

ROGERIAN DEMOCRATIC PEDAGOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN  
COMPOSITION STUDIES FOR STUDENTS, SERVICE LEARNING,  
AND THE PUBLIC WRITING MOVEMENT

by

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The statistics on attrition rates for doctoral students are alarming. Only about half of all doctoral students complete their programs of study and earn their degrees (Bowen and Rudenstine). For those who are awarded their Ph.D.s in Humanities, the median number of years spent in graduate school, at least in 2008, was 9.3 (National Science Foundation). For me it has taken even longer than that: sixteen years in graduate school, fourteen years working as a doctoral student, and ten years working on my dissertation. Despite the amount of time it has taken, I am so grateful to have finally made it this far. While I am proud of myself for my persistence and determination, I know that I could not have done this on my own. None of us can do it on our own. I am very grateful for all the help I have received along the way so that I could finally accomplish this.

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## ABSTRACT

### ROGERIAN DEMOCRATIC PEDAGOGY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN COMPOSITION STUDIES FOR STUDENTS, SERVICE LEARNING, AND THE PUBLIC WRITING MOVEMENT

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In this project, I articulate a democratic pedagogical model, which is based on and modified from the pedagogical theories of the American psychologist, Carl Ransom Rogers (1902-1987). Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy (RDP) is based on Rogers' claim that learning that is student directed, and involves the learner emotionally as well as cognitively, is more effective than the traditional, teacher-directed model of education. RDP focuses on empowering composition students to have a sense of ownership of their process of learning and their class, to be responsible and active learners, and to participate as citizens in a democracy by completing public writing projects that serve a purpose outside the classroom. One type of public writing project, community service writing that is based on the Stanford model, in which the writing that students do for non-profit organizations is their service work, encourages students to conduct writing

that fulfills a need in the community and that addresses a real rhetorical situation. I have found that my students who complete public writing projects, such as service-learning writing projects, interpret this kind of work as more meaningful to them than their traditional writing assignments, like the expository essay. According to Rogerian theory, the effectiveness of learning is increased when students are, as in these situations, more engaged and invested in their work.

While any teaching method that facilitates a democratic learning environment can potentially be a useful strategy for an RDP approach to teaching composition, the RDP methods that I discuss most extensively in this project include the attempt to level the power structure of the classroom, the use of student-centered dialogue to facilitate critical thinking, and public writing projects. I assert that an RDP approach is particularly useful when linked with service-learning pedagogy, and it can help service-learning practitioners address and overcome several challenges.

RDP can help to explain why service learning, when it works well, is such a transforming pedagogy. It illustrates why service learning, rather than having civic and moral value only, also increases the effectiveness of learning, which helps to overcome a common objection to service learning pedagogy by faculty who worry that a service learning approach will not help them teach the academic content of their courses. Not only does Rogerian theory address this objection because it explains that the best learning is that which students interpret as significant, but it calls into question the importance of any course material that the instructor alone, as opposed to the student, deems valuable. In addition, RDP can help service-learning practitioners facilitate

reflection and critical-thinking, overcome challenges associated with grading service-learning projects, and, according to some students in my service-learning composition class, encourage students to write for “more than just a grade” and to learn “just to learn.”

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In composition studies, the theories of psychologist Carl Ransom Rogers (1902-1987) are perhaps most frequently associated with the notion of Rogerian argument that Richard Young, Alton Becker, and Kenneth Pike introduced in 1970 with their textbook *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*. The theory of Rogerian argument rests on the assumption that is an underlying theme throughout Rogers' major works, that empathy is an essential component of effective communication. The goal of Rogerian argument is to completely describe another's differing perspective and its strengths before proceeding to articulate one's own position. When using Rogerian argument, as opposed to traditional argument,

instead of stating your own case and refuting your opponent's, you state the opponent's case with as much care as your own, and you analyze the sound points of his argument. Instead of building up your own character and qualifications and attacking those of your opponent, you seek to gain your opponent's trust, even at the cost of acknowledging your own inadequacies. (Young, Becker, and Pike 282)

The aim of Rogerian argument is to show genuine understanding of another person's or group's perspective as a means to reduce conflict and to establish common ground.

Although I certainly appreciate the theory of Rogerian argument and recognize its pedagogical benefits, I believe that composition studies has much more to learn from Rogers than what it has gleaned through Young, Becker, and Pike. The full value of

Rogers' theories in composition has not yet been recognized, and their importance has, at times, been perhaps underestimated. Although the necessity and function of empathy in effective relationships is a central concept throughout Rogers' works, it is the idea of democracy in relationships and in the process of learning that I would argue is much more essential in order to develop a solid understanding of Rogers' theories and their usefulness in composition studies.

For compositionists who have applied Rogers' pedagogical theories in the classroom, and there aren't many, the outcome is that this kind of democratic teaching style can significantly improve students' and teachers' learning experiences and positively affect the classroom environment in general, making students more responsible, active learners. Chris Madigan asserts that when he applied Rogerian pedagogy during a training seminar for graduate teaching assistants, "participants read more, wrote more, and presented better in-services" than he had imagined (210), and that in this type of classroom students, in general, seemed to "learn more" (218). Furthermore, he explains that when the participants were left to take more responsibility in the class due to what he calls a "leadership vacuum," which I would describe as a de-centering of the teacher's role as the sole authority in the class, "leaders arose from the ranks" (204). While Madigan's comments illustrate some of the benefits of applying Rogers' pedagogical theories in the classroom, I would assert that they have a number of other applications and benefits that have yet to be discussed in the research within composition studies. In particular, I have found that the radically democratic component of Rogers' pedagogical theories has profound implications related to the public writing

movement in composition studies, and especially with my work in service learning, which is one form of public writing.

Christian R. Weisser, in *Moving Beyond Academic Discourse*, asserts that the “move” toward “public writing” is the “most recent and most widely encompassing ramification of our discipline” (1). He explains that since composition studies first began to be seen as an academic discipline, its focus has gradually expanded “from the individual writer, to social notions of how knowledge is generated, to more political—and public—investigations of discourse” (1). Some might argue that since the composition classroom can be seen as a microcosm of the community in general, then most writing completed within that classroom can be considered “public” writing; however, I would argue that writing one can define as “public” in a truer sense of the word is that which is aimed primarily for an audience outside the classroom, in the community or in the world as a whole. By completing this kind of public writing, students are able to assert their voices politically and to act effectively as engaged citizens in a larger democracy. Public writing in this sense can help students to realize the power that their writing has. I am interested in the politics not only of the composition classroom, concerning the relationship between teacher and students, but also concerning the texts that composition students create and their function as public writing, which plays a role in—and can effect change in—the community and with student writers themselves.

To clearly illustrate the democratic power and potential for change that individual student public writers have, it is useful to examine the situation that occurred

after the tenth national election in Iran on June 12, 2009. Many Iranian citizens participated in demonstrations to protest the results of the election, in which President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was named the winner, and these protests occurred despite threats issued by the Iranian government. Furthermore, foreign news coverage of the situation was severely limited because journalists were barred from the protests by the government. What resulted was a situation that has been referred to as a “twitter revolution,” in which “tweets from a handful of students” in Iran “were instrumental in getting information” out of the country “to the mainstream media” (Musgrove). Students reported incidents of police brutality, and these tweets were instrumental in keeping the world informed about their situation despite attempts by censors within the Iranian government who aimed to silence them. One student wrote, “My friends are being held against their will at the University” (Musgrove). Another responded “Rasoul Akram hospital has medics outside. Go there for help” (Musgrove). Others uploaded photos to YouTube and Flickr that depicted the violent abuse against protesters by Iranian police (Musgrove). Since the Iranian students and other Iranian citizens who wrote publicly on social networking sites could not be silenced by the Iranian government, at the very least they managed to increase pressure on their government to treat citizens more humanely and fairly. Even though it did not change the results of the election, the Iranian government eventually agreed to a recount. The result was a powerful example of how through their public writing, students were able to initiate change in the world.

While tweets are only one form of public writing, and while my composition students are more likely to be participating in another form such as web writing or service learning, at least while completing work related to the class, this example does effectively illustrate the potential effect that public writing can have and why it is an important subject to focus on in the composition classroom. Although it is useful for composition students to learn to write traditional academic essays because they will need this skill to be successful students at the college level, I would argue that learning to use public writing effectively, in whatever form that takes, such as through web writing, letters, emails, brochures, fliers, blogs, social networking sites, and so on, is even more important for students at the beginning of the twenty-first century because this is a rhetorical art that will help them to assert their voices in the world, to be politically active, and to perhaps make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

### **A Rogerian Democratic Pedagogical Approach to Teaching Composition**

Gary A. Olson uses the term “radical pedagogy” to describe what is often associated with “Freire-inspired” “scholar-teachers,” and it refers to a “persistent effort to rearrange power hierarchies in the classroom” (viii). Paulo Freire, the Brazilian teacher whose liberatory pedagogical theories were intended to help educate and empower Brazilian peasants, is the theorist most often associated with and used to support radical composition pedagogies. A discussion of the striking similarities between Freireian theory and Rogerian theory will occur later, but in short, Rogerian pedagogy, and specifically my own model of Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy (RDP), is

radical in that it is, like Freireian pedagogy, liberatory and political in its effort to drastically rearrange the structure typical of the traditional classroom, making it more democratic as a means to empower students. Rogers' theories have political implications in that they are radically democratic; they are concerned with a reorganization of the power structure of many types of relationships, but Rogers did not become completely aware of how political his theories were until late in his career. In his book *Carl Rogers On Personal Power*, he writes about his own discovery of the political ramifications of his theories, in particular of his "person-centered" approach:

It is the psychological dynamics of this approach that has interested me [in the past]—how it affects the individual. I have been interested in observing this approach from a scientific and empirical point of view; what conditions make it possible for a person to change and develop, and what are the specific effects or outcomes of these conditions. But I have never given careful consideration to the interpersonal politics set in motion by such an approach. Now I begin to see the revolutionary nature of those political forces. I have found myself compelled to reassess and reevaluated all my work. I wish to ask what are the political effects (in the new sense of political) of all that I, and my many colleagues throughout the world, have done and are doing. (5)

When Rogers asserts that he has begun to realize the political nature of his theories in "the new sense" of the word "political," he defines this as "the process of gaining, using, sharing or relinquishing power, control, decision-making" (5). However, even though Rogers did not realize the political implications of his theories until later in his career, they were radically democratic even in his early writings. Rogers explains that his reassessment of his work in terms of its "politics" occurred later in his career primarily because the term itself was being used differently, to represent the process of the division of power in relationships instead of simply "the methods or tactics involved in managing a state or government" (4). He claims,

It is not just that I am a slow learner, that I have only recently realized my political impact. It is partly that a new concept has been in the process of construction in our language. It is not just a new label. It brings together a cluster of meanings into a powerful new concept. [. . .] the use of the word “politics” in such contexts as “the politics of the family,” “the politics of therapy,” “sexual politics,” “the politics of experience” is new. (4)

Richard Farson, in his article “Carl Rogers: Quiet Revolutionary,” wrote in 1974, perhaps as he and others, including Rogers himself, were just beginning to recognize the political implications of Rogers’ theories, that he had begun to think of Rogers as a revolutionary thinker:

Carl Rogers is not known for his politics. People are more likely to associate his name with widely acclaimed innovations in counseling technique, personality theory, philosophy of science, psychotherapy research, encounter groups, student-centered teaching [. . .] But in recent years, I have come to think of him more as a political figure, a man whose cumulative effect on society has made him one of the most important social revolutionaries of our time. (197)

It has been more than thirty 35 years since Farson identified Rogers’ theories as radical in their politics, but this aspect of Rogers’ theories has remained largely unrecognized in composition studies. I would assert that this is the aspect of Rogerian theory that can be most useful for compositionists. In particular, it has been useful for me because I am interested in radical composition theory and practice that is political in the sense that it is concerned with rearranging the power structure of the relationship between teacher and students and also with helping students to realize their own power as they assert their voices through public writing. I am interested in composition theory that is political in the sense that it helps students realize their potential to become active agents of social change through their writing and within a larger democracy outside the classroom.

Radical composition theory builds upon the work of earlier social constructionists in composition studies in that it is not only a social approach, but it also has a greater concern regarding the political implications of discourse. Weisser asserts that “public writing,” and “service learning” are “two new and important facets of radical composition,” and that they make up “one of the most compelling lines of thought in composition studies today” (26). Public writing and service learning are also important, I believe, in the way they establish a positive connection between theory and application. This kind of pedagogy is centered on the notions common among social theories in composition, that knowledge is socially created, that discourse is a product of its social context, that students should be actively engaged in dialogue, questioning assumptions, and realizing their potential to initiate and participate in change. Public writing and service learning encourage students to apply the principles of social theories of composition in practice by writing for real audiences outside the classroom, which ideally helps students realize that through their writing they can be engaged citizens who can possibly bring about change by influencing perspectives or through service, and that through a democratic participation in dialogue, they may also be changed themselves.

The democratic aspect of Rogers’ theories has been invaluable for supporting my own work in public writing with composition students. Over the course of several years of using Rogers’ theories to support my service-learning pedagogy, a form of public writing in which my students complete writing projects such as brochures, newsletters, press releases, and web pages for non-profit agencies in the community, I

have developed an RDP approach to teaching composition, which is not only useful because it draws on psychological theories of learning to explain why service learning is such an effective teaching method, but also because of what it has to contribute in terms of its practical applications and its social politics. RDP is a modified version of Rogers' teaching methods, which attempts to democratize the political structure of the composition classroom and to question traditional approaches to teaching writing as well as the traditional classroom, in which the teacher's discourse is the dominant discourse. The goal of RDP is to empower students, in part by placing them in charge of a great deal of their own learning, to encourage them to see themselves as productive citizens in a larger democracy, and to realize that their writing can have an effect in the world and on themselves.

While RDP is similar in many ways to other social theories used within composition studies that also aim to help students become productive citizens who can think critically about the politics of cultural practices and institutions, RDP is unique in the way that it is inextricably tied to practice. Since Rogerian pedagogical theory asserts that the most effective learning is that which engages students as whole persons, helping them to be emotionally connected to their work instead of only intellectually, it has helped me to create an RDP approach to teaching composition in which the goal is to facilitate writing that students see as meaningful and powerful in its public function. Students in an RDP class realize that their writing is not intended only for their teacher and classmates to read; their writing is aimed at a public audience, which helps students to see the real contribution they can make with it in their communities. It is effective

learning according to Rogerian psychological theory because it produces writing that students feel is significant in purpose. According to Rogers it is this kind of learning that can produce change in an individual's personality, and I would emphasize that it can produce public change as well.

Service learning is only one teaching method that can be used by compositionists whose practice is informed by RDP. While the focus in this project will be specifically with how service learning functions as a teaching method within a larger Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy, other teaching methods that compositionists interested in applying RDP might use would include blog writing, webfolio writing, and other types of public writing. In this dissertation, I will fully articulate and define RDP, explain its roots in Rogerian theory, discuss how it helps to address and to overcome some of the criticisms of social theories of composition and problems with service-learning pedagogy, illustrate the effects of and student responses to an RDP classroom with a service-learning component, and suggest additional applications and teaching methods associated with RDP including possible areas for future research.

In order to understand how RDP is unique in comparison to other social theories and what it can contribute, one must first understand where it is situated in terms of current theories and practices in composition studies. Several scholars in the field have recognized that the social approach to teaching composition is the most common pedagogical approach today. Robert Fulkerson claims, in "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," that he sees three dominant pedagogical approaches. These include, first, social approaches, which he refers to as critical cultural studies (CCS),

such as critical approaches, cultural studies approaches, and many feminist approaches. Second, he identifies contemporary expressivism as a major approach, which emphasizes “consciousness raising” and “coming to voice” (666). Third, he names procedural rhetoric as a major contemporary approach to teaching composition, which is “fully in the dominant tradition of composition in the 1970s and 1980s” (671). Despite the fact that Fulkerson does identify three different current approaches to teaching composition, he acknowledges that composition instruction has taken primarily a “social turn,” and that social approaches, the first group that he names, have been the “major movement in composition studies, which one can judge “from the published scholarship of the last thirteen years” (659). Christian R. Weisser makes a similar assertion, recognizing that “social perspectives are the current dominant paradigm in rhetoric and composition” (25).

Fulkerson, who is known for his scholarly work mapping the field of composition, does an excellent job defining social theories of composition and attempting to illustrate what a composition classroom looks like when a social approach is used. He attributes Jim Berlin as “the most famous CCS advocate,” who said the goal of social constructionist pedagogy “is to encourage our students to resist and to negotiate [. . .] hegemonic discourses—in order to bring about more personally humane and socially equitable economic and political arrangements” (“Composition” 50 qtd. in Fulkerson 660). The central activity within a CCS course, claims Fulkerson, is “interpretation,” which

may be of readings, either about cultural theory or the experiences of a cultural group or individual (Richard Rodriguez, Victor Villanueva, Paulo Freire, Gloria

Anzaldua, and other authors are popular). Alternatively, students may interpret cultural artifacts--ads, TV shows, minority language use, popular songs, etc. Most often, both sorts of "texts" are used. (660)

Frequently, multiple texts within a CCS class might reflect a single theme, such as the family or the Vietnam War, and what is assumed by the methods of interpretation are that the texts "reveal certain structural truths about power in American society," specifically, "in terms of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc." (661). Student writing within a CCS class involves the interpretation of these texts as cultural artifacts, and in some of these courses, writing is seen as an "extended, recursive, complex process" (661).

RDP fits within the definition of a social approach to teaching writing because it attempts to level the power structure within the class, to de-center the role of the instructor as the authoritarian, and to empower students to take responsibility for making choices regarding their own writing projects and the direction of their work and the class in general. There is also a large emphasis with RDP, as with other social approaches, on the role of dialogue within the class as a means to promote critical thinking, and Carl Rogers' psychological work on encounter groups is used to inform this aspect of the approach. Through a process of dialogue and a restructuring of the class, the goal is to empower students to question the political structure of the traditional classroom, of traditional academic discourse and other dominant discourses, and of cultural practices and institutions in general. The aim is to help students realize their ability to become productive citizens in a democracy who, especially through their

writing, are able to contribute and to participate in their communities and, with the use of technology, perhaps even in the world.

Social approaches to teaching writing as well as other contemporary approaches developed as a response to, and an attempt to overcome, the problems with the outmoded Current Traditional Rhetoric approach (CTR) to teaching writing. CTR is described by Richard Young in “Paradigms and Patterns” as having overt features that “are obvious enough: the emphasis on the composed product rather than the composing process; the analysis of discourse into description, narration, exposition, and argument; the strong concern with usage [. . .] and with style; the preoccupation with the informal essay and research paper; and so on” (31). Maxine Hairston, in her landmark article “The Winds of Change,” adds to Young’s description that teachers who adhere to this traditional paradigm of teaching writing believe that “their most important task when they are preparing to write is finding a form into which to organize their content” (78). Additionally teachers who use the outmoded CTR approach teach in a way that suggests “the composing process is linear,” and that “teaching editing is the same as teaching writing” (78). CTR teachers are either unaware of current research in the field that argues for the ineffectiveness of this approach or they choose to simply ignore it. Hairston asserts that these teachers

devote far more time than they can professionally afford to working with their students, but because they haven’t read Elbow or Bruffee they have no way of knowing that their students might benefit far more from small group meetings with each other than from the exhausting one-to-one conferences that the teachers hold. They both complain and brag about how much time they spend meticulously marking each paper, but because they haven’t read Diederich or Irmscher they don’t know that an hour spent meticulously marking every error in a paper is probably doing more harm than good. They are exhausting themselves

trying to teach writing from an outmoded model, and they come to despise the job more and more because many of their students improve so little despite their time and effort. (79-80)

During a period of remarkable change in the theory and practice of teaching composition classes, and as a result of new research in the field, many compositionists began moving away from the CTR paradigm and stopped trying to teach writing by primarily marking every error within students' papers with red ink, a method which rarely seems to encourage improvement. Hairston argued that the kind of paradigm shift that Thomas Kuhn had described in "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions" had occurred in composition studies, and she attributed this major shift in thinking to be the result of several factors that called into question the credibility and effectiveness of the traditional approach to teaching writing. Research from a number of different sources, including linguistics, anthropology, and clinical and cognitive psychology, had discredited the methods of CTR and had caused scholars in composition and rhetoric studies to re-think theories of writing, specifically to see writing as more process-oriented instead of product-centered and to see the most effective classroom as being more student-centered than teacher-directed. Meanwhile, open admissions policies had brought a huge influx of students into the University system, which, according to Hairston, further strained an already vulnerable system for teaching writing, forcing teachers who had little interest or training in the specific area of composition to staff classes (82).

