice concerns the degree to which an individual instructor deliberately extends his/her academic agenda to include what the University of Utah calls "socially responsive knowledge." Of course, to some degree, every project profiled in the series can be said to do this simply by virtue of the fact that it engages students in activities that address an unmet community need. Every project also includes reflective activities that seek to turn simple "exposure" into a deliberately constructed learning opportunity.

But the degree to which instructors are willing to place "socially responsive" knowledge on a par with "foundational" and "professional" knowledge differs enormously. In some cases, the results and goals of reflection remain closely tied to issues of technical mastery that the civic dimension of the project is all but overshadowed. Processing the service experience remains only marginally different from what would occur in the case of private-sector work.

Elsewhere, however, we find a well-developed approach to using the service experience to identify and develop skills of democratic participation. In this regard, one is reminded of the 1998 report of the American Political Science Association's Task Force on Civic Education in the 21st Century which concluded that
We...take as axiomatic that current levels of political knowledge, political engagement, and political enthusiasm are so low as to threaten the vitality and stability of democratic politics in the United States.

Insofar as one accepts this finding and the premise that the academy has at least some responsibility for addressing it, service-learning curricula that deal more substantively with "socially responsive" knowledge are clearly to be preferred over those that implicitly relegate such knowledge to a marginal position.

**Course Design**

In a section in *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990) entitled "The Leader's New Work," Peter Senge asks us to imagine what our role would be if the "organization" we are responsible for were "an ocean liner, and [we were] 'the leader.'" He then reports that the most common answers he receives are "captain," "navigator," "helmsman," "engineer," and "social director." Each of these, he admits, has some validity, "but there is another [answer] which, in many ways, eclipses them all in importance": "the designer of the ship." To be sure, Senge's frame of reference here is not higher education. Nonetheless, his stress on the importance of design as fundamental to the "Leader's New Work" speaks perfectly to the pedagogical needs of the academy at the beginning of the 21st Century.

Charles Schroeder implicitly makes the case for a heightened awareness of pedagogical design when he notes that

As faculty, we have generally espoused the common belief that students learn and develop through exposure—the content is all-important. We have been accustomed to a traditional learning process where one who knows (the teacher) presents ideas to one who does not (the student). Many of us prospered under the traditional lecture system, where the focus was on coverage of material through teaching by telling. This approach may work for us but it may not work for the majority of today's students [original emphasis].

And in a comprehensive article on "Restructuring the Role of Faculty," Alan Guskin, former chancellor of the five-campus Antioch University System, goes a step further, maintaining that "the primary learning environment for undergraduate students, the fairly passive lecture-discussion format where faculty talk and most students listen, is contrary to almost every principle of optimal settings for student learning."

This, of course, is not to deny the very real value of traditional pedagogical strategies in some contexts, for some purposes, and for some students. Clearly there is no single strategy that will work all of the time for the majority of today's students. But if traditional lecture, discussion, lab work, and individual research projects continue to serve a useful purpose, altered circumstances call for more strategies like collaborative learning, problem-based learning, learning communities, and community-based learning. This, in turn, implies that any instructor seeking to maximize learning for the majority of his/her students must deliberately design curricula to do so. The only pedagogical certainty is that focusing on content delivery to the exclusion of all other considerations holds little prospect of meeting the needs of twenty-first cen-

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to create products of demonstrable social value. Engagement as measured by attendance and class participation is complemented by engagement as evidenced by initiative and unstructured problem-solving.

One result of this expanded spectrum of learning situations can be a marked increase in student motivation. In fact, enhanced motivation is one of the themes that recurs most frequently across the series's volumes. As Jeffrey Simmons explains in an essay in the biology volume:

Service-learning enhances motivation in several ways: 1) it makes topics relevant to students by involving them in an issue, 2) it helps them gain a sense of ownership of a project or issue, 3) it satisfies the urge many students have to do something tangible and positive, ... 4) it gives them an opportunity to gain the satisfaction of performing community service, and 5) it demonstrates that knowledge is useful.

Linda Adler-Kassner, Robert Crooks, and Ann Waters echo this observation in their introduction to the composition volume, as does James Ostrow in his introduction to the sociology volume. Essays in communication studies (Mark Bergstrom and Connie Bullis) and political science (Daniel Pallazolo) underscore specific ways in which linking a research methods course to community-based problem-solving can transform a dreaded requirement into a break-through understanding of the importance—and the potential power—of social science research methodologies.

But even when motivation is not an issue, the essays in the series testify to other important ways in which service-learning can transform the student-teacher relationship. For example, in "Critical Pedagogy and Service-Learning in Spanish: Crossing Borders in the Freshmen Seminar," Jonathan Arries describes how, completely by accident, he discovered the power of "compelling situations." Having "prepared a course syllabus that, if not exactly driven by critical pedagogy, would at least permit students to write in a variety of ways about literature and films by Latino artists," he casually mentioned to his students that he would be revisiting a migrant workers' clinic where he had volunteered the previous summer. Two of his students wound up going with him.

Even more surprising than their successful "reading of a myth" [i.e., some promotional/informational/brochures produced by the hospital] without the benefit of my stock presentation on semiological systems was the fact that our roles had changed from "expert" professor and "non-expert" students to co-workers.... Our collaborative engagement in a problem-solving effort to help real people had carried us across a...pedagogical boundary which would have been much more difficult to cross in our regular classroom....

This experience wound up being transformative for both teacher and students as it re-defined the instructor's own understanding of "context":

I now see it as a personally lived event that gives a learner sudden insight or a discovery that therefore becomes a memorable schema or "subtext" she or he can use to make sense out of experiences in different settings, like an internal guidebook or map. Second, I learned that "context" created by service can empower students, enabling them to demystify complex aspects of language and society. I learned that the "borders" imposed by institutional forms can and therefore must be crossed. The pleasure I myself experienced while crossing the borders of pedagogy, culture and language with my students made the hard work we did on the Eastern Shore (and subsequently in the classroom) like no other experience I have had as a teacher or a student.

Arries's sense of having himself entered into the learning process in a new way — solving problems with his students rather than providing them with "stock" explanations — illustrates both the limited effectiveness of "teaching by telling" and an evolving appreciation of the meaning and role of academic "expertise."

**SERVICE-LEARNING AND OTHER PROGRESSIVE PEDAGOGIES**

A not-infrequently heard faculty complaint voices frustration with the seemingly endless list of new concerns and teaching strategies instructors are now expected to incorporate into their courses. To a considerable extent, these complaints are valid. Aware of the challenges posed by cultural and demographic shifts, administrators and other academic leaders demand that faculty keep abreast of promising responses to these shifts. The problem, however, is that these responses are often introduced in a sequential, piecemeal manner. As Ewell points out, "This means that often-significant investments of time and resources, however well-motivated, don't fit together very well." One of service-learning's most promising features is that, far from representing just another innovation, it can function as a way to organize a variety of progressive pedagogies into a new educational Gestalt.

For example, "Applying Service-Learning to the Problem of Prejudice: A Psychology and Theater Course" by Stevenson Carlebach and Jefferson Singer demonstrates how service-learning naturally leads to cross-disciplinary collaborations, while at the same time linking active learning strategies with learning about diversity. Indeed, the fact that such a large percentage of community-based projects involve activities with underserved children makes service-learning an especially effective vehicle for diversity work across the curriculum. In the process of developing and demonstrating discipline-related skills, students are simultaneously exposed to a range of cultures and demographic groups that they learn
to understand and to respect. Addressing diversity in and through service-learning requires careful preparation and focused attention, but it doesn’t necessarily require the kind of free-standing “diversity unit” that is typically added to faculty and student agendas.

Luther Brown’s essay in the biology volume not only shows how this can be done in the context of a biology-based program, but also demonstrates how effectively service-learning can be used to structure and unify an entire curriculum. In his essay, Brown describes George Mason University’s Bahamas Environmental Research Center on Andros Island—a “field station” designed to model “post-colonial” behavior by working reciprocally with the local community. Because the work of the field station is deliberately organized around projects co-sponsored by the community, its biology-based operations do not funnel students into areas of narrow specialization but lead them instead to link their biological interests with course work in geology, geography, cultural studies, art, English, and human ecology.

In “Community and Compatability in the York River Watershed,” Christine Brown and Samuel McReynolds describe another kind of service-based coherence—in this case embodied in a joint biology-sociology project undertaken in collaboration with the residents of York, Maine. In this case, interns from the Departments of Life Sciences (DLS) and Social and Behavioral Sciences (DSBS) served as liaisons between the University of New England (UNE) and various community groups in the Town of York. They also coordinated activities with students and faculty in four courses regularly offered at UNE: Community Organization and Research Methods in DSBS, and Invertebrate Zoology and Microbial Ecology in DLS. All four are upper-level courses for majors.

Thus, the project functioned both as an extended learning community and as a sophisticated demonstration of the possibilities of collaborative learning.

The interns presented the project and background information to the students in the conventional courses...helped instructors train their students in the techniques required to participate in the project...[and at] the end of the semester...collated and analyzed the results which were then presented to the classes involved as well as to the university community as a whole.