Around this time scholars in composition studies began developing and working with new approaches to teaching writing. Some of the most important of these included

cognitivist and expressivist approaches, which despite their many differences, shared some assumptions, that traditional teaching methods were “inadequate” and the traditional role of the teacher was “problematic” (Weisser 11). The newer approaches

argued for greater attention to the writing that was being produced by students and less attention to the consumption of great works of literature. These new theories all shifted the focus of composition studies from the composed product to the composing process, from the teacher’s monologue to the student’s dialogue, and from the text as the nucleus of the writing classroom to the student as the locus of knowledge. As a result, these new approaches contributed in different ways to changing the writing classroom. (Weisser 11)

The primary focus of cognitivist approaches, which were influenced by cognitive theories of psychology, was to study the recursive stages of the process of successful writers, and to help to facilitate the process of writing for students. Expressivists tended to focus on writing as a creative process of self-discovery. Both of these new approaches to teaching writing, which were popular during the 1970s tended to focus on “individual writers” and the development of the “personal voice” (Weisser 20). The shift toward more social approaches to the teaching of writing occurred during the 1980s, and these perspectives, such as social constructionism were “based on the assumption that writing is primarily a social—that is, ‘public’—act. Social constructionists asserted that what we know about our world and ourselves is manufactured primarily through the social conventions we share with other human beings” (Weisser 21).

### **Some Criticism of Social Approaches to Teaching Composition**

While social perspectives are the dominant paradigm in composition studies today, they have been criticized as well. Fulkerson’s tone when he describes CCS

approaches to teaching composition seems critical, especially when he explains that it is “important to emphasize that in CCS the course aim is not ‘improved writing’ but ‘liberation’ from dominant discourse” (660). Howard Tinberg suggests, like Fulkerson, a disconnect in our field between theory and practice when he asserts that “it may very well be composition’s dirty little secret that many of us who teach writing would rather talk about cultural studies or critical theory and not trouble ourselves with the writing that our students do,” and Scott McLemee points out that when Tinberg, who is the Director of a Writing Center at a two year college, says “us,” it is clear that he really means ‘them’” (16).

In his article, entitled “Deconstructing Composition: ‘The New Theory Wars’ Break Out in an Unlikely Discipline,” McLemee quotes Tinberg to illustrate the debate regarding how to define the subject of composition studies, whether this should be done broadly, covering the study of discourse in general, or more narrowly, covering the study of writing and writing pedagogy. He explains that, on the one hand, those who argue for defining the scope of composition studies more narrowly “insist that work in composition studies ought to have some application to what goes on in the classroom, that discussions within the profession should focus on the tools of writing instruction” (16). On the other hand, those who define the scope of composition studies broadly, “reply that such pragmatism reduces composition to the status of a service, rather than a full-fledged discipline within the humanities (16). I would assert that RDP addresses a real need in composition studies, with its focus on service learning and public writing, because it makes it possible to achieve some common ground between both sides in the

debate about how we should define our work in composition studies. While RDP, like other social theories in composition, rests on the assumption that discourse is a product of its social context, and while, like other radical composition theories, it is focused on the political implications of the classroom and student discourse, it also addresses the concern of pragmatists in composition studies because it is focused on student writing and writing instruction in a real way by encouraging the facilitation of public writing. RDP can be instrumental in helping compositionists return to the practical, to the business of teaching writing, while still working to accomplish the goals of social approaches to teaching composition.

### **An Introduction to the Theoretical Roots of RDP**

For Rogers, it was important to maintain democracy in all types of relationships in order to best facilitate significant learning and growth. Chapter two in this dissertation will be devoted to describing the most important elements of Rogers' theories in detail, especially the ones pertaining to education; however, at this point, it is sufficient to say that in general Rogers advocated that power should be divided more democratically in relationships, such as between a therapist and a client, between spouses, and especially between teacher and student.

In his landmark book *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951), Rogers asserted that the client rather than the therapist should be free to determine not only the direction of therapy, but moreover, that the therapist should have "acceptance of the client as a person who is competent to direct himself" in general (24). Similarly, in the student-centered classroom, Rogers believed that students should have the freedom to direct

themselves. He argued that education should not be a “futile attempt to learn material which has no personal meaning,” material which someone other than the student has determined is important (*Freedom to Learn* 4). Rogers believed that such learning “involves the mind only” rather than the whole person, including the emotions (*FL69*<sup>1</sup> 4). Instead, Rogers claimed, learning should have “**a quality of personal involvement**—the whole person in both feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event” (4). Furthermore, he claimed, learning should be “**self-initiated**,” “**pervasive**,” in that it “makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes, perhaps even the personality of the learner,” “**evaluated by the learner**,” and should have “an element of **meaning** to the learner” (5).

As Rogers’ theories were applied more broadly, not only in therapy, but in many other contexts as well, he began referring to them as “person-centered.” Essentially, this describes a situation in which the power in helping relationships is centered with the person being helped rather than with the helper, and a situation in which the person being helped is considered “responsible” rather than “dependent” (*OPP* 5). This effectively transforms these relationships into more democratic ones, whether they are between therapist and client, teacher and student, parent and child, and so on.

My teaching of composition has been largely influenced by Rogers’ theories because they have shown me *how* to teach instead of *what* to teach. Rogers has written extensively about what he believes is effective pedagogy, and although he is perhaps best known for his work in the field of psychotherapy, he was also a teacher, a professor

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix One for a list of Rogers’ major works and the abbreviations for them, which are used in

of Psychology at Ohio State, then at The University of Chicago, and later at The University of Wisconsin. His passion for the subject of teaching is evident from his prolific writing on the subject. Out of the twelve books that I consider to be Rogers' major publications, he writes about pedagogy in six. *Freedom to Learn* (1969) and *Freedom to Learn for the 80s* (1983) are Rogers' most extensive works about his teaching philosophy, and in them he illustrates in great detail how to apply his principles of psychology in the classroom to facilitate more effective, meaningful student learning. He includes within them discussion of specific cases in which his teaching methods were applied at various levels of education, including at the university level. These cases suggest that creating a learning environment for students that encourages them to be active, responsible learners, as Rogerian pedagogy does, can be a transforming experience for students and teachers.

In order to illustrate what goes on in a Rogerian pedagogy course, it is useful to refer to a specific case that Rogers discusses in *Freedom to Learn*. In this case, a university professor, Dr. Levitan, who was concerned about decreased enrollment and a high dropout rate in his Neurophysiology class decided to try Rogerian pedagogy to see if it would help with enrollment and retention of students. The enrollment in his class, since he had earned a "reputation" among students and faculty for being demanding, had decreased over several years from 120 students per term to around 40 students per term (FL83 74). Furthermore, the dropout rate was 30-40%. Dr. Levitan implemented Rogers' method of structuring the course, or rather not structuring it, so his role would

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this dissertation.

be radically nondirective. The students were responsible for deciding the course content and for creating the syllabus. Although the professor lectured some, students were welcome to lecture as well. Students had a great deal of input in deciding how laboratory would be conducted and evaluated, whether they would have exams in the course and how the exams would be created and evaluated. Additionally, students were responsible for assigning their own grade in the course. The one requirement in order to have their grade submitted to the university was “to submit a portfolio containing all written material which reflected the work they had done during the semester” and a “journal containing their insights, perception of progress and their reflections on the conduct of the course, as well as a justification of the grade they wanted submitted” (88).

At the end of the class, the student feedback was quite positive to a large extent, but there were also some negative comments about this type of radically democratic pedagogy. Some of the positive feedback included one student’s claim that the democratic classroom environment “makes one think much more than other courses” (91). Another commented that there was a great deal of “enthusiasm in the subject matter” (90). On the other hand, however, one student claimed that “democracy has no place in the classroom. [. . .] A benevolent dictator (can more efficiently) teach a course [. . .]” (90). Despite the varied responses from students in their evaluation of the teaching methods used in their class, perhaps the most important indicator that the class should be considered a success was that “not one student intentionally dropped the

course” (92), which should be considered a highly positive outcome when compared to the dropout rate of the class when it was organized as a traditional, lecture-style model.

There are a number of benefits to facilitating democracy in the classroom. Rogers believed that when students have a great deal of freedom in the learning process, they become involved as a whole person, cognitively and emotionally. The result is that the effectiveness of their learning is increased, and it becomes more meaningful to them. He recommends that learning be largely student-directed; students should be actively involved in choosing the material to be learned, in guiding the process of their own learning, and in evaluating how effectively they have learned. The benefits of Rogers’ democratic teaching methods may be best expressed by illustrating from his student’s perspective what it was like to attend one of Rogers’ classes. When one reads an account of how Rogers’ own classes were conducted, it becomes apparent how radical his approach was, and how unconventional it still is almost half a century after he first published *Freedom to Learn*.

Dr. Samuel Tenenbaum, who was once a student in a class taught by Rogers at Brandeis University, writes about the experience in “Carl R. Rogers and Non-Directive Teaching.” He explains that Rogers’ nondirective methods were at first uncomfortable for students, even “a source of [. . .] irritation” (*OBP* 302). There was a great deal of student resistance during the first sessions. One student demanded that Rogers teach in a more conventional manner, claiming: “We are Rogers-centered, not student-centered. We have come to learn from Rogers” (*OBP* 302). Rogers responded to students’ requests for him to lecture by encouraging them to seek out other resources as well:

“You asked me to lecture. It is true I am a resource, but what sense would there be in my lecturing? I have brought a great quantity of material, reprints of any number of lectures, articles, books, tape recordings, movies” (304). Rogers in this way suggested that he should be seen as one “resource” among many rather than the authority figure of the class.

Eventually, the unstructured nature of Rogers’ course seemed to shock students into becoming more active, more responsible learners. They realized that if they were going to learn in the class, “it was they who had to provide the content—an uncomfortable, challenging situation indeed. It was they who had to speak up with all the risks that entailed” (304). What ensued was a greater sense of energy and enthusiasm in the course, a greater willingness to participate in the process of learning:

By the fifth session, something definite had happened; there was no mistaking that. Students spoke to one another; they by-passed Rogers. Students asked to be heard and wanted to be heard, and what before was a halting, stammering, self-conscious group became an interacting group, a brand new cohesive unit, carrying on in a unique way; and from them came discussion and thinking such as no other group but this could repeat or duplicate. The instructor also joined in, but his role, more important than any in the group, somehow became merged with the group; the group was important, the center, the base of the operation, not the instructor. (304)

In general, as the description of Rogers’ class suggests, his democratic teaching methods encouraged students to be active learners, and students tended to be more emotionally engaged in the process of learning. These are benefits that are described by instructors who implement Rogerian pedagogy in the classroom.

On the other hand, Rogerian pedagogy poses some problems for teachers as well, and one of the biggest challenges is that some student resistance to an

unconventional teaching style is almost certain to occur. Student resistance was a part of the group learning experience in Rogers' classroom, and instructors can be certain that it will occur to some extent if they implement Rogers' principles. In fact, Madigan claims that since the challenges associated with Rogerian pedagogy are great, especially in terms of student resistance, he does not recommend that instructors without tenure try to create a shared responsibility classroom. He believes it is too risky for non-tenure-track faculty because it is inevitable that students confronted with an unfamiliar pedagogy "may recall their initial frustrations come evaluation time" (216). Low student evaluations would require teachers to justify their pedagogy, and they may even adversely affect tenure decisions (217). Despite these challenges, however, Madigan acknowledges that the process of facilitating learning within such a class is one that brings a great potential for growth despite its painfulness:

[...] I've felt the most pain in realizing I am not the person I thought I was. Specifically, I now realize I didn't respect students as much as I thought I did. Since Rogers' *Freedom to Learn* appeared in 1969, I'd periodically and unsuccessfully tried to implement its ideas. As part of a teaching team, I tried again in the first summer institute, but with misgivings. I feared and expected that participants might do nothing.

It is certainly understandable that many instructors who are faced with implementing a Rogerian pedagogy would have the same misgivings that Madigan describes here. The idea of trusting students to be in charge of their own process of learning goes against years of training and experience for some writing instructors. For those implementing this non-directive pedagogy exactly as Rogers did, students would be in charge of creating assignments, evaluating their work, leading class discussions, and perhaps even negotiating the syllabus; however, Madigan explains that the benefits both he and his

students experienced with Rogers' teaching methods were great, causing him to completely re-think and question the work he had completed in the field up to that point, even his own publications:

[. . .] when I found myself learning instead of merely teaching, I realized my previous pseudomilitary, spell-everything-out teaching style might not so much have guaranteed decent work as inhibited excellent work. I felt 60% of my teaching Self evaporate from one anomalous class. I no longer believed in some of my publications. (210)

Madigan does report that his students seemed to learn more as a result of a Rogerian pedagogy, and it is common that students in Rogerian classes seem to work harder, have more ownership of their work, and are more responsible and engaged learners; however, like Madigan, teachers in these classes often have transformational experiences that force them to re-think their teaching philosophies. Reports such as Madigan's were intriguing to me as a writing instructor. I became interested in implementing Rogerian pedagogy in my own writing classes to see if I would get the same positive results.

Moreover, I thought that Rogerian pedagogy would help me to overcome some challenges related to my work with service learning. Like many service-learning practitioners, my experience with service-learning pedagogy had shown me that it was a beneficial teaching method for students. My students were highly engaged with their service-learning projects. They frequently reported that they spent much more time on their service-learning work than they did on other assignments, and they sometimes expressed an interest in continuing their service work after our class ended. I believed that Rogers' theories would help me to illustrate why service learning was such an

effective pedagogy. Furthermore, I believed Rogers' theories would help me to address and to overcome an objection that some faculty members have with service learning, that although they see the civic and moral value with this pedagogy, they question whether service learning helps students learn the academic content of the course.

Although I had used service-learning pedagogy in a literature course, I was interested in teaching a composition course that included a service-learning component and that was also primarily structured as Rogers suggests in *Freedom to Learn*. In the spring of 2004, I taught my first Rogerian, service-learning course in composition. In many aspects, I consider that first class to have been highly successful. As I had heard in other cases in which Rogerian pedagogy had been implemented as the overall teaching strategy of the class, students in my Rogerian, service-learning class seemed to find a great deal of meaning and satisfaction in their work, they demonstrated ownership of the class and their work, and they seemed to take responsibility for their own learning. Students reported at the end of the term that they felt the writing they had completed was for "more than just a grade" and that they had learned "just to learn." Some students in the class completed extra work for the non-profit agencies that were their service partners, work that was not required and for which they would not receive credit, and a few students even planned to continue to work for their service partners after the class had ended.

Moreover, the student-directed discussions in the class, which were facilitated using Rogers' theories on encounter groups, and which focused on the reading assignments, I would also consider successful. These discussions would sometimes

seem to develop aimlessly or to begin in ways that I thought missed the main point of a reading assignment, but I found it interesting that when I resisted the temptation to redirect student discussions or to insert my own voice as the teacher/authority of the class, that left to their own devices, students seemed able to reconsider certain assumptions, to think critically, and to lead the discussion in positive directions.

There were some significant challenges that I encountered during that term. It is common to have some student resistance to Rogerian pedagogy, and I certainly did. In fact, although I only had a great deal of resistance from one student, it was persistent, and I found it sometimes distracting to the class as a whole. It can be tricky to address student resistance when one is using Rogerian pedagogy because if one accepts that students should be free and responsible to direct much of their own learning, it should also be accepted that students should be free to express resistance to the teaching methods and to the teacher. Moreover, some student resistance might indicate success—that students are compelled to voice their perspectives, to take risk, to be actively engaged, to think critically—even when the target is the instructor.

Another challenge with Rogerian pedagogy, in its strictest sense, is that students are encouraged to come up with their own assignments and to evaluate their own work. I have found it beneficial for students to be actively involved in some aspects of creating their own projects, but this is an area in which I prefer not to be as non-directive as Rogers. My students choose the non-profit organizations with whom they work on their service-learning projects because this often allows them to pursue areas of their own interests, and it helps them to become more engaged with their work. Students

generally also do well when they are left to negotiate their own writing projects with service-learning partners, and in doing so they are more able to create projects that they genuinely enjoy completing and on which they can utilize their strengths. For instance, someone who is talented in web design can construct a website for a service partner, or someone who is talented in photography can take original pictures to be used on a brochure for a non-profit agency. As the instructor, however, I prefer to create most of the writing assignments in the class, and although I give students a great deal of freedom to determine how they accomplish the details of certain projects, I want to create the parameters of the assignments.

Similarly, I think it is best that I assign grades in the class even though I think it is useful to take into consideration students' self-evaluations of their work and their proposals for grades. I have seen a large number of students' proposals for grades, and if I assigned in every case the grade that each student believed he or she deserved, perhaps up to ninety percent of students would receive an A for the term, which I do not believe administrators at the university, who are concerned about grade inflation, would look upon favorably.

Since the semester in which I taught my first composition course with a service-learning and a Rogerian component, I have taught many more of these classes, and I have modified the way in which I use Rogers' theories. Rather than using Rogerian pedagogy in its strictest sense, I now depend heavily on Rogers' theories, but I use them as one part of an overall pedagogy that is democratic yet a bit more structured. I have developed RDP as a modified Rogerian pedagogy rather than using a strict Rogerian

one because I have discovered that I am not as effective in my teaching when I try to emulate Rogers' pedagogy too closely. Rogers' approach is too non-directive to be comfortable for me as an instructor. In fact, even in his own field of psychotherapy, although many counselors incorporate Rogers' theories into their overall approach to therapy, few consider themselves to be wholly client-centered.

The goal of compositionists applying RDP is, in part, to depend on Rogers' pedagogical theories to re-organize the traditional structure of the classroom, to encourage students to take more responsibility in the learning process and to be active learners, to use dialogue within the classroom as a means to promote critical thinking, to help students recognize and to resist or re-negotiate dominant discourses, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to help students participate in or even to initiate dialogue outside the classroom as well, through public writing, which can take many forms. This functions to apply the democratic principles of radical composition theory, not only within the classroom, but outside of it as well. Students' writing is also the writing of politically active citizens. RDP aims to help students realize that as public writers, they have a great deal of potential power to create change in the community and in the world, and ideally, they may continue to realize their potential to initiate change as public writers even after they finish their composition course.

My aim in this project is to fully articulate a model of RDP that I have developed over a number of years since I first used Rogerian pedagogy in conjunction with service learning in a composition class so that it can be applied by other compositionists interested in helping to facilitate students' democratic use of public

writing, as with service learning. In the chapter that follows, “Rogers’ Psychological Theories and His Pedagogical Philosophy,” I will explain the major aspects of Rogers’ psychological theories, in which RDP is rooted, by presenting them thematically, including a discussion of his theory of personality, his ideas regarding the elements of a facilitative environment, and his pedagogical ideas. As I provide an overview of major aspects of Rogers’ theories, the focus is on illustrating the development of his thinking over the course of his career, and especially the movement toward an increasing concern for the political ramifications of his theories.

CHAPTER 2  
ROGERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORIES AND HIS  
PEDAGOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Rogers wrote sixteen books in all<sup>1</sup>; however, I consider twelve his major works. This excludes his doctoral dissertation, published as *Measuring Personality Adjustment in Children Nine to Thirteen Years of Age* (1931)<sup>2</sup>, a small book, *Counseling with Returned Servicemen* (1945), *Person to Person: The Problem of Being Human* (1968), a book Rogers largely credits to his co-author, Barry Stevens<sup>3</sup>, and another small book, *Man and the Science of Man* (1968)<sup>4</sup>. Of Rogers' twelve major works, six deal, at least in part, with pedagogy. Since Rogers majored in educational psychology in addition to clinical psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University, it should not be surprising that he writes so extensively about pedagogy. The primary focus of this

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<sup>1</sup> For a complete list of Rogers' major works, see Appendix One.

<sup>2</sup> This first served as a dissertation for which Rogers developed an instrument used to determine the level of personality adjustment of girls and boys, a project he began while serving as a fellow at the Institute for Child Guidance in New York, from 1927-1928. After publication, it became quite a successful book and was used extensively in clinics internationally.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers claimed, "The one thing I regret about the book [*Person to Person*] is that she [Barry Stevens] talked me into putting my name first on it, because she knew it would help to sell the book. And I shouldn't have let her do that, because it's a damn lie. It's her book, and I never feel good about seeming to author something that I really didn't" (qtd. in Kirschenbaum 391).

<sup>4</sup> This book, co-authored by William Coulson, was based on the proceedings of a conference organized by the Western Behavioral Sciences Institute, "a nonprofit organization devoted to humanistically oriented research in interpersonal relationships" (Rogers, *Autobiography* 373). It sold fewer copies than any of Rogers' other major publications (Kirschenbaum 326).

chapter will be to provide an overview of Rogers' psychological theories as well as his educational philosophy, or Rogerian pedagogy<sup>5</sup>. This chapter will consist of a thematic discussion of his major psychological theories, organized generally in terms of their chronological appearance during the course of his career, with special attention given to his thoughts about education. Moreover, by organizing the chapter in this way, the aim is to illustrate the major developments in Rogers' thinking throughout his professional career.

### **Overview of Major Developments in Rogers' Theories**

The first of the major developments in Rogers' theories is a movement toward a nondirective therapeutic style. From the middle to late 1930s, Rogers' experience as a counselor led him to discover that nondirective techniques were more effective for providing a positive therapeutic outcome. As he gained experience as a therapist, Rogers became disillusioned with current methods of psychoanalysis, and he discovered through counseling experiences that "there were mistakes in authoritative teachings and that there was still new knowledge to discover" (Rogers, *Autobiography* 358). He began to move away from using "any approach which was coercive or strongly interpretive in clinical relationships, not for philosophical reasons, but because such approaches were never more than superficially effective" (Rogers, *Autobiography* 359). By the time he published *Counseling and Psychotherapy* (1939), he had begun to endorse the nondirective approach to counseling.

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<sup>5</sup> Chris Madigan uses this term in his article "Attitudes and Expectations in a Shared Responsibility Classroom" in *Rogerian Perspectives* (1992).

Relatively early in Rogers' career, a second major development occurred, which was that Rogers became critical of the overemphasis on counselor techniques, and he began focusing instead on the attitudes a counselor should develop in order to increase the likelihood of a successful therapeutic outcome. In *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951), Rogers began to emphasize important therapist attitudes, such as *empathic understanding, acceptance, genuineness, and trust*, as opposed to the use of counselor techniques, tricks, or tools (30). He believed that techniques could be seen as "rigid" and "mechanical," and client-centered therapy should be instead a "fluid," dynamic field (*CCT* 5-6).

A third development was that before the publication of *On Becoming A Person* (1961), Rogers began to prioritize the characteristic of genuineness in relation to the other therapist attitudes. He began to call this characteristic *congruence*, a condition in which "the feelings the therapist is experiencing are available to him, available to his awareness, and he is able to live these feelings, be them, and [is] able to communicate them if appropriate" (Rogers, *OBP* 61). The term *congruence* suggests that the therapist should be genuine and that she should also have an *immediacy* in her communication, in which she communicates persistent feelings that she is having in the moment.

Gradually, over the course of Rogers' career, a fourth development occurred. Although *Client-Centered Therapy* contained a major section on how his theories could be applied in contexts outside of the therapeutic situation, during the sixties and seventies Rogers wrote more extensively about the far-reaching applications of his theories. For instance, he focused on how his client-centered theories could be applied

in education, which he wrote about extensively in articles and in the major work *Freedom to Learn* (1969), how they could be applied in encounter groups or learning groups, which he wrote about in *On Encounter Groups* (1970), and how they could be applied in marriages, which he wrote about in *Becoming Partners* (1972). By the time he published *On Personal Power* (1977), Rogers had begun to use the term *person-centered* instead of *client-centered* to describe his approach because this term was more broadly conceived and more fitting for discussion about the applicability of his approach in intensive groups, marriage, family relationships, administration, minority groups, interracial, intercultural, and even international relationships (5).

A fifth development in Rogers' thinking, and one that is highly significant in terms of the implications for applying his psychological theories in a number of situations and contexts is their politicization. In *On Personal Power*, Rogers articulated the *politics* of the person-centered approach. By using the term *politics*, Rogers was referring to strategies that are consciously or unconsciously employed to gain or relinquish power or control over others. The politics of the person-centered approach is to encourage the development of self-reliance and self-responsibility in others and to avoid actions that are controlling of others. Around this time, Rogers had begun to reassess his life's work and to rearticulate its meaning in political terms, calling it "revolutionary" in purpose.

By the end of his career, a sixth development had occurred: Rogers' person-centered approach had been successfully applied in such a variety of contexts, that it had become more of a philosophy of life, a "way of being," instead of simply a

psychotherapeutic approach. His late major publication, *A Way of Being* (1980), reflects this development.

These theoretical developments become apparent through an analysis of Rogers' major works, beginning with *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* (1939), and ending with *A Way of Being* (1980). The discussion that follows will be organized thematically with an attempt to cover each of the major ideas within Rogers' works as they begin to appear chronologically within his publications. Rogers discusses many of these major ideas in multiple works, and his treatment of some of them evolves over the course of his career, so the chronological organization is approximate.

### **The Qualifications of the Therapist**

Rogers wrote the first of his major works, *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child* (1939), while working at, and eventually directing, the Child Study Department at the Rochester Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, where he diagnosed and conducted "treatment interviews" of "delinquent" and "underprivileged" children (Autobiography 358). In the book, he provides a description of various approaches to child therapy. He explains that in addition to having psychological knowledge, all therapists need to have "objectivity," "respect for the individual," and "an understanding of the self" (280-84). In these three "qualifications of the therapist," asserts Howard Kirschenbaum, one may see the roots of the three concepts that "would be among Rogers' most important contributions to the understanding of helping relationships": "empathic understanding," "unconditional positive regard," and "congruence" (97). Rogers emphasizes that both training and attitudes are important in

order for the clinical psychologist, the social worker, or the educator to be most successful in treating children:

In evaluating the results of other treatment methods it has been pointed out that the personal qualifications of the worker are a factor in determining the outcome. The success of foster-home placement and of therapeutic procedures in the school and club can be shown to depend to some extent upon the training and the attitudes of the worker, teacher, or counselor involved. This is much more true in the interviewing process where, in many instances of deeper therapy, it is the personal relationship itself which is of outstanding importance. There are some who maintain that the success and quality of all direct therapy depends entirely on the emotional relationship between therapist and child. (*CTPC* 280)

In this statement, one can see the beginnings of what would become a major emphasis in Rogers' philosophy of psychology, that rather than being skillful at applying specific techniques, a therapist should be concerned about having particular attitudes during therapy.

### **Clinical Psychology**

Rogers admits that during the period when he was working in Rochester and writing *CTPC*, he began to question whether he was, indeed, a psychologist at all (Autobiography 361). The field of clinical psychology was still young at the time, and when Rogers attended meetings of the American Psychological Association, he claimed they were "full of papers on the learning processes of rats and laboratory experiments which seemed to me to have no relation to what I was doing" (Autobiography 360). Instead, Rogers asserts, psychiatric social workers "seemed to be talking my language." (Autobiography 361). While the Department of Psychology at The University of Rochester told Rogers that they were not interested in having him teach there because they believed his work was not psychology, Rogers did offer courses at that university

under the Departments of Sociology and Education (Autobiography 361). Even though he is primarily known today as a psychologist, his background in these fields is extensive.

After he published *CTPC*, Rogers began to establish his reputation as a clinical psychologist. In 1940, Rogers accepted a position of full professor in the Psychology Department at Ohio State University. He claimed he was certain that it was because he had published this book that he was considered for the position at all (Autobiography 361).

### **Nondirective Therapy**

It was while teaching graduate students at Ohio State that Rogers began to realize he had developed a unique perspective on psychotherapy (Autobiography 361). Thus, in order to communicate this perspective, he wrote *Counseling and Psychotherapy*<sup>6</sup>, considered by some to be Rogers' most important work. Howard Kirschenbaum and Valerie Land Henderson claim that "no single volume did more to influence the practice of counseling and psychotherapy in the United States than Rogers's *CP*" (*The Rogers Reader* 62). In the book, Rogers describes and endorses the nondirective approach to therapy. It was primarily Rogers' experience as a counselor that led to a major shift in his thinking, which occurred from the middle 1930s to

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<sup>6</sup> The book was written during a critical and early time in the field of clinical psychology, and it includes the first published transcription of a complete psychotherapy case. By 1967, the book had sold over 80,000 copies even though the publisher doubted it would ever sell 2,000 (Autobiography 361). Rogers modestly attributes the fact that the book boosted him into national visibility to timing, claiming that when he wrote it, "neither my publisher nor I could have foreseen that the miniscule field of counseling would suddenly expand at the end of the war into an enormous field of great public interest. To have written one of the very few books on the subject [ . . . ] was simply lucky" (Autobiography 382).

around 1940, from using primarily directive methods for psychotherapy to relying on and developing more nondirective methods (Kirschenbaum 190). Rogers claims that he discovered as a result of several specific situations that in therapy “it is the client who knows what hurts, what directions to go, what problems are crucial, what experiences have been deeply buried. It began to occur to me that unless I had a need to demonstrate my own cleverness and learning, I would do better to rely upon the client for the direction of movement in the process” (Autobiography 359).

Rogers claims that compared to nondirective counselors, directive counselors “are more active in the counseling situation—they do much more of the talking. [. . .] Conversely, of course, the client does much less talking” (CP 122). In the chapter “The Directive Versus the Nondirective Approach,” Rogers depends heavily on research conducted by E.H. Porter to illustrate the differences of approach by counselors within the therapeutic situation:

In an analysis of word count in these interviews, Porter found that the ratio of counselor words to counselee words ranged from .15 to 4.02. In other words, at one extreme the client talked nearly seven times as much as the counselor. At the other extreme the counselor talked four times as much as the client—a statistical example of what it means to try to “get a word in edgeways.” If we compare these two extreme counselors, the second talked more than twenty-five times as much as the first.” [. . .] This makes graphic the fact that in nondirective counseling the client comes “to talk out his problems.” In a directive contact the counselor talks to the client. (122)

Directive counselors, according to Rogers, stress the use of techniques designed to “control the interview and move the client toward a counselor-chosen goal” (123). Directive techniques include “persuading the client, pointing out problems needing correction, interpreting test results, and asking specific questions” (123). On the other

hand, nondirective counselors use techniques that “cause the client to be more conscious of his own attitudes and feelings, with a consequent increase in insight and self-understanding,” such as “recognizing and interpreting the client’s verbally expressed feelings or his feelings as expressed in actions” (123).

### **Attitudes Instead of Techniques**

After writing *CP*, Rogers “began to recognize some of the limitations of his own work” (Kirschenbaum and Henderson 62). Specifically, he became critical of how even a nondirective counseling approach could overemphasize the use of specific counselor “*techniques*” instead of giving “enough attention to the counselor’s *attitudes* toward the client and how the client perceived the relationship” (Kirschenbaum and Henderson 62). Thus, Rogers began emphasizing the importance of certain therapist attitudes, which he believed would allow therapy to be more successful.

Rogers’ *Client-Centered Therapy* (1951) is perhaps his best known book. It includes a detailed discussion of the client-centered therapist’s attitudes. The shift in Rogers’ writing from an emphasis on nondirective counselor “techniques” to an emphasis on the importance of specific therapist attitudes began to happen around the middle 1940s (Kirschenbaum 190), and it became apparent in this book.

Throughout his life, Rogers continued to revise and to develop a theory about certain attitude characteristics that a therapist should have to improve the likelihood of a successful therapeutic outcome. In chapter two of Part I, entitled “The Attitude and Orientation of the Counselor,” he identifies important attitudes as acceptance of the client, empathic understanding of the client, and genuineness on the part of the

therapist. Client-centered therapy, according to Rogers, is a certain philosophy that the therapist applies during counseling, a philosophy which he describes succinctly in the following:

We [client-centered counselors] have come to realize that if we can provide understanding of the way the client seems to himself at this moment, he can do the rest. The therapist must lay aside his preoccupation with diagnosis and his diagnostic shrewdness, must discard his tendency to make professional evaluations, must cease his temptation subtly to guide the individual, and must concentrate on one purpose only; that of providing deep understanding and acceptance of the attitudes consciously held at this moment by the client as he explores step by step into the dangerous areas which he has been denying to consciousness. (*CCT* 30)

While Rogers focuses here on the attitudes of deep understanding and acceptance, another important attitude is that of being genuine. More specifically, Rogers explains that it is not good if a therapist attempts to use nondirective methods as a technique, rather than genuinely having certain attitudes toward the client, such as acceptance and empathic understanding. He claims that “client-centered counseling, if it is to be effective, cannot be a trick or a tool. It is not a subtle way of guiding the client while pretending to let him guide himself. To be effective, it must be genuine” (30). Although “genuineness” is listed as the third attitude of a client-centered therapist in the book, *CCT*, Rogers later puts greater emphasis on this particular attitude, calling it “congruence” and listing it first as the most important attitude (*FL 80s* 126).

### **Rogers’ theory of personality**

In the chapter within *CCT* entitled “A Theory of Personality and Behavior,” Rogers presents nineteen propositions, which taken together comprise his theory of personality and behavior (482). I will not discuss all nineteen propositions in this

chapter<sup>7</sup>; however, I will introduce some of the propositions that constitute basic elements of Rogers' psychological theory regarding personality and behavior because these also inform Rogers' philosophy of education.

### **The phenomenal or experiential field.**

Rogers' first proposition is that "every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center" (483). Kirschenbaum explains that phenomenological theory assumes that "every individual perceives a separate world of phenomena all around him and also within himself. This 'phenomenal field' governs his behavior" (*OBP* 238). Although the phenomenal field of many individuals may overlap as they perceive the same phenomena, asserts Kirschenbaum, "it is also true that part of any individual's phenomenal field may not correspond to what others would agree is 'reality'" (238). Rogers claims that "the private world of the individual [. . .] can only be known, in any genuine or complete sense, to the individual himself" (483). However, Rogers also asserts that individuals may not be consciously aware of their total phenomenal field.

### **The actualizing tendency.**

In proposition four, Rogers claims, "The organism has one basic tendency and striving—to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism" (487). There is, he asserts, an "observed directional force in organic life" (488). It is a "tendency of the organism to move in the direction of maturation, as maturation is defined for each

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<sup>7</sup> For a complete list of the nineteen propositions that comprise Rogers' theory of personality, see Appendix Two.

species. This involves self-actualization” (488). Rogers states that this tendency is also evident in “the process of evolution”: “the directional tendency which we are discussing will be defined most adequately by comparing the undeveloped with the developed organism, the simple organism with the complex, the organism early or low on the evolutionary scale with the organism which has developed later and is regarded as higher” (489).

Consequently, this process is not always a smooth one, for an organism must sometimes experience struggle and pain before enhancement and growth (490). To illustrate this point as it relates to human development, Rogers provides an example of the child learning to walk, who might, as a result of painful falls, revert to crawling for a period of time. Rogers claims that despite the pain and struggle that humans may experience, they have this tendency to become “independent, responsible, self governing, socialized” (490). He admits that sometimes a variety of circumstances can prevent an individual from exhibiting growth, but he argues that even in these situations, “the tendency is present. Given the opportunity for clear-cut choice between forward-moving and regressive behavior, the tendency will operate” (491).

### **The role of emotion in facilitating behavior.**

In proposition five, Rogers defines behavior as “the goal directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived” (491). He builds on this definition in proposition six by adding that emotion not only “accompanies” goal-directed behavior, but it “facilitates” it. For instance, Rogers explains, “fear

accelerates the organization of the individual in the direction of escape from danger, and competitive jealousy concentrates the efforts of the individual to surpass” (493).

**The internal frame of reference of the individual.**

Rogers asserts in proposition seven that “the best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual” (494). This is an important basic assumption because if it is accepted as true, it provides the reasoning for allowing the client to guide the course of therapy, which is an important aspect of client-centered therapy. Rogers claims, however, that there are drawbacks to viewing behavior from the internal frame of reference, namely that not only is communication imperfect, but also “the greater the area of experience not in [an individual’s] consciousness, the more incomplete will be the picture” of that individual’s frame of reference (495). The advantage of attempting to understand the individual’s frame of reference through client-centered therapy is that the procedures used in it, according to Rogers, tend to improve the client’s ability to communicate his/her frame of reference:

The situation minimizes any need of defensiveness. The counselor’s behavior minimizes any prejudicial influence on the attitudes expressed. The person is usually motivated to some degree to communicate his own special world, and the procedures used encourage him to do so. The increasing communication gradually brings more of experience into the realm of awareness, and thus a more accurate and total picture of this individual’s world of experience is conveyed. On this basis a much more understandable picture of behavior emerges” (496).

### **Response to threat.**

Rogers theorizes in proposition sixteen, that an “experience which is inconsistent with the organization or structure of self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self-structure is organized to maintain itself” (515). For instance, Rogers explains that if a mother who believes herself to be a good and loving mother is confronted by several observers claiming that she rejects a child, and if she perceives this confrontation as a threat, she will likely “exclude any assimilation of this experience” (516). This mother will proceed in a way that defends her self-concept as a loving and good mother, collecting evidence that disputes the conclusions of the observers. However, in proposition seventeen, Rogers adds that “under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of any threat to the self-structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived, and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences” (517).

In other words, learning is most likely to be facilitated in a non-threatening environment. Rogers claims, “The educational situation which most effectively promotes significant learning is one in which (1) threat to the self of the learner is reduced to a minimum, and (2) differentiated perception of the field of experience is facilitated” (391). Moreover, the method, client-centered therapy, in general, is applicable both in therapy as well as in the classroom:

If, in therapy, it is possible to rely upon the capacity of the client to deal constructively with his life situation and if the therapist’s aim is best directed toward releasing that capacity, then why not apply this hypothesis and this method in teaching? If the creation of an atmosphere of acceptance,

understanding, and respect is the most effective basis for facilitating the learning which is called therapy, then might it not be the basis for the learning which is called education? If the outcome of this approach to therapy is a person who is not only better informed in regard to himself, but who is better able to guide himself intelligently in new situations, might a similar outcome be hoped for in education? (384)

In some of his later books, especially in *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers would continue to discuss how his theories regarding client-centered therapy could be applied in the classroom.

### **Student-Centered Teaching**

*CCT* is the first major work in which there is a large focus on how Rogers' theories regarding therapy with the individual can be applied in other contexts, such as in play therapy with children, in group therapy, in leadership and administration, and in education. In Part II of *CCT*, "The Application of CCT," Rogers includes three chapters written by other authors who have applied a client-centered philosophy in some of these contexts. He contributes two chapters in this section himself on the application of a client-centered philosophy in education: "Student-Centered Teaching" is one of these chapters. Although the general notion of *student-centered* teaching has been attributed to John Dewey and others, Rogers is responsible for "expanding this approach into a general theory of education" (O'Neill and McMahon 1). He argues that the application of client-centered principles in education is relevant only if the educational goal is democratic rather than authoritarian:

If the aim of education is to produce well-informed technicians who will be completely amenable to carrying out all orders of constituted authority without questioning, then the method we are to describe is highly inappropriate. In general it is relevant only to the type of goal which is loosely described as democratic. (387)

Educators who use the student-centered, or nondirective, approach in their democratic classrooms, according to Rogers, should conduct themselves in a certain manner. Initially, they should attempt to set the mood of the class by having a general philosophy of trust in the group and by communicating that trust in subtle ways. While Rogers explains that they should “help to elicit and clarify the purposes of the members of the class,” he also claims that they should rely heavily on the students to define and to implement those purposes (402). In general, facilitators of a democratic classroom should make resources available, including making themselves available as a resource, but they should let the students take the lead in determining how resources should be used. Eventually, the goal for the facilitator of this type of classroom is to become less of a leader and more of a participant, whose views are expressed as one individual within the group instead of as the teacher (402).