As a result, “greater scientific literacy” developed among social science participants and an understanding of sociological research techniques among life science students.”

Two other noteworthy models of service-learning as a vehicle of curricular coherence appear in the engineering and management volumes. In the former, Edward Coyle and Leah...
their primary and secondary stakeholders. Discussion focuses on students’ roles as stakeholders in the college, university, and community. They examine businesses that have been recognized as doing well by doing good, and discuss the role of business in promoting healthy communities.

This first-year experience then serves to anchor a course of study that eventually leads to a business capstone course in which students are required to apply concepts, skills and values mastered in the business core courses (management, marketing, finance and accounting) to strategic analyses of a variety of firms, including not-for-profit. The structure of the course is similar to that of the Freshman Seminar; however, as a capstone course it requires that students engage in activities at a strategic and integrative level.

Each team initiates a semester-long project with a local not-for-profit organization. Occasionally, students select agencies with which they have worked in their freshman assignment. Using discipline-specific skills, students conduct a strategic analysis of their client organization and make strategic recommendations. At the end of the semester, they present their findings and recommendations to the whole class. Each team’s final report and recommendations are forwarded to its partner agency...

Thus, while freshmen engage in a short-term, awareness-building experience, seniors engage in long-term, strategic application.

That service-learning should foster such multifaceted and yet integrative learning experiences is not surprising. As service-learning practitioners, as well as others, have often pointed out, it is only in the academy that problems come packaged in discrete disciplinary compartments. In the nonacademic world, the perspectives of different disciplines naturally have to work together. It is a testimony to service-learning’s ability to facilitate such experiences that it is appearing ever more frequently in the context of capstone courses. Harold Ward, editor of the environmental studies volume, explicitly refers to this phenomenon in discussing the natural compatibility of service-learning (SL) and environmental studies (ES):

An ES/SL experience can bring...segregated material together. At the same time, it can help students identify gaps in their backgrounds, and thus assist them in course selection. Often, after an ES/SL experience, students are more willing to undertake the challenge of courses they avoided before because of intimidating reputations (e.g. chemistry, economics). In many programs, the ES/SL experience, usually in a senior seminar or a thesis, is a device to integrate the entire major as a “capstone” experience.

Across the 18 volumes, Ward’s observation is echoed in many disciplinary contexts. It seems safe to predict that the number of programs using service-learning in this way will continue to increase rapidly.

**CONCLUSION**

Although it is now less common for faculty and administrators to confuse academic service-learning with traditional community service, it is still very common—even among
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service-learning practitioners—to view service-learning as a pedagogical strategy to be accepted and implemented on a course-by-course basis. To be sure, this very approach dominates throughout the AAHE series. But to conceptualize service-learning only in terms of individual course design is to overlook its potential as a vehicle of general curricular reform, as a way of addressing a variety of pressing educational and institutional needs. Because well-designed service-learning activities naturally and effectively lead to a deeper understanding of the learning process even while they provide an opportunity to create larger units of curricular coherence, they can simultaneously address the challenges of facilitating deep learning and of overcoming piecemeal implementation of reform.

Furthermore, as Ira Harkavy warns us in the history volume, a fragmented approach to service-learning can also have important social implications: "In its 'classic' form [i.e., merely as an isolated pedagogical enhancement], service-learning may function as a pedagogical equivalent of 'exploitative' community-based research." In other words, our failure to move in the direction of a more comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to service-learning may leave our attempts at community partnering too fragmented to achieve meaningful social results. Thus, failure to achieve greater integration would be not only academically shortsighted but also morally indefensible.

For all these reasons, developing a more multifaceted, comprehensive approach to service-learning may well be the cutting edge of contemporary service-learning theory and practice. Indeed, I am reminded of Ernest Boyer's now famous description of the "New American College" (1994):

This New American College would organize cross-disciplinary institutes around pressing social issues. Undergraduates at the college would participate in field projects, relating ideas to real life. Classrooms and laboratories would be extended to include health clinics, youth centers, schools, and government offices. Faculty members would build partners with practitioners who would, in turn, come to campus as lecturers and student advisers.

Although Boyer nowhere explicitly references "service learning," there are few more eloquent formulations of its academic and social potential. That potential, however, is clearly tied to both deep understanding of what learning means and the comprehensive implementation strategy that any real reform agenda demands. Perhaps someday we will view AAHE's 18-volume series in the same way we now view early 19th-Century maps of North America: as pioneering efforts to identify the basic contours of a new continent, as significant both for the knowledge they document and the agenda they imply.