Moreover, Rogers lists several ways in which the facilitator of a democratic classroom should respond to students during discussion, including the following:

- In responding to expressions from the group, he accepts both the intellectual content and emotionalized attitudes, endeavoring to give each aspect the approximate degree of emphasis which it has for the individual and the group.
- He remains alert to expressions indicative of deep feeling and when these are voiced, he endeavors to understand these from the speaker’s point of view, and to communicate this type of understanding.
- Likewise when group interaction becomes charged with emotion, he tends to maintain a neutral and understanding role, in order to give acceptance to the varied feelings which exist.
- He recognizes that the extent to which he can behave in these differing fashions is limited by the genuineness of his own attitudes. To pretend an acceptant understanding of a viewpoint when he does not feel this acceptance, will not further, and will probably hinder, the dynamic progress of the class. (402)

Like the therapist in nondirective therapy, the student-centered teacher relies on certain attitudes to create an appropriate learning environment, acceptance, understanding, and genuineness. The student-centered classroom, according to this description by Rogers, is a place with much student interaction and discussion, where the teacher's role depends largely on the situation. The teacher's role may shift from that of a facilitator who puts the students in charge of determining the direction of the class, to being a clarifier of and responder to individual students expressing their perspectives, from being a participant in the group, sharing his or her point of view as one individual in the group, to being neutral during heated discussions, accepting and understanding all views. In his subsequent books, Rogers continues to develop his ideas about the role of the teacher in a student-centered classroom and about how his psychological theories can be applied in the classroom.

### **Hypotheses of Client-Centered Therapy**

In the introduction to his next book, *Psychotherapy and Personality Change* (1954)<sup>8</sup>, Rogers provides a clear and thorough definition of client-centered therapy based on four hypotheses that he and his colleagues tested:

1. The first hypothesis is that the individual has within himself the capacity, latent if not evident, to understand those aspects of himself and of his life

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<sup>8</sup> *PPC* documents many of the findings conducted on client-centered therapy by Rogers and his students and staff at the University of Chicago Counseling Center. Five chapters of seventeen are written by Rogers himself, including the introduction, the conclusion, and two case studies. Rogers co-authors one chapter with colleagues. Eleven chapters are contributions regarding research on client-centered therapy by others. In regard to the extensive studies detailed in *PPC*, Rogers writes, "It isn't a good research in psychotherapy; it's just the best that there is" (5), which he claims reflects both his "pride in presenting this investigation" and his feeling "that it falls far short" of what he and his students "would like it to be" (6). The book was the first "objective study of outcomes of psychotherapy," and it was also considered "the single most important research publication on [psychotherapeutic] interviewing" of its time (Kirschenbaum 219).

which are causing him dissatisfaction, anxiety, or pain and the capacity and the tendency to reorganize himself and his relationship to life in the direction of self-actualization and maturity in such a way as to bring a greater degree of internal comfort.

2. This capacity will be released, and therapy or personal growth will be most facilitated, when the therapist can create a psychological climate characterized by (a) a genuine acceptance of the client as a person of unconditional worth; (b) a continuing, sensitive attempt to understand the existing feelings and communications of the client, as they seem to the client, without any effort to diagnose or alter those feelings; and (c) a continuing attempt to convey something of this empathic understanding to the client.
3. It is hypothesized that, in such an acceptant, understanding, and nonthreatening psychological atmosphere, the client will reorganize himself at both the conscious and the deeper levels of his personality in such a manner as to cope with life more constructively, more intelligently, and in a more socialized as well as a more satisfying way. More specifically it is hypothesized that the client will change in his perception of self, will become more understanding of self and others, more accepting of self and others, more creative, more adaptive, more self-directing and autonomous, more mature in his behavior, less defensive, and more tolerant of frustrations.
4. It is hypothesized that the therapeutic relationship is only one instance of interpersonal relationships and that the same lawfulness governs all such relationships. Thus, if the parent creates such a climate for his child, the child will become more self-directing, socialized, and mature; if the teacher creates such a climate for his class, the student will become a self-initiated learner, more original, more self-disciplined; if the administrator or executive creates such a climate for his organization, the staff will become more self-responsible, more creative, better able to adapt to new problems, more basically co-operative. (4-5)

These hypotheses of client-centered therapy reinforce basic notions central to the general body of Rogers' work: therapists and others in "helping relationships," as Rogers calls them in several of his books, such as parents, teachers, or administrators, should attempt to be genuine, accepting, and empathetic as a means to create a nonthreatening psychological environment, which is conducive to learning and promotes growth. Another central idea in Rogerian theory that is evident in these

hypotheses is that therapists and others must have a certain trust that those whom they help can and should be effectively self-directing. Rogers privileges self-directed, self-initiated learning, and the process of growth that he describes for clients and others is toward greater independence.

### **“The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship.”**

In addition to this being a major theme within Rogers’ theories, it is also the title of an essay within his book *On Becoming a Person* (1961)<sup>9</sup>. Rogers claims that his interest in psychotherapy has brought about an interest in every kind of “helping relationship,” which he defines as “a relationship in which at least one of the parties has the intent of promoting the growth, development, maturity, improved functioning, improved coping with life of the other. The other, in this sense, may be one individual or a group” (40). He mentions several types of helping relationships, including those

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<sup>9</sup> Rogers’ frequently claimed that his seventh book and his fifth major work, *OBP*, was his favorite (Kirschenbaum 299). It is a collection of twenty-one essays. Some of these deal primarily with Rogers’ theories about psychotherapy, and others are about their application in other areas, such as in education and in family life. Some of the essays compiled in this text consider the significance of Rogers’ psychological principles in terms of larger philosophical issues, for instance, their implications regarding the achievement of “the good life.” All of them, however, according to Rogers, have to do with “living in this perplexing world” (vii). Rogers’ audience at the time *OBP* was written had broadened to include both those in the field of psychotherapy and others, such as those in education, social work, the ministry, and even the general public.

By 1971, *OBP* “had sold more copies than any of Rogers’ other books, all of which had been available for many years more” (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 313). Rogers’ popularity had come about largely due to a political movement because many in the general population shared the goals of humanistic psychology in general: “To help individuals achieve their full potential, to become self-actualizing or fully functioning, to clarify their values, to relate more effectively to those around them—this was the language of humanistic psychology, and it meshed very comfortably with the other political and social movements of the sixties. . . . *On Becoming a Person* appeared exactly at the right time. (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 313)

between a counselor and client, a parent and child, a teacher and student, a physician and patient, and an administrator and staff.<sup>10</sup>

Rogers lists ten questions designed to help readers determine whether they can create a helping relationship. The first two of ten questions that Rogers discusses for determining if one can create a helping relationship focus on congruence, or genuineness, which is the next major theme to be discussed. Rogers encourages readers interested in creating helping relationships to ask, “Can I be in some way which will be perceived by the other person as trustworthy, as dependable or consistent in some deep sense?” A second question that is closely related is, “Can I be expressive enough as a person that what I am will be communicated unambiguously?”

Rogers asks additional questions that encourage readers to think about other important client-centered ideas. Rogers reinforces the notion that those in a helping relationship should think of the client or the one being helped as a separate other, capable of self-direction. He explains the importance of empathizing with the one being helped without judging or evaluating that person, and he discusses the necessity of acceptance. Rogers asserts that therapists, teachers, and other helpers should create an unthreatening environment.

Lastly, Rogers claims that the person being helped should be imaged as one who is in a “process of becoming” (55). In other words, children, students, or clients should

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<sup>10</sup> In *OBP* Rogers discusses several research studies that support the use of principles of client-centered psychology in helping relationships. One of these, for example, is a study by A.L. Baldwin and others, “Patterns in Parent Behavior” (1945), in which the children of parents who have an “acceptant-democratic” attitude are found to have “an accelerated intellectual development (an increasing I.Q.), more originality, more emotional security and control, less excitability than children from other types of homes” (41-42).

be seen in terms of what they are as well as what they can become, seen in terms of their potential rather than as simply “an immature child, an ignorant student, a neurotic personality, or a psychopath” (11). Using the words of Martin Buber, Rogers describes this as “confirming the other,” which means “accepting the whole potentiality of the other. . . . I can recognize in him, know in him, the person he has been . . . created to become. . . . I confirm him in myself, and then in him, in relation to this potentiality that . . . can now be developed, can evolve” (qtd. in Rogers 55). If one is not visualized as being in a process of becoming, one may instead be seen as “already diagnosed and classified,” and “already shaped by his past,” which is limiting as opposed to encouraging (55).

### **Congruence**

Rogers defines “congruence” in “The Characteristics of a Helping Relationship” within *OBP* as “whatever feeling or attitude I am experiencing would be matched by my awareness of that attitude. When this is true, then I am a unified or integrated person in that moment, and hence I can be whatever I deeply am” (51). Rogers claims that most failures to create helping relationships come about because of an inability to be congruent (51). In the moments when one is unable to be acceptant of one’s own feelings and to communicate those feelings, Rogers explains, one is likely to communicate contradictory messages:

When I am experiencing an attitude of annoyance toward another person but am unaware of it, then my communication contains contradictory messages. My words are giving one message, but I am also in subtle ways communicating the annoyance I feel and this confuses the other person and makes him distrustful, though he too may be unaware of what is causing the difficulty. When as a parent or a therapist or a teacher or an administrator I fail to listen to what is

going on in me, fail because of my own defensiveness to sense my own feelings, then this kind of failure seems to result. (51)

What is significant about the order of the questions in OBP that are aimed at defining the helping relationship is it reflects a shift in Rogers' thinking that occurred gradually beginning in the early 1950s when he began considering genuineness, or congruence, the most important characteristic for therapists and others in effective relationships. Howard Kirschenbaum considers this shift in thinking to be "one of the most personally significant changes in [Rogers'] life," although he notes that "the change did not come about all at once" (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 190). Kirschenbaum explains that "apparently, even though [Rogers] had come to understand the importance of the client's feelings in the relationship, his own personal background still held him back from giving due attention to the therapist's feelings" (191).

During Rogers' childhood, emotional displays had been considered a sign of emotional weakness. Kirschenbaum suggests that it may have been the suppression of feelings that he had experienced as a child that helped Rogers to realize the importance of the therapist's ability to empathize with and to accept clients and their feelings; however, in some of Rogers' earlier writings, there was not such an emphasis on the importance of the therapist's feelings. For instance, Rogers had not fully discussed how therapists should react if they did not feel empathetic or accepting of a particular client. Kirschenbaum asserts that "the turning point came during the years 1949 through 1951. This was a time when Rogers experienced "two years of intense personal distress" and almost had a serious psychological breakdown" (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 191). Rogers' difficulties were triggered in part by the stress of his interactions with a

severely disturbed client. Rogers wrote in 1951, “The therapy I have conducted has been better than anything I have ever done before. I think that my counseling is showing increasing results from my own therapy undertaken two years ago when I was really personally disturbed by the deep hostility of a client” (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 194).

### **“Doing Away With” Teaching (in the Traditional Sense)**

Rogers claims that “Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning” is “the most explosive” chapter in *OBP* (273). Delivered at a conference at Harvard University on “Classroom Approaches to Influencing Human Behavior” in 1952, “Personal Thoughts” was actually, Rogers notes, “a demonstration of student-centered teaching,” but it also contained many of the important elements of Rogers’ teaching philosophy, elements that he would expound upon in later works, especially in *Freedom to Learn*.

Rogers claims that when he first wrote “Personal Thoughts,” he modeled his writing of the conference paper on the same method he frequently used in his teaching at the university: “I had sometimes been able to initiate very meaningful class discussion by expressing some highly personal opinion of my own, and then endeavoring to understand and accept the often very divergent reactions and feelings of the students. This seemed a sensible way of handling my Harvard assignment” (274). Though he admits it may have been naïve, Rogers had no idea that the ideas in the paper would be as inflammatory as he soon discovered they were. After reading his paper, he opened the floor to a discussion that was highly charged with emotion: “Feelings ran high. It seemed I was threatening their jobs, I was obviously saying things I didn’t

mean, etc., etc. And occasionally a quiet voice of appreciation arose from a teacher who had felt these things but never dared to say them” (274).

Some of Rogers’ assertions that proved to be quite controversial from this chapter are that he is “only interested in learnings which significantly influence behavior,” that the only learning that can significantly influence behavior is “self-discovered, self-appropriated learning,” and that “anything that can be taught to another is relatively inconsequential, and has little or no significant influence on behavior” (276). Rogers claims that he has “lost interest in being a teacher,” and that “outcomes of teaching are either unimportant or hurtful” (276). By this, Rogers explains in his introduction to the essay, he is referring to the idea of “*teaching*” “as this term is defined in the dictionaries” (274).<sup>11</sup>

Rogers asserts that rather than being a teacher, he is “only interested in being a learner, preferably learning things that matter” (276). Rogers mentions that some of the best ways he learns are “to drop my own defensiveness, at least temporarily, and to try to understand the way in which [another person’s] experience seems and feels to [that person], and “to state my own uncertainties, to try to clarify my puzzlements, and thus get closer to the meaning that my experience actually seems to have” (277).

At the end of “Personal Thoughts,” Rogers argues that we should “do away with” “teaching,” with “examinations,” with “grades,” and with “degrees” (277). These

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<sup>11</sup> Rogers is opposing an idea of teaching that theorist Paulo Freire also opposes, one which Freire describes as the “‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (53). The similarities between Rogers and Freire will be more completely explored later in this project.

ideas, which were indeed shocking to the initial audience, sparked, according to Rogers, a “thought-provoking session” (274).

Although Rogers writes here that he is disinterested in teaching, many of his students have praised Rogers’ teaching style, though unconventional, and have written that they learned a great deal from taking his class, not only about the subject, but about themselves and others. Their feedback on Rogers’ teaching will be considered later as well.

### **Significant Learning/Experiential Learning**

In *Freedom to Learn* (1963, 1983)<sup>12</sup>, Rogers explains a philosophy of teaching in which client-centered principles are applied in education to promote what he refers to as, “significant, meaningful, experiential learning” (19). Rogers defines “significant” or “experiential” learning to be that which (1) “has a quality of personal involvement” and involves the whole person, both emotionally and cognitively (2) “is self-initiated,” (3) “is pervasive,” making a difference in behavior, attitudes, and perhaps even personality, (4) “is evaluated by the learner,” and (5) is essentially meaningful to the student (20). When teachers apply Rogers’ psychological theories in a classroom setting, this contributes to creating what Rogers calls “a climate of freedom” (ix), in which “significant” (4), “self-initiated” and, “experiential” learning may be promoted (9). The

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<sup>12</sup> The 1963 edition of *Freedom to Learn* became a best-selling book that by 1978 had sold over 300,000 copies (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 379). Rogers revised this edition, and in 1983, he published *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*, which contains much of the same material as the 1963 edition and also several new chapters that present additional research and evidence of new developments in Rogers’ thinking about the client-centered approach and its applications. One of these is that Rogers began focusing on a “person-centered” approach rather than on a “client-centered” one. Rogers’ ideas regarding the politics of a person-centered approach are also evident in the 1983 edition of *Freedom to Learn*;

attitudes that facilitate this type of learning are the same ones that facilitate learning in a client-centered, therapeutic relationship: (1) realness or genuineness on the part of the teacher, in which she feels free to express her feelings, whether she is “enthusiastic,” “bored,” “angry,” or “sympathetic,” (2) prizing or acceptance of the learner “as an imperfect human being with many feelings, many potentialities, (3) empathic understanding, a “sensitive awareness of the way the process of education and learning seems to the student,” and (4) trust in the student to “choose her own way and her own direction in her learning” (121-27).

### **Teaching Methods that Facilitate “Freedom” in Learning**

In *Freedom to Learn* (1983), Rogers lists several teaching methods that can help to facilitate the type of democratic, student-directed learning that he describes:

#### **Building upon problems perceived as real.**

Rogers claims that students should learn about that which has “meaning” and “relevance” for them (148). He explains that to increase student motivation, teachers should be willing for students to confront challenges that are “real” for them and to “improve the opportunity for them to meet those challenges” (148).

#### **Providing resources.**

Instead of spending large amounts of time preparing lectures, Rogers explains that teachers should instead focus on providing resources, which include “academic resources,” such as “books, articles, work space, laboratory room and equipment, tools,

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however, it is more appropriate to explore these ideas in detail during the discussion of Rogers’ book *OPP* (1977) because this is the first major publication in which these ideas were thoroughly presented.

maps, films, recordings, and the like,” and “human resources,” guest speakers, people in the community familiar with issues of student concern, and the teacher, who should make his or her knowledge available to the students without imposing it (149).

### **Using contracts.**

Student contracts give students “security” and “responsibility” within a democratic classroom environment. They can provide a “bridge between conventional approaches and a classroom of greater freedom,” and they can also provide “activities, motivation, and reinforcement” for students to achieve academic objectives (150).

For example, Arthur Combs explains to his college-level students and graduate students at the beginning of the term that they can earn a passing grade in his class if they complete the reading assignments and pass tests over those assignments; however, if they wish to earn a grade of “B” or “A,” they must plan and complete work on their own that justifies the grade that they wish to receive. They create a contract describing the work they will complete, and when the work is finished, they receive the contracted grade (150).

In this section, Rogers provides additional examples of how contracts can be used as guidelines for students to obtain the grades they choose to earn. Included is a sample student contract and questions teachers can ask to help them implement contracts (149-53).

### **Using the community.**

Rogers explains that the community can be an excellent resource for experiential educational opportunities. Students can participate in community projects, for instance,

conducting interviews for a background study on racial attitudes in the community, or they can be involved in apprenticeships or internships to learn about a particular field of work. According to Rogers, such educational opportunities help students to become “searchers after knowledge,” active learners rather than “passive and temporary recipients” of knowledge (153).

**Peer teaching.**

The “tutor-tutee” relationship, Rogers asserts, is an effective method of facilitating learning in which both parties benefit, the student who is being helped and the student who is teaching. Rogers cites an experiment conducted by The University of Cincinnati with sixth-grade math tutors and third-grade tutees, in which the tutees showed after six thirty-minute tutoring sessions “greater confidence, more motivation to work, and an improved attitude toward mathematics,” and the tutors “gained in their own self-assurance and their willingness to assume responsibility” (154).

**Dividing the group.**

Rogers notes in this section that students who prefer to “be guided on a carefully predetermined path of learning” and do not wish to have “freedom to learn on their own responsibility” should be offered some sort of provision so that they can choose to learn more conventionally. He admits that it “does not seem reasonable to impose freedom on anyone who does not desire it” (154).

**Organizing facilitator-learning groups.**

What Rogers refers to as “facilitator-learning groups” are small student learning groups within which students can work collaboratively to achieve specific learning

goals. Dividing students into smaller learning groups is one way to effectively provide students with “freedom of learning” within a larger class (154-156).

### **Conducting inquiry.**

In *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers discusses the conduct of inquiry as a “new” educational “movement” that is experiential; it encourages students to ask questions and to become discoverers. In order to facilitate this type of learning, the teacher poses problems, creates a responsive environment, and assists students during a process of investigation (156).

### **Encounter groups.**

This teaching method, Rogers claims, which was developed and used during group therapy, “fosters a climate for significant learning.” The encounter group promotes a group educational experience during which the members participate in a process of dialogue with “little imposed structure.” Group members become more willing to participate in spontaneous discussion, to express thoughts and feelings, and to provide positive and negative feedback to others. The end result of a successful group educational experience is that individuals learn to have “more direct person-to-person communication, sharply increased self-understanding, more realness and independence [. . .], and an increased understanding and acceptance of others” (158).

### **Self evaluation.**

Rogers claims that one means in which self-initiated learning becomes “responsible learning” is when students are provided with the opportunity to evaluate themselves, and he asserts that it is important for teachers who are attempting to

facilitate experiential learning to use “some degree” of self-evaluation in their classes. Self-evaluation might include having students participate in creating the criteria for grading, asking students to analyze their strengths and weaknesses, and even having students recommend their own grades (158-59).

Although Rogers wrote extensively on education and frequently included a chapter or chapters on education in his books, *Freedom to Learn* was Rogers’ most comprehensive work on education as well as his most significant contribution to the field of education. It continues to be an important work in educational studies.

### **Encounter Groups**

Beginning in 1965, Rogers became increasingly more involved in the encounter group movement<sup>13</sup>, which became an important focus in his career. He was known as the “grand master” of the encounter group and as “an elder statesman” in the movement (Kirschenbaum, *Becoming* 328). In *On Encounter Groups* (1972), Rogers describes the history of encounter groups, their process, and their outcomes, he provides information about how to facilitate encounter groups, and he presents research on their effectiveness.

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<sup>13</sup> Rogers claims that the “T group,” which stood for “training,” was an early version of the encounter group. It was developed in 1947 by the psychologist, Kurt Lewin, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as a means for providing human relations skills (2). Around the same time, 1946-47, Rogers and his colleagues at The University of Chicago were also depending on “intensive group experiences” to train counselors to help soldiers returning from combat during World War II (3). Gradually, what Rogers calls “a movement involving intensive group experience” developed (4). The emphasis of the encounter group is educational; its purpose, according to Rogers, is to provide training in human relations and to promote personal and therapeutic growth through experiential means (4). Encounter groups are also sometimes known as sensitivity training groups, sensory awareness groups, creativity workshops, team building groups, and gestalt groups, and they are rooted in a combination of Lewinian thinking, gestalt psychology, and client-centered therapy (4).

### **The process of the encounter group.**

Rogers lists fifteen stages in the educational process of an encounter group. For teachers aiming to facilitate democracy in the classroom through the use of student led discussion, understanding these stages is particularly useful because the process of dialogue that occurs among students in composition classes is sometimes similar in many ways to that within Rogers' encounter groups:

1. *Milling around*: “an initial period of confusion during which there might be “awkward silence,” and a general “lack of continuity” (16).
2. *Resistance to personal expression or exploration*: a hesitation about trusting the group with their thoughts and feelings.
3. *Description of past feelings*: expression of feelings that are obviously current; however, the feelings are placed in the past and described “as being outside the group in time and place” (18).
4. *Expression of negative feelings*: “negative attitudes toward other group members or the group leader” (18).
5. *Expression and exploration of personally meaningful material*: a revealing of oneself to the group in a significant way (19).
6. *Expression of immediate interpersonal feelings in the group*: examples of this might be, “I like your warmth and your smile,” or “I dislike you more every time you speak up.”

7. *The development of a healing capacity in the group*: members in the group begin to respond to each other in a “helpful, facilitating, and therapeutic fashion” (23).
8. *Self-acceptance and the beginning of change*: during this stage, individuals begin to recognize and to accept certain aspects of themselves, perhaps negative ones, and this is the first step necessary for changing those aspects if desired.
9. *The cracking of façades*: the group becomes more demanding of each other that individuals within the group should reveal themselves.
10. *The individual receives feedback*: the individual discovers how he/she appears to others.
11. *Confrontation*: this occurs when one receives strong feedback, frequently negative, from another in the group who essentially “levels” with the first (31).
12. *The helping relationship outside the group sessions*: outside of group sessions, group members assist each other with their individual struggles.
13. *The basic encounter*: when two people in the group communicate and understand each other at a deep level.
14. *The expression of positive feelings and closeness*: individuals within encounter groups become close as a result of their acceptance of each other.
15. *Behavior changes in the group*: members frequently become more helpful and thoughtful of each other (36), they “come to know themselves” more deeply, and they also relate “better to others, both in the group and later in the everyday life situation” (9).

### **Facilitating an encounter group.**

In the chapter, “Can I Be a Facilitative Person In A Group?” Rogers lists the characteristics of a good encounter group facilitator, which are the same characteristics of a client-centered therapist or of a teacher who wishes to facilitate a democratic learning environment. An encounter group facilitator must first establish an appropriate climate, one that is psychologically safe. The facilitator must be accepting of the group as a whole and of the individuals in the group. She must also respond to group members with empathic understanding. Rogers focuses on the importance of the facilitator’s genuineness, or what he sometimes refers to as congruence, in a section entitled, “Operating in Terms of My Feelings” (52). He stresses that his aim is to express to the group or to an individual within the group “any *persisting* feelings,” even if they are negative ones. Rogers does not necessarily express all of the feelings he is experiencing; his goal is to “be aware of all the complexity” of those feelings “in any given moment,” which is certainly not a simple task. The strong and persistent feelings, however, should be expressed, he explains (53). The psychological term for the expression of persistent, in the moment feelings is “immediacy.”

As a facilitator, Rogers claims that he sometimes confronts individuals in the group “on specifics of their behavior,” but he only does this “with feelings I am willing to claim as my own” (54-55). In other words, he uses the first person when he confronts someone, and he “owns” the feelings he expresses by putting them in terms of his own perspective. An example of this type of comment is, “It seems to me you give each message three or four times. I wish you would stop when you’ve completed your

message” (55). Rogers also explains that during a confrontation, he tries “to use quite specific material, given previously by the participant. ‘Now you’re being what you called the “pore lil ole country boy” once more”” (55).

While facilitating an encounter group, Rogers attempts to avoid planned procedures and exercises because he doubts their effectiveness; however, he supports using exercises such as role playing, bodily contact, or psychodrama if it is done spontaneously “when they seem to express what one is actually feeling at the time” (57). During facilitation, Rogers also tries to avoid making evaluative comments about the group process or about individuals because he finds that these comments make the group “self-conscious” and “slow it down”; he claims that “comments on the group process best come naturally from the member, if at all” (57). He acknowledges that when a group member makes interpretive comments about an individual’s behavior, it is sometimes helpful (57). Additionally, Rogers learned that there is a great deal of therapeutic potentiality of the group. For example, when problems arise during the encounter group process, such as a group member who begins exhibiting psychotic behavior, Rogers found that the group frequently handles the situation effectively, relating “to the troubled person as a *person*” (58). Rogers also acknowledges, though he generally does not try to promote it himself, that some facilitators are able to encourage the use of physical movement and contact in a therapeutic way during an encounter group process (58-59).

Rogers claims that there are some difficulties that he experienced as the facilitator of encounter groups. One of these is handling group apathy. It can be

particularly difficult to facilitate an encounter group that is simply apathetic. Some facilitators have an ability to provoke a relationship with a group to overcome apathy, and Rogers tries to choose such a person as a co-facilitator. Rogers admits that another problem has to do with the challenge of expressing one's feelings as the facilitator. In particular, Rogers claims that he is "slow to sense and express my own anger" (65). It can lead to "real communication—to a strengthening of the relationship and gradually to the feeling of genuine liking for each other" when one can be sufficiently aware of one's immediate feelings and can express those feelings (65).

The teaching style that Rogers developed over the course of his career had much in common with the learning groups called encounter groups. In fact, in *Freedom to Learn*, Rogers lists the encounter group as an effective method for teachers who wish to facilitate self-initiated learning. Rogers' *OEG* should prove to be a valuable resource for teachers who are, in a sense, always facilitators. In particular, teachers who depend on facilitating dialogue within the classroom as a means of promoting critical thinking should find a great deal of applicability for Rogers' discussion of the process and methods of facilitating encounter groups.

### **The Politics of the Person Centered Approach**

Late in Rogers' career, he began re-evaluating his person-centered<sup>14</sup> theories and focusing on them in terms of their politics. This politicization of Rogers' theories and

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<sup>14</sup> Rogers had begun to focus on the application of *person-centered* principles instead of *client-centered principles*, which functions to extend their applicability:

This view developed first in counseling and psychotherapy, where it was known as client-centered, meaning a person seeking help was not treated as a dependent patient but as a responsible client. Extended to education, it was called student-centered teaching. As it has

their implications in therapy, in the classroom, and in other situations becomes evident in his work *On Personal Power* (1977). Rogers realized, after viewing his theories in terms of their politics, why they had “aroused” “great furor” in the 1940s when they were first introduced:

I see now that I had dealt a double-edged political blow. I had said that most counselors saw themselves as competent to control the lives of their clients. And I had advanced the view that it was preferable simply to free the client to become an independent, self-directing person. I was making it clear that if they agreed with me, it would mean the complete disruption and reversal of their personal control in their counseling relationships. (6-7)

The politics of Rogers’ approach in therapy is “a conscious renunciation and avoidance [. . .] of all control over or decision-making for, the client” (14). When applied in other contexts, such as with students, with employees, in families, and so on, the goal of the person-centered approach is to facilitate self-ownership and responsibility in the persons helped, to encourage them to be independent and self-reliant rather than dependent on the helper. It is important for those who wish to apply Rogers’ theories to have an understanding of their politics, for to misunderstand this aspect of the person-centered philosophy is to misunderstand it entirely.

### **Two trends in education.**

In chapter four of *OPP*, Rogers compares two different trends in education. First, Rogers describes a traditional approach, which is based on what he calls the “mug and jug” theory of education, “where the faculty possesses the knowledge and transfers

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moved into a wide variety of fields, far from its point of origin—intensive groups, marriage, family relationships, administration, minority groups, interracial, intercultural, and even international relationships—it seems best to adopt as broad a term as possible: person-centered. (5).

it to the passive recipient” (72). Rogers describes the politics of the traditional school in the following:

- The teacher is the possessor of knowledge, the student the recipient.
- The lecture, as the means of pouring knowledge into the recipient, and the examination as the measure of the extent to which he has received it, are the central elements of this education.
- The teacher is the possessor of power, the student the one who obeys.
- Authoritarian rule is the accepted policy in the classroom.
- Trust is at a minimum.
- The subjects (the students) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear.
- Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice.
- There is no place for the whole person in the educational system, only for the intellect. (70-71)

According to Rogers, in the traditional educational paradigm, democracy and its values are not only ignored in the treatment of students, but also, it is frequently ignored in the treatment of teachers as well, who may not be consulted in the creation of school policy (70).

Next, Rogers describes the “person-centered” theory of education, where “the student retains his own power and the control over himself; he shares in the responsible choices and decisions; the facilitator provides the climate for these aims” (74). Rogers describes the politics of the person-centered model of education as being facilitated by leaders who are secure enough that they trust others to think and learn for themselves. While they provide resources, including using themselves, the community, and additional materials such as books or articles, they put students in charge of developing their own program of learning, and encourage them to rely on their own self-discipline to accomplish their goals. Evaluation of the students is conducted by themselves and possibly by their peers as well. The leader of the group may also provide feedback to

the learner, but the leader's primary role is to provide a "facilitative learning climate" and to foster the learning process. Rogers claims that in this climate, "the learning is deeper, proceeds at a more rapid rate, and is more pervasive in the life and behavior of the student than learning acquired in the traditional classroom" (73-74)<sup>15</sup>

### **A Person-Centered Approach to Life**

Rogers writes in the introduction to his latest major publication *A Way of Being* (1980)<sup>16</sup> that when he discusses the "person-centered approach," he is "no longer talking simply about psychotherapy, but about a point of view, a philosophy, an approach to life, a way of being, which fits any situation in which growth—of a person, a group, or a community—is part of the goal" (ix). Over the course of his career, his

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<sup>15</sup> Rogers includes a good portion of his writing on these two educational paradigms from *OPP* in his 1983 edition of *Freedom to Learn* within a new chapter entitled "The Politics of Education" (185-194). The politics of his person-centered theory of education certainly had not changed since he first wrote *Freedom to Learn* in 1969, but in that earlier edition he had not identified and described it as such. The person-centered mode is a useful educational philosophy for both teachers who choose to incorporate only some aspects of it into their overall teaching strategy and for teachers who adopt it almost entirely.

<sup>16</sup> In *WB*, Rogers brings together various works, conference papers and some previously published journal articles, which reflect the changes in his philosophy that took place during the seventies, namely its development into a political philosophy. *WB* contains four parts: a section on Rogers' personal experiences and perspectives, a section on the person-centered approach, a section on Rogers' educational philosophy, and a short section on Rogers' thoughts about the implications of the person-centered approach in the future. Very little of the material presented in *WB* is new. Much of it is reprinted from earlier books or journal articles. For those who have not read much of Rogers' previous works, or for those who wish to find one book that summarizes the major principles of Rogers' person-centered approach or his educational philosophy, *WB* should prove useful.

Part One includes three autobiographical papers that Rogers delivered at various conferences, "My Philosophy of Interpersonal Relationships," presented at a Humanistic Psychology conference in 1972, which is about his personal growth and the development of his thinking, "In Retrospect: Forty-Six Years," presented in 1973 at a conference for the American Psychological Association after he had received the Distinguished Professional Contribution Award, which contains a discussion of his professional life, and "Growing Old: Or Older and Growing," presented in 1977 at a workshop on life stages, which is about his life at age seventy-five. These autobiographical papers present a good deal of information in brief form about Rogers' life and work, and it is useful that he wrote them all late in his career, which allows him to provide much commentary about developments in his own thinking over the entire course of his personal and professional life.

theories had become not only much more politically conscious, but they had become increasingly more postmodern as well, and this is particularly apparent in his essay “Do We Need ‘A’ Reality” in *WB*. In it, Rogers claims that it is likely the world will destroy itself unless we experience a shift in our collective thinking, in which we begin to accept a theory of “multiple realities,” a philosophy that encourages individuals to accept and value others for their differences rather than their similarities. Although these ideas are expressed within a relatively short paper in *WB*, it is consistent with and representative of the political principles of Rogers’ person-centered approach, which had become late in his career a philosophy of living among others that not only accepts but embraces difference, one that is both democratic and postmodern.

CHAPTER 3  
ROGERIAN DEMOCRATIC PEDAGOGY AND ITS  
METHODS, INCLUDING PUBLIC WRITING

While many find Carl Rogers' pedagogical methods intriguing, even the most student-centered teachers would probably have difficulty implementing them exactly in the way he does. In fact, when I tried to teach a composition course in a strictly Rogerian way, an experience I will discuss in detail in a later chapter, I discovered that it would not work for me over the long term to emulate Rogers' teaching style to the letter and in every course I teach. However, it is not necessary to teach exactly like Rogers did to benefit from Rogerian pedagogical theory. Instead, it is the spirit of Rogerian pedagogy that has been most useful to me in my teaching of composition. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss three of the most important teaching methods that can be used to facilitate a modified Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy (RDP) that is consistent with the spirit of Rogers' teaching philosophy but that is specifically applicable in the composition classroom at the beginning of the twenty-first century, especially in terms of its democratic politics. Specifically, those three methods include reorganizing the traditional structure of the classroom so that it is more democratic, facilitating student-centered dialogue, and public writing, which serves a purpose and addresses a rhetorical situation outside the classroom in the community.

The focus of an RDP approach to teaching writing, whether in a face to face or an online course, is to facilitate a democratic learning environment, one that promotes the kind of whole person learning that Rogers advocated, that attempts to engage students on both an intellectual and an emotional level, that promotes student ownership of the class and their work, that encourages students to be responsible for their own learning, and that deals with course material and assignments students interpret as significant and meaningful. In the composition classroom, the teaching methods that are most useful for facilitating a spirit of Rogerian democracy, even if Rogers himself did not implement them, would have the same general aims and accomplish similar goals as the teaching methods that he outlined in *Client-Centered Therapy*, *Freedom to Learn*, *On Personal Power*, and in his other major publications that have in depth discussion of pedagogy. Three important RDP teaching methods for the composition classroom include the attempt to reorganize the power structure of the traditional class in a way that is radically student centered, the facilitation of student generated dialogue that encourages critical thinking, the questioning of assumptions, the resisting of and renegotiation of dominant discourses, and the participation of students as citizens in the process of democracy outside the composition classroom through public writing. While all of these teaching methods are an important component of facilitating an effective RDP writing class, I would assert that the teaching method that has the greatest implications in terms of helping our composition students to experience the kind of democratic learning that Rogers advocated, even if he did not use this teaching method himself, is public writing, and especially as it is accomplished through service learning.

There are a number of different models of teaching public writing in composition that will be explored later in this chapter, but I believe that the most effective ones for addressing democratic learning objectives ask students to respond to a real exigency outside the classroom. In addition to service learning, these types of public writing assignments might include webfolio writing, blogging, and other types of web writing, such as with wikis, twitter, or social networking sites. Public writing not only allows students to publish their own writing, which I would argue is the last stage of the writing process, but it provides a means for students to participate in a real rhetorical situation outside the classroom so that they might through a democratic process use their writing to effect change in their communities and to contribute their voices toward a wide variety of argumentative purposes, such as participating in inquiry, negotiation, or persuasion.

In this chapter, in order to fully articulate an RDP approach to teaching writing, the discussion that follows will focus on each of the major teaching methods used to facilitate an RDP classroom, including re-organizing the traditional structure of the classroom, facilitating student-centered dialogue, and public writing. The goal in this chapter is to provide the context and history of each of these teaching methods within composition and rhetoric studies and to suggest how each method might be effectively used to facilitate Rogerian democracy in composition classes.

### **Reorganizing the Traditional Structure of the Classroom**

Beginning in the 1960s and early 1970s, when the paradigm shift in composition and rhetoric studies began to occur and teachers moved away from using

the Current Traditional Rhetoric model, the work of cognitivists and expressivists led to a reorganization of the traditional classroom in which the teacher was the ultimate authority. Cognitivism and expressivism have influenced compositionists to teach in a more student-centered manner. Cognitivist theory focuses on the students' processes of writing, which Xin Liu Gale claims "implicitly criticizes the traditional way of teaching writing, especially its emphasis on students' passive imitation of the master's great pieces" (14). Rather than teaching in a product-oriented way, encouraging students to emulate the writing found in canonical works of literature, cognitivism led compositionists to be more process-oriented, helping students to think about and practice writing as it occurs in various stages.

Linda Flower and John R. Hayes made a large contribution to the cognitivist movement with their work "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing," in which they argue that writing is a goal-oriented process. After comparing the writing of experienced and inexperienced writers during a five year period, they explain that the mental process of writing takes place in stages, including the planning stage, in which ideas are generated and organized, the translating stage, during which writers put their ideas into "visible language," and the reviewing stage, when activities such as evaluating and revising occur (372-74). They assert that the major difference between experienced and inexperienced writers is that experienced ones are able to conduct goal setting during their process of writing, including both process-oriented goals, which involve the directions writers give themselves as they carry out the task of writing, and content-oriented goals, which involve what writers want to say to their audiences (377).

The implications of Flower and Hayes's work in terms of the student-centeredness of their theories is evident in their conclusion, in which they claim, "By placing emphasis on the inventive power of the writer, who is able to explore ideas, to develop, act on, test, and regenerate his or her own goals, we are putting an important part of creativity where it belongs—in the hands of the working, thinking writer" (386). However, even though the contributions of Flower and Hayes, and those of other cognitivists, are highly significant because they helped to create a more student-centered model of teaching composition that would be influential for many years, they tended to ignore the political dynamics involved in the structure of the classroom and in writing itself. Gale argues that cognitivists, "unfortunately, do not address political, social, or cultural issues implicated in the teacher's discourse and teacher's authority in the classroom" (1). Like Gale, Weisser expresses a similar criticism of cognitivism. He claims that cognitivists "advocated the teacher's interaction with students during the writing process, but cognitivists did not question the political implications of the discourse students were supposed to master" (16). Cognitivism then, according to Weisser, made the creation of successful writing seem like a "scientific fact," "free of ideological factors. The possibility that what is good and successful is a product of class interest and social formations was never seriously considered" (16). Cognitivism, despite the fact that it ignored the political dynamics involved in students' creation of discourse, made a highly significant contribution to composition studies because it was an instrumental component in the beginning stages of the movement toward a more student-centered, student-empowered writing class.

Expressivists, on the other hand, challenged the teacher's authority in the classroom much more directly than cognitivists because they believed that writing was a private act, one concerned with "personal experience," "self-discovery," and "individualism" (Weisser 18). In his book, *Writing Without Teachers*, Peter Elbow, who contributed a great deal to the expressivist movement, writes:

In this book you are jettisoning the very foundations of learning and knowing. You invite the student to get along without any teacher—without anyone who can bring to bear greater training, knowledge, wisdom, or authority. In the place of a teacher you propose nothing else but other students. You do propose a process, too, but it is a process devoid of critical thinking, logic, debate, criticism, or doubting. It is a flabby, unintellectual process: trying to listen, to understand, and to experience—and sometimes merely to tell the writer about that experience. (xx)

Elbow's advice to compositionists is to create a teacherless class. Readers are asked to understand what writers are attempting to say rather than to judge. Critics of expressivism claim that expressivists are too romantic at times and almost anti-intellectual with their focus on the personal insights and feelings of the individual. Joseph Harris argues that "there is an odd way in which the students in [Elbows'] workshops [. . .] do not seem to be held answerable to each other as intellectuals. Readers are simply asked to say what they felt about a text, not to offer a convincing case for their readings of it; [. . .] Students in such a class sound more like sounding boards than interlocutors" (Harris 31, qtd. in Elbow xxi). Implicit in Harris' argument is the assumption that expressivism promotes an almost arhetorical situation in the writing classroom due to the absence of logical argument.

In addition to being criticized for creating writing group situations that seem artificially devoid of debate and contention, some critics argue that Elbow and other

expressivists go too far in denying the teacher's authority in the classroom. Gale asserts that the "problem with expressivists' position is that they downplay the significance of the teacher in the writing classroom to the extent that they risk denying the possibility of using the teacher's authority constructively to enhance students' learning" (2). Furthermore, Gale asserts, the "proposal" of the "teacherless class" is an "oxymoron" because it "denies and acknowledges simultaneously the inevitability of institutional authority in learning" (29-30).

The criticisms of expressivism are important to explore because they can also be used against Rogers' pedagogy, for he, like Elbow, focused a great deal in therapy and in discussion groups on the facilitation of understanding, and he also proposed to do away with teaching. In "Personal Thoughts on Teaching and Learning," Rogers claims that "anything that can be taught to another is relatively inconsequential, and has little or no significant influence on behavior" (276). He explained that he was "only interested in being a learner, preferably learning things that matter," and he suggested that we "do away with examinations," "with grades and credits," and with "degrees" (277). Rogers and Elbow sound, at first, a great deal alike in their argument for what is essentially a teacherless class, and Elbow admits that he "got many of the seeds" of some of his ideas from Rogers, especially in terms of his idea of playing the "believing game," when one reads to find the strengths in a writer's argument as opposed to playing the "doubting game," when one attempts to "poke holes in" a writer's argument, or find the weaknesses in it (xxix). However, the problem with identifying

Rogersian pedagogy too closely with expressivist theory, or even as an expressivist theory, is that it oversimplifies Rogers' work.

While Elbow claims that compositionists when reading students' work should "listen" and try to "understand" in an "unintellectual process" that is "devoid" of "critical thinking, logic, debate, criticism or doubting," the group learning process that is described in some of Rogers' major publications was much more complex, not at all devoid of debate and critical thinking, even though the goal was almost consistently to facilitate understanding, which was also the goal in Elbow's writing groups. In fact, when one examines the processes of learning that occurred in group settings facilitated by Rogers, such as in the classroom or in encounter groups, they were marked frequently by contentious discussions in which differing perspectives were shared, and much of the growth for the participants takes place as a direct result of situations in which there is struggle, challenge, disagreement, and contention. Moreover, in Rogers' classroom, the student learning experience included, at least to some extent, shock and disorientation at being faced with a new paradigm of teaching and learning, and it was generally after this uneasy period that students began to take responsibility for their own learning and to demonstrate ownership of the class. It would be a misunderstanding of Rogersian theory to think that it assumes learning can occur in a process that is devoid of struggle, contention, debate, and sometimes even pain.

In *On Encounter Groups*, Rogers discusses the stages of group learning situations, and in general confrontation plays an important role in the learning experience (31); it often leads to what Rogers refers to as the "basic encounter," when

individuals “come into much closer and more direct contact with each other than is customary in ordinary life” (33). Rogers claims that the encounter is “one of the most central, intense, and change-producing aspects of group experience” (33).

Rather than being anti-intellectual and devoid of debate, or too “romantic” and “soft,” the process of dialogue in Rogerian group learning situations depends, in part, on contention, and, when successful, leads to critical thinking, self-evaluation, and personal growth for the participants; these types of learning situations are markedly democratic in that differing perspectives are shared within a forum that is akin to what postmodern theorist Mary Louise Pratt describes as “contact zones,” which are “social spaces in which cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other” (1). While Pratt’s use of the term “contact zone” has to do primarily with social situations which occur in the context of “highly asymmetrical power relations,” such as “colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths” (1), classroom group learning situations frequently include student participants who come from diverse backgrounds in terms of class, race, gender, and religious beliefs, so the dialogue that occurs within these settings reveals such great differences in perspective that they often can seem much like Pratt’s contact zones.

When one becomes familiar with transcripts of dialogue from some of the group learning situations that Rogers’ facilitated, it becomes apparent that his goal was, like Elbow, to create a kind of “teacherless” class in that these were intensive “learning” situations instead of “teaching” situations, at least in the traditional sense that this word is used. However, Rogers’ method was not at all an “unintellectual process,” “devoid” of “critical thinking,” “debate,” or “criticism,” as Harris described Elbow’s class. In this

way, Rogers use of dialogue in learning situations seems more consistent with the pedagogical goals of radical compositionists, like Paulo Freire, who are known for the method of facilitating a process of critical thinking that occurs largely as a result of dialogue.

An example of the type of dialogue that occurred in Rogers' encounter groups, which was sometimes contentious, was recorded during a session in Belfast, Northern Ireland, which he discusses in his book *On Personal Power*, in which there were both Protestants and Catholics, extremists and moderates, men and women. He claimed this allowed him "to observe what happens in a group where the bitterness involves generations of economic, religious, and cultural hatred" (129). His purpose was to facilitate "straightforward communication" within the group and to film the event as a means to document and to study the dialogue and the process of learning within an encounter group. He claims that in the early group sessions, the "bitterness, horror, and despair of everyday life in Belfast was abundantly clear" (130). Tom, one group member, had a sister who had been killed by a bomb, and it was unclear as to which side was responsible for that terrorism. Another group member, Dennis, a Protestant, had experienced the terror of having to hide behind mattresses with his family as bullets struck his home, and on other occasions having to help "carry away the torn bodies, living and dead, from bomb explosions" (130). One woman in the group, Becky, a Catholic, discussed how her sons had suffered as a direct result of British police brutality, and she expressed a sense of hopelessness and despair at the thought that if change did not occur, she was afraid that the "bitterness" her sons were experiencing

would eventually lead them to become IRA men. At the same time a Protestant woman, Gilda, said, “If I seen an IRA man lying on the ground—this is the wrong thing I suppose in your eyes—I would step on him, because to me he has just went out and taken the lives of innocent people” (130).

However, despite the hatred, bitterness, and despair expressed by group members on both sides about their situations, Rogers claims that during the group interaction “centuries-old hatreds were not only softened but in some instances deeply changed. [ . . .]” (131). For instance, Rogers demonstrates how a great level of understanding was achieved as a direct result of the dialogue between Dennis, a Protestant, and Becky, a Catholic. Dennis’ comments show that by being involved in an encounter group with Becky, he has begun to think critically about the stereotypes associated with Catholics: “The general impression back in Belfast is, if she is a Catholic she is a Catholic and you just put her in a wee box and that is the end of it. But you just can’t do that” (131). Dennis shows a great level of empathy for Becky when he states:

I would hate to be sitting in Becky’s chair . . . because I feel that she feels the absolute despair that I would feel. I don’t know how I would react if I were one of her lads. I would probably go out and get a gun and finish up doing something radical and end up dead. (131)

Becky responds to Dennis’ comments by acknowledging that she believes he “fully understands me as a person” and that she thinks of him as a “friend” (131) What is remarkable about this discussion is that it demonstrates well how critical thinking and changes in thinking can be achieved through a process of dialogue, and it also shows

what strong interpersonal relationships and a sense of community can develop as a result of the process.

Rogers explains that, “open expression, in this kind of a climate<sup>1</sup>, leads to communication. Better communication very often leads to understanding [. . .]” (131-32). In fact, Rogers claims that some of the dialogue had to be deleted from the film because it demonstrated such understanding of the other side’s position that it might have endangered the lives of the speakers when it was shown in Belfast (132). However, what is important to recognize is this group discussion included the expression of a great deal of contention and even hatred before the expression of such profound understanding occurred. An important component of facilitating democracy in any learning environment is that individuals must be free to express themselves, and the hope is that critical thinking will occur, greater understanding will be achieved, and change may be effected when differing perspectives are expressed within a certain type of environment. This often occurs in conjunction with honesty and openness, which might include debate, contention, and even hostility. Rogers understood this and illustrates this dynamic in his writings about group learning situations, which separates him from expressivists and sets his group situations apart from Elbow’s writing groups.

Conversely, the criticism that expressivists go too far in doing away with the teacher can also be leveled against Rogerianism. Xin Liu Gale, author of *Teachers, Discourses, and Authority in the Postmodern Composition Classroom*, claims that

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers is referring to a person-centered climate in which a facilitator attempts to have certain attitudes, which were discussed in detail within the previous chapter, congruence, which means being genuine, acceptance, which entails caring or prizing for others, and empathic understanding. A big part of facilitating a democratic learning environment, for Rogers, includes having these attitudes.

teachers rely on the institution for authority to perform pedagogic acts. As long as teachers have to play the role of cultural agents for the institution, they will never be able to sever their ties to the institution completely. As long as teachers want to have power to oppose the dominant society, they have to belong to the academic institution and become part of its oppositional tradition. It is a dual role that the teacher has to recognize and learn to cope with. (46)

One of the most challenging aspects of an RDP approach to writing is the burden of having to cope with the dual role, which Gale recognizes is an inevitability for all radical compositionists. We must creatively navigate the thin line between aiming for a radically student centered class, while still working within the constraints of the institution. Radical compositionists have to recognize that no matter how hard they work to reorganize the structure of the traditional classroom so that students are more empowered, they can never achieve complete democracy in their class due to their responsibilities to the institution and to the fact that their role as a teacher for that institution carries with it a certain amount of authority that cannot be denied. Perhaps the key to successfully navigating this challenging situation is for radical compositionists, as Gale suggests, to “strive to make their authority enabling and constructive rather than evading its existence” (158). I would assert that the way compositionists can make their authority enabling is by focusing on the use of specific teaching methods that empower students and that facilitate democracy as much as possible while still recognizing that this is an idealistic goal, never fully achievable. If we are honest with ourselves, though, it is the same when we attempt to implement any type of pedagogical philosophy. We aim to use teaching methods that accomplish the goals of a particular philosophy even if that aim cannot be perfectly attained.

## **Dialogue as an Essential Component for Building Democracy: In Rogers and Freire**

An RDP approach to teaching writing, like other radical composition theories, depends on the use of dialogue to empower students and to effect change. While most radical compositionists support their pedagogy with the theories of Paulo Freire, who focused on dialogue as a liberatory teaching method that facilitates critical thinking, Rogers, as a psychologist, has a great deal to contribute to the discussion because his work illustrates how dialogue can be used effectively to facilitate learning in the classroom as well as in group therapy. Additionally, in Rogers' work, because he frequently transcribed, taped or filmed both group and individual therapy sessions, his work provides a rich means to illustrate specifically how the use of dialogue and other teaching methods that facilitate democracy increase the effectiveness of student learning. His numerous pedagogical examples make his work highly accessible for researchers and teachers.

While Rogers and Freire share the assumption that communication through dialogue is an essential component of student learning, they are also similar in many other aspects of their overall democratic pedagogical philosophies. Before exploring the similarities of their ideas regarding dialogic communication, it is important to first outline what they share in terms of their overall teaching philosophies. Rogers and Freire both essentially argue for a leveling of power between teacher and students. Both oppose a traditional educational philosophy that envisions teachers as lecturers and students as empty receptacles, who should be filled with their teacher's knowledge.

In his chapter “The Politics of Education,” Rogers describes “the traditional mode” of education, a model in great need of reform, in a manner strikingly similar to what Freire refers to as the “banking” model of education. For Rogers, the traditional mode of education is “a jug and mug theory of education” (*Freedom to Learn* 187), in which teachers fill their students’ heads with their own perception of the world, their own version of truth. It is a model of education in which the power in the classroom resides in the teacher alone. In this conventional model of education the “teacher is the expert who knows the field. The student sits with poised pencil and notebook, waiting for the words of wisdom. There is a great difference in the status level between the instructor and student” (Rogers 186). The qualities of the conventional mode of education, as Rogers sees it, are as follows:

- The teacher is the possessor of knowledge, the student the expected recipient.
- The lecture, the textbook, or some other means of verbal intellectual instruction are the major methods of getting knowledge into the recipient. The examination measures the extent to which the student has received it. These are the central elements of this kind of education.
- The teacher is the possessor of power; the student the one who obeys.
- Rule by authority is the accepted policy in the classroom.
- Trust is at a minimum.
- The subjects (students) are best governed by being kept in an intermittent or constant state of fear.
- Democracy and its values are ignored and scorned in practice.
- There is no place for the whole person in the educational system, only for her intellect. (*Freedom to Learn* 186)

On the other hand, according to Rogers, a more democratic model of education can occur when “an atmosphere of realness, of caring, and of understanding listening” is provided, in which case students can learn to “think for themselves,” and to “learn for

themselves” (188). Rogers believed that rather than being a “*teacher and evaluator*,” one should aim for “being a *facilitator of learning*,” which he asserts is “a very different occupation” (26). Moreover, a more democratic model of education requires a great deal of trust on the part of the educator. In order to facilitate significant learning, Rogers claims that in addition to being genuine with their students (121), and attempting to be understanding of their students (125), facilitators of learning should have an attitude of “prizing, acceptance, trust” of their students (123). Rogers explains that the “facilitator’s prizing or acceptance of the learner is an operational expression of her essential confidence and trust in the capacity of the human organism” (124). For Rogers, the trust that facilitators should have in the ultimate capacity of students includes an “acceptance of the learner as an imperfect being with many feelings, many potentialities” (124), including the possibility that the learner may demonstrate “occasional apathy,” “hatred of authority,” “concern about personal adequacy,” and so on.

In a manner strikingly similar to Rogers’ description of traditional education, Freire describes the “‘banking’ concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits” (Freire 53). The qualities of his “banking” model of education are as follows:

- (a) The teacher teaches and the students are taught;
- (b) The teacher knows everything and the students know nothing;
- (c) The teacher thinks and the students are thought about;
- (d) The teacher talks and the students listen—meekly;
- (e) The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined;
- (f) The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (g) The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher;

- (h) The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (i) The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his or her own professional authority, which she and he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (j) The teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (54)

Freire writes that the “solution” to an oppressive educational structure is “to transform that structure so that [students] can become “beings for themselves” (55). He argues that the efforts of the “humanist, revolutionary educator” must “be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this, they must be *partners* of the students in their relations with them” (56; emphasis added). Both Rogers and Freire envision traditional education in similar ways, and likewise, both have a common idea, which centers around the notion of trust in students, about how to reform that outmoded system in order to achieve a more democratic and liberatory model of education.

The notion of dialogue plays an important role for both Rogers and Freire in a reformed model of education, one in which power is more equally distributed between teacher and student. Rogers describes a process of dialogue that he refers to as the “encounter group,” which is essential for a Rogerian pedagogy:

It is difficult to describe briefly the nature of such a group experience because it varies greatly from group to group and from leader to leader. However, the group usually begins with little imposed structure; the situation and the purposes are up to the group members to decide. The leader’s function is to facilitate expression and to clarify or point up the dynamic pattern of the group’s struggle. In such a group, after an initial “milling around,” personal expressiveness tends to increase. An increasingly free, direct, and spontaneous communication occurs between members of the group. Facades become less necessary. Defenses are lowered, and basic “encounters” occur as individuals reveal hitherto hidden feelings and aspects of themselves and receive spontaneous feedback—both negative and positive—from group members. Some or many individuals become

much more facilitative in relationship to others, making possible greater freedom of expression. (*Freedom to Learn* 158)

For Rogers, the end result of participation in an encounter group, if it is “a fruitful one,” is “a deeply personal experience resulting in more direct person-to-person communication, sharply increased self-understanding, more realness and independence in the individual, and an increased understanding and acceptance of others” (158). The process of the encounter group is, according to Rogers, an example of experiential learning, and it is a democratic type of learning group in which the goal is primarily liberatory.

According to Freire’s educational theory, in which the goal as with Rogers’ theory is primarily liberatory, participation in a process of dialogue can help individuals to learn to think critically and to reflect upon their assumptions about the world. This dialogic process can help students to recognize their own oppression and to become liberated. Freire describes the process of, what he calls, the “problem-posing method” of education, which is his concept of a reformed educational model, in the following:

The problem-posing method does not dichotomize the activity of the teacher-student: she is not “cognitive,” whether preparing a project or engaging in dialogue with the students. He does not regard cognizable objects as his private property, but as the object of reflection by himself and the students. In this way, the problem-posing educator constantly re-forms his reflections in the reflection of the students. The students—no longer docile listeners—are now critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher. The teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own. The role of the problem-posing educator is to create, together with the students, the conditions under which knowledge at the level of the *doxa* is superseded by true knowledge, at the level of the *logos*. (62)

For Freire, the engagement in dialogue between a teacher and students is a type of learning experience that allows the participants to re-consider together their assumptions about reality through a liberating process that results in the acquisition of a higher level of truth for all participants.

Both Rogers and Freire describe a process of dialogue that is essentially a democratic one in that power is shared between the participants. Although Freire refers to the process as “problem-posing” education and Rogers refers to it as an “intensive group experience” or an “encounter group” experience, both theorists describe a similar process of dialogue, in which individual participants learn by expressing and re-considering their unique perceptions of the world. According to Rogers, participants in such a process become empowered; according to Freire, they become liberated. In Rogers terms, the facilitator and students in encounter groups achieve greater “independence,” an “increased self-understanding,” and an “increased understanding” of others. In Freire’s terms, the “problem-posing educator” and students acquire a more “true knowledge.” Despite their different language, the similarities between the two theorists’ ideas are striking.

Rogers was astonished when he discovered the similarities between his pedagogical ideas and those of Paulo Freire, which he addresses in one of his later works, *OPP* (1977):

Freire’s book, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was first published in Portuguese in 1968 and translated into English in 1970. My book, *Freedom to Learn*, was published in 1969. There is no indication that he had ever heard of my work, and I had never heard of his. I was addressing students in educational institutions. He is telling about work with frightened, downtrodden peasants. I tried to use a style that would reach students and their teachers. He writes to

communicate to Marxists. I like to give concrete examples. He is almost completely abstract. Yet the principles he has come to build his work on are so completely similar to the principles of *Freedom to Learn* that I found myself openmouthed with astonishment. (106)

In part, the similarities between Rogers' and Freire's principles, to which Rogers refers, may be accounted for because both theorists' works are said to have roots in American pragmatism and the work of John Dewey. John Saltmarsh asserts that several service-learning practitioners who have attempted to find pedagogical foundations for their teaching methods have looked to Freire, "particularly in his conception of praxis, dialogic education, a liberationist educational paradigm, and a redefined role of teaching. Little of this interest in Freire's work accounts for the roots of his educational philosophy in Dewey" (14). Saltmarsh explains that Freire's thesis for becoming Professor of History and the Philosophy of Education, which was published during 1936 in Brazil, was based upon Dewey's book *Democracy and Education* (14).

Dewey believed that democracy is the environment most conducive to education. "A Democracy," according to Dewey in *Democracy and Education*,

is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. The extension in space of the number of individuals who participate in an interest so that each has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own, is equivalent to the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity. These more numerous and more varied points of contact denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond; they consequently put a premium on variation in his action. They secure a liberation of powers which remain suppressed as long as the incitations to action are partial, as they must be in a group which in its exclusiveness shuts out many interests. (87)

For Dewey, the idea of democracy was not limited to a “form of government” (87). Instead, in terms of its significance for education, Dewey believed that a democratic ideal promotes communication among individuals with diverse backgrounds, which assists individuals in “perceiving the full import of their activity,” or rather, it encourages learning, and it leads to a “liberation of powers” (87). Similarly, the notion of “freedom,” a term Freire uses instead of “democracy,” is a necessary element for his liberatory pedagogy. He asserts that freedom “must be pursued constantly and responsibly. Freedom is not an ideal located outside of man; nor is it an idea which becomes myth. It is rather the indispensable condition for the quest for human completion” (29).

The main argument in Rogers’ *Freedom to Learn*, and his notion of self-actualization throughout his works, is similar to Freire’s idea that freedom is essential to education and to human growth. Rogers’ definition of freedom, in terms of the educational process, like Dewey’s and Freire’s also has much to do with a liberatory educational paradigm. For Rogers, a free classroom is a person-centered classroom. Politically, power in the traditional mode of education resides in the authority of the teacher: “Power over is the important concept. The strategies for holding and exercising this power are (1) the rewards of grades and vocational opportunities; and (2) the use of such aversive, punitive, and fear-creating methods as failure on exams, failure to graduate, and public scorn” (187). In such an environment, Rogers explains, there is a minimum of trust in students, who experience themselves as “powerless, as having little

freedom, and as having almost no opportunity to exercise choice or carry responsibility” (186-87).

Conversely, in the “person-centered mode” of education, power resides in the “learner, or the learners as a group, including the facilitator-learner” (189). Rogers’ depiction of the facilitator as one who is also a learner is reminiscent of Freire, who writes, “Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow” (61). Freire, like Rogers, describes a more politically equal version of education in which all participants, teacher and students, equally share responsibility in the learning process. Their notion is reminiscent of an idea of Dewey’s in *Democracy and Education*:

We [teachers and parents] can and do supply ready-made “ideas” by the thousand; we do not usually take much pains to see that the one learning engages in significant situations where his own activities generate, support, and clinch ideas—that is, perceived meanings or connections. This does not mean that the teacher is to stand off and look on; the alternative to furnishing ready-made subject matter and listening to the accuracy with which it is reproduced is not quiescence, but participation, sharing, in an activity. In such shared activity, the teacher is a learner, and the learner is, without knowing it, a teacher—and upon the whole, the less consciousness there is, on either side, of either giving or receiving instruction, the better. (160; qtd. in part in Saltmarsh 14)

In this paragraph, Dewey’s description of what is also essentially a democratized process of learning is much like the rhetoric of Rogers and Freire, that learning is a reciprocal process in which teacher and students share.

Jane Tompkins presents a persuasive argument for why it is important to depend on democratic teaching methods of Friere and, I would add, of Rogers as well, in her frequently quoted article, “Pedagogy of the Distressed.” She suggests that while English professors frequently pay lip service as advocates of social justice, we don’t always practice those values in the classroom. In other words, she asserts that it is important that we institute our values regarding the importance of democracy and social justice in our classrooms because “the classroom is a microcosm of the world” (656):

We tell ourselves that we need to teach our students to think critically so that they can detect the manipulations of advertising, analyze the fallacious rhetoric of politicians, expose the ideology of popular TV shows, resist the stereotypes of class, race, and gender; or, depending on where you're coming from, hold the line against secular humanism and stop canon-busting before it goes too far. But I have come to think more and more that what really matters as far as our own beliefs and projects for change are concerned is not so much what we talk about in class as what we do. I have come to think that teaching and learning are not a preparation for anything but are the thing itself. There is a catch-22 in the assumption that what you say in class or what you write for publication is the real vehicle for change. For if you speak and write only so that other people will hear and read and repeat your ideas to other people who will repeat them, maybe, to other people, but not so that they will do something, then what good are your words? (656)

While discussion in English regarding pedagogy is sometimes considered much lower in importance than scholarly research about literary figures or critical theory, Tompkins argues that it is precisely pedagogy that matters most because that is the real vehicle for social change, the way we practically institute the democratic values that we believe are so important. In order to institute democratic values in the composition classroom, it is important to choose appropriate teaching methods that work toward that end. For compositionists who take an RDP approach, reorganizing the traditional classroom

structure, at least as much as is realistically possible, and depending on student-centered dialogue to facilitate critical thinking are two important teaching methods. Although Rogers does not mention public writing specifically, I am convinced that this is perhaps one of the most important teaching methods on which compositionists can depend to encourage students to use their writing to express their opinions, to participate in an ongoing dialogue outside the classroom, and to effect change in their communities.

### **Public Writing as an RDP Teaching Method**

In *On Personal Power*, Rogers discusses the politics of his “person centered” paradigm of education as “revolutionary”:

The political implications of person-centered education are clear: the student retains his own power and the control over himself; he shares in the responsible choices and decisions; the facilitator provides the climate for these aims. The growing, seeking person is the politically powerful force. This process of learning represents a revolutionary about-face from the politics of traditional education. (74)

Rogers claims that the goal of his model of radically democratic teaching is to empower students. Implicit to the idea of democratic education is not only that students will be empowered on a personal level, but that students will also be empowered to “do” something, to act in some way. While Rogers’ focuses more explicitly on the personal effects of student empowerment, or personal power, the notion that students’ empowerment will also manifest itself by being directed outwardly, through students’ actions outside the classroom, seems to be an essential part of any conception of democratic learning. An effective way to translate into practice the idea of student empowerment within the discipline of composition is for instructors to encourage

students to see that through their writing they can effect change in their communities. Students in composition courses that utilize an RDP approach can learn that their writing is a powerful rhetorical tool that can help them to assert their voices, to participate as active citizens within a democracy, and to work to make a difference outside the classroom. Toward this end, one of the most effective teaching methods that can be used to facilitate democratic learning in composition is public writing.

Compositionists hope that their students will become strong critical thinkers, who not only have a well developed sense of social justice, but who are able to realize their potential to act on their ideas as well—especially through their writing. The idea that agency should be a necessary aspect of a democratic model of education is reflected in Freireian theory, in particular with his idea of critical consciousness, which Freire defines as “the capacity to adapt oneself to reality plus the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality” (*Education* 5). Weisser asserts that most compositionists who implement a public writing component in their classes do so to help students develop a strong critical consciousness; they hope “that students will emerge from the semester’s work with the ability to participate in critical and reformative public discourse,” that they will “transform themselves into active, critical participants in democratic society” (39).

In her article, “Rogue Cops and Health Care: What Do We Want from Public Writing?” Susan Wells introduces her discussion of public writing with a moving example of how one Temple University student, Arthur Colbert, effectively used public writing to defend himself as a victim of police brutality, and as a result, his writing was

the catalyst for an investigation of and the eventual firing of several bad cops in his community. After two Philadelphia police officers stopped Colbert, unjustly accused him of running a crack house, questioned him, beat him, and threatened him at gunpoint, he retaliated by filing a “Citizen’s Complaint” against the officers, which he eloquently concluded with the following:

The above events happened violently and brutally [. . .] I am a Temple student and will be around that area quite frequently. It seems as though the people who are supposed to be protecting my civil rights are the ones who are violating them. I can’t say this for every police officer, but this is the case with these two cops. (Bowden and Fazlollah qtd. in Wells 325)

Colbert’s story, and specifically how he courageously and effectively defended himself in writing against this police brutality, led Wells to re-think the goal of composition classes and to reflect upon the importance of public writing assignments in those courses. She explains that when she first read about Colbert in her local newspaper she was fascinated by what he had accomplished with his writing:

As a citizen, I was angry; as a teacher, I was upset that a student had been brutalized. But as a writing teacher, I was triumphant. Colbert had probably learned to write strong narrative in our program; his complaint sounded like a successful basic writing assignment—good sequential order, lots of detail and elaboration, a clear, supportable conclusion. Someone had done good work with this student. And his text had been efficacious: it had turned around the whole police department, delivered innocent grandmothers from unjust imprisonment, and set aside scores of false convictions. (325-6)

Wells explains that Colbert’s story reminded her of her desire for “efficacious public writing, especially as it is invested in students” (326). As compositionists, she claims that we need to imagine our students in a public role, we need “to take part in building [. . .] a public sphere” (326).

There is a good deal of discussion among composition scholars, however, about how the “public” should be defined and how students in composition classes should be engaged in public writing. S. Michael Halloran, for instance, in “Rhetoric in the American College Tradition: The Decline of Public Discourse” (1982), argues that the attention of composition and rhetoric scholars should be turned to “the discourse of public life,” and we should help students to see themselves as “members of a body politic in which they have responsibility to form judgments and influence the judgments of others on public issues” (263-64). Lester Faigley, in *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition*, maintains that an emphasis on political awareness in the field of composition can help us to “recover a lost tradition of rehetoric in public life” (71).

Wells, like many scholars interested in the public writing movement, depends on the work of Jurgen Habermas for theorizing the public. Wells considers Habermas’ work, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, both “deeply problematic and astoundingly fruitful” (326). Habermas’ work was first published in German in 1962 and translated into English in 1989. In it, Habermas focuses on bourgeois political life between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, and he discusses the development of the bourgeois public sphere as “a forum in which private people, come together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public authority to legitimate itself before public opinion” (25-26). Depending largely on Habermas’ theories of the public and public discourse, Wells explores how compositionists can theorize the public as they prepare to teach public writing courses.

She asserts that while we might think of public space as a “real” place where citizens can speak face to face and make decisions, she claims that, in fact, it is not real. Wells asserts that public discourse “is a performance in time, located at specific historical junctures, temporary and unstable,” and she recommends that we think of the public and of public discourse “as questions rather than answers” (326-27)

While Habermas’ work and his theorizing of public discourse has proven invaluable for many scholars, he has also received a great deal of criticism, primarily for not taking into account factors associated with power and ideology. Nancy Fraser, in “Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere: Toward a Postmodern Conception,” has criticized Habermas for not recognizing how class, gender, and race have effected and do effect one’s ability to participate in and have access to ongoing public discussions. She also suggests that in a democratic environment, there is not just one comprehensive public sphere, but on the contrary “in stratified societies, arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public” (122). So, according to Fraser, it is helpful to think about “the public” as being comprised of a number of different and smaller public groups. Furthermore, it can be difficult to determine what constitutes “public” matters versus “private” ones, and who gets to decide. For all of these reasons, it is important to remain aware of how power and ideology effect public discourse.

Given the challenges associated with defining “the public,” understanding the nature of “public writing” and what public writing assignments in composition courses

might look like, is also challenging. Weisser, building on the work of Habermas, Fraser, and other scholars who have theorized the public, forwards the following definition of public writing:

Briefly stated, public writing consists of written discourse that attempts to engage an audience of local, regional, or national groups or individuals in order to bring about progressive societal change. Such discourse *intends* to be free of any coercive constraints or forms of domination, and it hopes to influence what Habermas calls “public opinion.” (90)

Working from this definition, then, in composition courses, public writing assignments should prompt students to engage a public audience in attempt to bring about some kind of social change. Since all discourse is affected by power and ideology, even if it “intends to be free of any coercive constraints,” compositionists who teach public writing courses should explore with students during class discussions how the political dynamics of race, class, and gender might play a role in their own public writing projects.

Wells offers specific suggestions for how a public writing course in composition might be organized. She maintains that public writing can be facilitated in composition in four ways.

First, the classroom can be seen as a microcosm of society in general, so it can be considered a “version of the public sphere”:

Teachers and students see how classroom rhetorical strategies effect individual projects of persuasion and how they open or foreclose possibilities for common work. The issues of such a class might include connection to an audience, positioning, collaboration, and the articulation of texts in time. A classroom that

saw itself as a version of the public might value such skills as focusing discussion, organizing work, tolerating and enjoying difficulty, and renunciation of safety and comfort. Such a classroom would develop and extend the pedagogical innovations of cultural studies (338).

The problem with organizing a public writing class in this way is that while this pedagogy does excellent work with students in regard to cultural studies issues, the writing that students do in this class has no “public exigency,” the writing is not aimed outside the class. Wells suggests, though, that when students come to understand their culture critically as a result of critical teaching, “the class’s exigency shifts” and becomes “potentially public” (338). A second approach for teaching a public writing course would be to focus on the analysis of public discourse. While such an approach would help locate the class within a rhetorical tradition, Wells argues, “it also mortgages composition to the analytic bias of such study, rather than encouraging the production of alternatives” (338). On the other hand, there are more fruitful ways of organizing the public writing class so that the writing in which students are engaged has consequences outside the classroom, or it allows them to write for a public exigency. This would be a third strategy—to have students produce writing that actually enters a form of public space. Writing in this context would be socially grounded. Wells suggests that this type of teaching “moves from a study of what students already know, as apprentices of the academy, to reflection about how that knowledge can be transformed” (339). She also acknowledges that while this type of teaching, which I would refer to as clearly service learning, might pose “thorny” issues for teachers, for instance if students are placed in internships with organizations or groups that “seem transgressive to the academy” (339), she adds, this should not be a problem that would

lead teachers to avoid using this strategy. The fourth approach that Wells suggests for teaching public writing is to work with “the discourses of the disciplines as they intervene in the public” (339). Wells claims that composition students have an “initial socialization in professional forms” which might be used “to teach about public writing very concretely in partnership with students from diverse disciplines” (339). For instance, she suggests that a “class that included students from political science, sociology, pre-medical fields, actuarial science, planning, and risk management could powerfully address a public issue like health care, an issue that engages each of their disciplines” (339).

While each of the four approaches that Wells discusses has particular benefits and can be productive, I am most interested in the third model she presents—teaching public writing so that the texts students produce have a real public exigency; their writing is created for a purpose outside the classroom, and it can potentially have an affect in the community. This teaching method, while Rogers never discussed it, does accomplish the aims of a democratic model of education that he espoused as increasing the effectiveness of student learning. In the next chapter, chapter four, my goal is to highlight the benefits as well as the major pedagogical challenges of implementing a service learning component in composition classes. The discussion will be focused on how service learning can be used as an integral teaching method within an overall Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy, and in chapter five, I will discuss my own response and those of my students to participating in an RDP course with a service learning, public writing component.

CHAPTER 4

SERVICE LEARNING AS A COMPONENT OF ROGERIAN DEMOCRATIC  
PEDAGOGY IN THE COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

In brief, service learning is a pedagogy that integrates community service into the academic curriculum. As a means to support funding for this type of education, Congress passed the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993, in which service learning is specifically defined as a method of teaching that:

- (a) provides educational experiences under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with school and community;
- (b) is integrated into the students' academic curriculum or provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what the student did and saw during the service;
- (c) provides a student with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities; and
- (d) enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community, thus helping students to develop a sense of caring for others.

In composition studies, service learning is also referred to as community-based learning, community writing, and community service writing, and some models of service learning are considered one type of public writing.

Since roughly the mid 1980s, the “service-learning movement,” which has been referred to as perhaps “the most important educational movement since its ancestor, the

progressive education movement” (Campbell 785; Saltmarsh 13), has had a significant effect on a number of writing programs at colleges and universities across the nation, including Stanford University, Bentley College, the University of Minnesota, UCLA, Michigan State University, and others. Service learning connects academic study with community involvement, and its strong emphasis on reflection and critical thinking makes it more than simply volunteerism (Schutz and Gere 129). Teachers of service-learning courses in composition report numerous pedagogical benefits for their students, their community partners, their university, and themselves. Service learning provides students with real rhetorical situations, audiences, and purposes for writing, so it helps composition teachers overcome what has been referred to as the “empty assignment syndrome” (Brack and Hall 143), a situation that may occur when students compose only for their teacher. Students who have the opportunity to write in response to real rhetorical situations are reportedly “more motivated and engaged” writers (Brack and Hall 151). Service learning in composition encourages students to see themselves more as “writers” (Bacon 42; Mansfield 80), to take responsibility for their own learning (Dorman and Dorman 124; Keen and Howard 130), and to realize their power to effect change in their communities (Arca 138; Dorman and Dorman 131). At its best, service-learning pedagogy linked with critical-thinking and reflection can help students develop what Bruce Herzberg calls, in his article “Community Service and Critical Teaching” (1994), a “social imagination,” which “makes it possible not only to question and analyze the world, but also to imagine transforming it” (317). Service learning can help improve relationships between universities and their communities, and it can work to

empower individuals within those communities (Cushman 7). Furthermore, teachers who implement service-learning pedagogy have reported acquiring a “new sense of purpose” in teaching (Herzberg 308), or being reenergized as teachers (Deans 30). Service learning in composition, especially the model in which students’ writing is their service in the community, is an excellent example of a teaching method that is consistent with the goals of a Rogerian democratic approach to teaching writing because it is a method that in general requires students to take a great deal of responsibility in negotiating the details of their projects, encourages students to develop ownership of their work, and is meaningful for students because it serves a purpose in the community. As such, it facilitates the kind of whole person, democratic learning that Rogers advocated, even if he did not discuss, and probably was not even aware of, service learning as it is used today.

Wade Dorman and Susann Fox Dorman, in their article, “Service-Learning: Bridging the Gap Between the Real World and the Composition Classroom” (1997), use Rogerian theory to provide rationale for their implementation of service learning in composition, which they assert, helps students to become more autonomous, engaged learners and to function more effectively as citizens in a democracy:

We are convinced that making service-learning an integral part of our composition classes is a challenge worth the effort. [. . .] Service-learning is not, of course, a wonderland from which alienated students emerge transformed into literate, responsible citizens. But it does provide a site for students to exercise autonomy as writers, in response to real-world complexities, for bridging the gap between the composition classroom and the real world. Students do engage. They do develop a literacy to suit them for citizenship in a democracy. They do develop the confidence that they can make meaningful change. They are more connected, less alienated. (131)

Despite the many positive effects of service learning in composition, service-learning practitioners face several pedagogical challenges. A first challenge is that in order to prevent service-learning courses from becoming mere charity work, teachers must find methods of facilitating student reflection and critical thinking. This helps to ensure that the service learning is both academically rigorous and that it might result in social change. To be most effective, Bruce Herzberg argues, service-learning pedagogy must promote critical thinking about the nature of certain social problems and their causes (“Community Service” 308). Moreover, without reflection and dialogue, students might not question certain assumptions in our culture that can be potentially dangerous because they can perpetuate discriminatory attitudes, assumptions such as the idea of meritocracy, which implies that victims of poverty, homelessness, and illiteracy have only themselves to blame for their situations. Another harmful assumption in our culture is that of noblesse-oblige, the belief that there are those who serve and those who are served, those who are the problem-solvers and those who are the problems (Adler-Kassner and Collins 3; Herzberg, “Digging” 55; Flower, “Partners in Inquiry” 101).

Although Herzberg claims that the social awareness fostered by service learning is “remarkable” because students “report that their fears and prejudices diminish or disappear, that they are moved by the experience of helping others, and that they feel a commitment to help more,” he believes that service learning must also encourage students to “understand the plight of the people who need these services” (308). For Herzberg and many other scholars who are service-learning advocates, community

service must be combined with critical teaching that incorporates rigorous critical thinking.

A second pedagogical challenge is that teachers must be cognizant that their interest in seeing that their students benefit from involvement in service-learning projects does not overshadow their interest in seeing that community partners benefit as much from the service relationship. Service-learning projects must be mutually beneficial for both students and their community partners. At its worst, service-learning relationships that are not reciprocal might actually perpetuate a form of oppression in which service-learners, in order to have an opportunity to serve, benefit from the misfortune of others (Cushman 20, Maybach 229). For instance, Carol Maybach discusses the contradiction inherent in a student's comment: "Doing service as a college student was such a meaningful experience for me. I hope that my children have the opportunity to work in homeless shelters" (226), which inadvertently suggests that the student supports the perpetuation of the situation of those in need. Critical teaching, again, can help to ensure that through discussion and reflection, students develop a service ethic that, as Maybach asserts, does "not stop with concern for the server's need to serve" but "embraces mutual empowerment of people in the process of addressing the root causes of need, to lead to a more just society" (231).

A third problem for service-learning teachers has to do with assessment. Service-learning practitioners must decide how to best assess service-learning projects when they are unlike traditional academic assignments. Some teachers try to evaluate service-learning projects by judging how well they accomplish their intended purpose.

Nora Bacon asserts, however, that teachers who grade service-learning projects in this way are “essentially guessing” what their outcome will be, which is a “difficult matter, since we as teachers are outsiders, too; unfamiliar with the community agency’s goals, the paper’s audience, and the genre, we are ill equipped to judge” (49).

Faculty who believe in the effectiveness of service-learning pedagogy may face a challenge within the academy as well. There is a pervasive attitude about service learning that, although it has civic and moral value, it is not academically rigorous, or it takes time away from the teaching of “content” in academic courses (Deans 30; Zlotkowski 3). Edward Zlotkowski claims in his article, “Linking Service-Learning and the Academy,” that unless significant “strategic adjustments” occur, adjustments that he claims center on the faculty, the service-learning movement “will either quickly exhaust its natural constituency (faculty already ideologically sympathetic),” or it will “lose many of its best practitioners through the failure of the academy as a whole to recognize and reward their work. In either case, the movement will not succeed in achieving the critical mass it needs to survive as a respected and influential voice for educational reform” (3).

Zlotkowski explains that most of the dialogue concerning service learning, in journal articles and on conference panels, has more of an “ideological” focus, “a primary concern with the sociopolitical content of the word ‘service,’” rather than a “more academic” focus (4). Additionally, he explains that it is important for service-learning faculty to do more to establish a greater respect for service learning as a

“discipline-specific pedagogy,” which would function to increase its legitimacy within disciplinary associations and within individual departments (5).

Zlotkowski makes some suggestions for how service-learning practitioners can work to combat the attitude that service learning has more civic and moral value than academic value, and how they can work to increase the longevity of the service-learning movement. First, he recommends that faculty publish scholarly articles on service learning for professional journals aimed at readers in specific disciplines rather than in only service-learning publications. Second, he suggests that faculty organize panels and scholarly presentations on service learning at professional conferences that “demonstrate real rigor and sophistication of thought,” or that have an academic focus rather than only an ideological one (5). He cites Bruce Herzberg’s article, “Community Service and Critical Thinking,” which appeared in *College Composition and Communication*, as a good example.

Furthermore, Zlotkowski recommends linking service learning to other “reform-related efforts in higher education” (6). The purpose of this is to position service learning so that “its concerns are reflected in the ways in which the academy redefines itself for the 21<sup>st</sup> century” (6). Some of the reform-related efforts that he suggests are reflected in “interest groups” concerned with “increasing pedagogical effectiveness,” and he names “active learning,” “collaborative learning,” and “critical thinking” as specific examples (6).

I assert that the service-learning movement would benefit significantly from being informed by Rogers’ educational theory, particularly his work, *Freedom to Learn*

(1969; 1980)<sup>1</sup>, in which he carefully delineates how to apply his psychological theories to improve the effectiveness of learning. Rogerian theory can help teachers understand how the politics of the classroom can help or hinder the facilitation of learning. Furthermore, according to Rogerian theory, significant change and growth can result from the leveling of power in the teacher-student relationship. Moreover, linking service learning to Rogerian theory can function to increase significant student learning and to improve the effectiveness of educational relationships between teachers of service learning and their students, between students and their community partners, and among students who may work collaboratively with each other on service-learning projects. Rogerian psychological theory helps us to understand why service learning can potentially be such a transformative pedagogical practice, primarily because it is learning that involves the whole person, both intellectually and emotionally. Rogerian theory also can provide concrete suggestions for how to realize this potential. Specifically, Rogerian pedagogy can help service-learning practitioners in their attempts to address several challenges, such as how to facilitate the kind of discussion and critical thinking necessary for effective service learning and how to assess student service-learning projects.

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<sup>1</sup> While Rogers' first edition of *Freedom to Learn* was published in 1969, he later published *Freedom to Learn for the 80s*, which, though it has much of the same material, is quite different. While it is important to keep in mind the original date of publication, the edition published in 1983 contains more discussion of the politics of education, newer research, more specific cases, and more concrete examples. In this chapter, whenever *Freedom to Learn* is referenced, it is the 1983 edition that has been used. For a more extensive discussion of the specific differences between both texts, refer to Chapter Two.

Many of the pedagogical methods that help facilitate a democratic paradigm of education and thus, according to Rogers, increase the effectiveness of education, are used in service-learning courses, including perhaps most obviously, the involvement of the community and the employment of students as tutors, a means by which student service is occasionally provided. Moreover, the use of encounter groups, or groups in which dialogue is exchanged accomplishes these aims because it also encourages critical thinking and reflection, necessary components of service learning. Like Rogerian pedagogy, service learning frequently entails that students work on projects collaboratively, in small groups or as a class, a teaching method that assists in democratizing the classroom and encouraging students to become responsible for their own learning. Rogers claims that it is pedagogically effective to encourage the conduct of inquiry, which is an aim of service learning that involves students in seeking answers and solutions to real problems. Rogers also argues that in a person-centered classroom, the students' "self-discipline" should replace "external discipline" (189), which is the case in service-learning classes where students assert autonomy in the completion of service that frequently occurs outside the classroom. It is interesting that Rogers asserts that the evaluation of the student's learning should primarily be made by the student, and Rogers qualifies this by adding that the student's self-evaluation may certainly be "influenced and enriched by caring feedback" from others (189). In terms of service-learning pedagogy, this feedback might be given not only by the teacher and by other students but also by community partners. Like Rogers' paradigm of person-centered

learning, service learning is experiential, involving the whole person, not only one's mind, and it occurs inside as well as outside the walls of the classroom.

Since they are alternative teaching paradigms, some practitioners may have reservations about incorporating service-learning pedagogy or elements of Rogerian pedagogy into their teaching. Rogers certainly realized that applying his radically democratic model of education requires all participants in the educational process to take some risk. He writes,

I have slowly realized that it is in its politics that a person-centered approach to learning is most threatening. The teacher who considers using such an approach must face up to the fearful aspects of sharing her power and control. Who knows whether students can be trusted and whether a process can be trusted? One can only take the risk; and risk is frightening. (190)

Moreover, a pedagogy that insists on having students share in the responsibility for their own learning is also threatening to students because, Rogers asserts, it "is much easier to conform and complain than to take responsibility, make mistakes, and live with the consequences. In addition, students have been directed for so many years that they long for the security of being told what to do" (190). As with Rogerian pedagogy, service-learning pedagogy requires instructors, students, and community partners to take some risk. Students involved in service-learning projects frequently venture outside the classroom, sometimes on their own, to visit community partners, an idea that for liability reasons may concern administrators as much as it does students. Furthermore, teachers and community partners must place a great deal of faith in students to fulfill their service obligations, and students must learn to have faith in themselves that they do indeed have the power to make a contribution in the community.

Despite the risks involved in implementing service-learning pedagogy and Rogerian pedagogy, a more democratic educational process seems particularly well-suited for the composition classroom. Herzberg explains why he believes democratic learning is important:

The effort to reach into the composition class with a curriculum aimed at democracy and social justice is an attempt to make schools function . . . as radically democratic institutions, with the goal not only of making individual students more successful, but also of making better citizens, citizens in the strongest sense of those who take responsibility for communal welfare. These efforts belong in the composition class because of the rhetorical as well as the practical nature of citizenship and social transformation. (317)

Like Herzberg, Ellen Cushman also claims in her article, “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change” (1996), that composition teachers should have more democratic educational goals. Cushman asserts that we should, as composition teachers, shift “our critical focus away from our own navels, Madonna, and cereal boxes to the ways in which we can begin to locate ourselves within the democratic process of everyday teaching and learning in our neighborhoods” (12). She argues that academics have a social responsibility to become civic participants and to break down barriers between the university and the community. Cushman and Herzberg are both advocates of service-learning pedagogy because it is such an invaluable pedagogy for teaching composition students how to function more effectively within a democracy, and it helps them to realize that they can be agents of social change. The purpose of initiating social change is one of the important goals of rhetoric itself.

At the same time, Cushman cautions readers that although service learning is potentially beneficial for teaching students how to be agents of social change, it is also

important that the relationship be mutually empowering for both students and the community. She theorizes that reciprocity in the relationship between the university and the community is important and that service-learning practitioners must be aware of the politics of this relationship in order to ensure that service does not inadvertently contribute to oppression:

With an idea of how exchanges create and maintain oppressive structures, activists can pay conscious attention to the power structures produced and maintained during their interactions with others outside of the university. Reciprocity includes an open and conscious negotiation of the power structures reproduced during the give-and-take interactions of the people involved on both sides of the relationship. A theory of reciprocity, then, frames this activist agenda with a self-critical, conscious navigation of this intervention. (16)

The problem that Cushman suggests, that service-learning practitioners, if not careful, could perpetuate an oppressive situation, is one that also concerns Carol Wiechman Maybach. In her article “Investigating Urban Community Needs: Service Learning from a Social Justice Perspective” (1996), Maybach asserts that research on the effectiveness of service learning focuses predominantly on the growth of the student rather than on the growth of individuals within the community (224). Maybach suggests that when service-learning practitioners are concerned for the growth of students at the expense of individuals in the community, the “effects of service-learning projects may indeed be viewed as malevolent by the very individuals whose lives the service was intended to enhance, despite the best of good intentions” (224).

One way that a more equitable division of power can be signified between representatives of the university, including students and faculty, and individuals in the community, Maybach asserts, is to pay “attention to the nomenclature and roles” of all

service-learning participants (231). She suggests that the term “partners in service” should replace the terms “service provider” and “service recipient” because more than being simply “politically correct,” it denotes

an actual change in the service relationship: emphasizing mutual respect for individual strengths and weaknesses each partner can bring to the service relationship, underscoring the give and take of the cooperation, supporting the equal role each should play in the service design and accomplishment of the community project they are engaged in, and reinforcing the equal concern for positive outcomes in both service partners. (231)

Maybach suggests that changing the nomenclature used to describe the roles of participants in service learning may change the political structures of those relationships. Service-learning practitioners can also look to Rogers for help in this area. If service-learning practitioners are careful to ensure that service partners within the community take an active role in determining the details of the service work, including the kind of service that is needed, the duration of the service, and so on, the end result is that the focus, rather than being predominantly on the learning of the student, is instead beneficial for both service partners.

Maybach has suggested using a similar method to achieve a more equitable service-learning paradigm by having all participants in the service-learning process be accountable for providing input in regard to almost every step in the process of service learning, including reflecting on the process of service during its duration, and evaluating the outcomes of service (233-34). Rogerian theory helps service-learning practitioners to understand why this method is such an effective one to use for establishing an equitable service-learning paradigm between partners in service. In terms of the service-learning relationship, Rogerian pedagogical methods would

necessitate involving all participants—students, community partners, and teachers—in the definition of terms and goals for the service as well as in the evaluation process after the service has been completed. In fact, Rogers claims that “a fundamental condition” for person-centered learning, regardless of educational level, is that the student is involved, either “alone or in cooperation with others,” in the development of a “program of learning” and in the “evaluation of the extent and significance of the student’s learning” (73).

The next chapter is a case study that explores the question of how and why service-learning pedagogy affects students’ motivation to learn the academic content of a first-year composition course. That chapter helps to illustrate more extensively how Rogerian pedagogy may be linked with service-learning pedagogy to improve the effectiveness of student learning and to overcome pedagogical challenges specific to service learning. These challenges include how to create an equitable service-learning paradigm between service partners, how to best assess service-learning projects, and how to encourage reflection, which is such an important aspect of any service-learning course if it is to be effective.

CHAPTER 5  
LINKING ROGERIAN DEMOCRATIC PEDAGOGY TO SERVICE LEARNING IN  
COMPOSITION: WRITING FOR  
“MORE THAN JUST A GRADE” AND “LEARNING  
JUST TO LEARN”

In 2004, I was invited to speak about service-learning pedagogy to faculty members at a small, religiously affiliated university, which wanted to encourage the inclusion of service-learning components in a variety of disciplines and courses. It was soon clear from the discussion, which I found illuminating, that the faculty members did not doubt the civic or moral value of service learning, but its academic value. They worried that service learning wouldn't help students master the subject matter of the course. Furthermore, they were afraid that it would be so time-consuming that it could instead distract their students from learning the course content.

The concern about service learning's academic value is a common one. Zlotkowski addresses it in his article “Linking Service-Learning and the Academy,” asserting that service-learning advocates need to become “far more comfortable seeing ‘enhanced learning’ as the horse pulling the cart of ‘moral and civic values,’ and not

vice versa” in order for service learning to become more visible and important to the higher education community (24).

Indeed, when I sought departmental approval to teach a service-learning course in composition as a Ph.D. candidate, it was a challenging task. The director of composition believed that service learning in composition could potentially contribute a valuable service to the community, but she was not convinced that it would help students learn to improve their writing. Like many other faculty members, she was not convinced of the academic value of service learning, and as such, she was hesitant to approve my course. In the end, she gave her permission because she admitted that the question of whether service learning is valuable can only be answered by offering some service-learning courses.

Although some faculty members may not be interested in service learning because they believe that it will not help them to teach course content, in my experience teaching a number<sup>1</sup> of service-learning courses in composition, and from what my students’ responses suggest, service learning does have academic value because it facilitates significant, experiential learning. I conducted a case study designed to explore the question of how and why service learning affects student motivation and how this impacts helping students to learn the academic content of the course.

According to Rogers, in his book *Freedom to Learn* (1983), “significant or experiential learning” is learning that “makes a difference in the behavior, the attitudes,

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<sup>1</sup> By the spring semester of 2008, I had taught twelve service-learning courses in composition and thirteen service-learning courses in all. See Appendix Three for a sample syllabus from one service-learning composition course.

perhaps even the personality of the learner” (20). A pedagogy that helps to facilitate significant learning involves, in Rogers’ words, the “whole person,” “the logical *and* the intuitive, the intellect *and* the feeling, the concept *and* the experience, the idea *and* the meaning” (20). It is *person-centered* learning. Rogers claims that significant, experiential learning also has an element of self-initiation by the student, and it should be, at least in part, self-evaluated<sup>2</sup> (20). I would argue that service learning, though it may not have been discussed as such by Rogers<sup>3</sup>, fits the type of pedagogy that Rogers recommended to facilitate significant learning. Students involved in service-learning projects have the opportunity to be active learners and to take responsibility for making choices in their own learning. For this reason, I believed that my students’ involvement in service learning would positively affect their motivation. I also believed that students who are motivated learners and who strive to succeed on service-learning projects will also more effectively learn the academic content of the course if those service-learning projects are directly and appropriately related to the academic content of the course. In

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<sup>2</sup> Rogers claims that it is important that students’ learning be, in part, self-evaluated because this “is one of the major means by which self-initiated learning becomes also responsible learning. It is when the individual has to take the responsibility for deciding what criteria are important to him, what goals must be achieved, and the extent to which he has achieved those goals, that he truly learns to take responsibility for himself and his directions” (*Freedom to Learn* 158). This self-evaluation, according to Rogers, may be “influenced and enriched” by others (*Freedom to Learn* 189). In service-learning classes, it may be appropriate for students to receive feedback from service partners in addition to receiving it from their instructor and their classmates before they participate in self-evaluation.

<sup>3</sup> Rogers did not use the term “service-learning”; however, he did write that an effective means of helping students to learn “experientially” is to involve them in “community projects” (*Freedom to Learn for the 80s* 153).

this chapter, I discuss the results of this case study, my own response and the responses of my composition students to our experiences in a composition class with both a service-learning and a Rogerian pedagogy component.

In the spring of 2004, I taught my first two service-learning composition classes. The service-learning component of each course was similar to the model implemented at Stanford in the early 1980s: my students completed writing projects as their service for non-profit agencies. Some of their projects included creating brochures, PowerPoint Presentations, WebPages, press releases, and articles for newsletters. Students made arrangements, some individually and some in collaborative writing groups, to complete a writing project with an agency of their choice, either by contacting a non-profit agency on their own, or by working with contacts that I had made at 9-1-1, Alliance for Children, an agency serving victims of child abuse and their families, AIDS Outreach, Helping Restore Ability, an advocate for persons with disabilities, and the Arlington Life Shelter, a service provider for homeless individuals.

In addition to service-learning pedagogy, I also used several other teaching methods, which were intended to facilitate democratic learning. For instance, the entire class was involved in the process of selecting the reading assignments from the textbook. After surveying the textbook individually, students created a list of their favorite reading selections as a class and voted on which selections from that list to assign. They claimed at the end of the term that they were more motivated to complete the reading assignments and to discuss them because they took part in selecting them.

Students also had a voice in the creation of writing assignments for the class. I provided them with some basic information about what skills they needed to master in order to be more successful in their next required writing class, such as the ability to conduct research, to use quotation effectively, and to use MLA format, and they used this information to create writing assignments. In response to these assignments, they wrote about a diverse range of topics generated from their reading assignments, from class discussion, and from issues related to their service projects, including poverty, racial discrimination, and AIDS.

As Rogers suggests for increasing the effectiveness of learning, my students were involved in the evaluation of the work they completed during the term<sup>2</sup>. Before they completed a self-evaluation of their work, they received extensive feedback on that work from me and from other students, and most of them received some feedback from their service partners as well. When determining students' grades, I gave their self-evaluations serious consideration, and in many cases, I agreed with the grades that they proposed for themselves. There were some student evaluations with which I disagreed, for example with two self-evaluations written by students who plagiarized their work and with some others as well, which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter.

Additionally, I incorporated several other teaching methods into this composition class that I consider consistent with Rogerian pedagogical philosophy. One of these methods, which is particularly important for facilitating critical thinking and reflection, is what Rogers calls "encounter groups." My students also participated in

collaborative learning projects, which provided further opportunities for student-directed learning, and they compiled portfolios of their work, a method that Rogers does not mention specifically, but which accomplishes goals consistent with Rogerian pedagogy because it encourages students to have an increased sense of ownership of their work.

My students' responses suggest that service-learning pedagogy and Rogerian pedagogy helped them to learn as whole persons: they engaged in the practice of writing and worked on improving their writing skills; however, many also discovered a sense of passion about their work and found it purposeful and meaningful. As a result of taking part in experiential learning, many explain that they were more motivated to learn, they worked harder, and they began to learn for the sake of learning rather than to simply earn grades. Furthermore, they claim to have developed a sense of ownership of their class and their work. In fact, some students developed such a strong sense of ownership of their work that they decided to continue their service work even after the class had ended.

The responses of my students to their experiences working on community service-writing projects confirm Brack and Hall's findings. Like the students of Brack and Hall, many of my students claimed that they were more motivated to write because they were writing for real audiences and purposes; however, my students' experiences with service learning suggest several additional benefits. First, their service-learning experience, in addition to increasing their sense of motivation to work, also changed

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix Four for the writing prompt for students' reflective writing and

their perception of writing in general, allowing them to see the writer as one who is empowered to bring about change. Second, they became more responsible learners. Third, they came to appreciate learning for its own sake.

One of my students, Deanna<sup>3</sup>, writes, “Writing can really change things and make a difference. I like to think that I actually did something that has a real impact on people and a real purpose. [ . . . ] I wanted to do the topic justice and present it well. It was up to me to help out, so I felt more motivated.” As a result of working on her service-writing project, Deanna had the opportunity to see that her writing can have actual consequence in the world, a notion that is difficult to convey in a conventional writing classroom.

Another student, Uma, discovered, like Deanna, that the ability to write is empowering, but she also explains that the benefit of working on a service-writing project for her was that it helped her to acquire “a sense of responsibility” for her own learning. She writes, “Sometimes I don’t work as hard as I can on projects because I know that it won’t have any kind of effect on anyone or anything. I feel like there’s no real motivation except a grade. But, having to work on a service learning project makes me feel that what I am doing can have an effect on people’s opinions and knowledge.”

Several of my students claimed that service-writing projects helped them to be more responsible learners, who were motivated to write and to learn for reasons other than to earn a grade. One student, James, writes, “The service project showed me what it takes to write for more than just a grade.” My student, Luis, explains, “I wasn’t just

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self-evaluation.

doing something in order to get a grade; yes, I needed the grade, but I was also doing it because I wanted to help somebody.”

Although some students in the class claimed that they were more motivated to work in the class because they believed their work might help others, students also explained that they gained appreciation of learning for its own sake. For instance, Linda asserts, “Rogerian pedagogy gave me an appreciation for learning just to learn.” Another student, Nina, makes a similar assertion about her experiences in a classroom with a Rogerian democratic and a service-learning component:

This experience reminded me of the fact that I have sat through many classes where I never learned anything. Many times I have crammed all the material for one test and forgotten it soon after. This course was a wake up call, reminding me that we are in school to learn—not for some letter grade. Unfortunately, we all have this image in our heads that if we get a good grade, it means that we are good students. I can make good grades, but I have to learn.

Nina recognizes that earning good grades does not necessarily indicate that one has experienced significant learning. Rogers claims that although he believes most teachers want to facilitate “the experiential, meaningful, whole person type of learning,”

[. . .] in the vast majority of our schools, at all educational levels, we are locked into a traditional and conventional approach that makes significant learning improbable if not impossible. When we put together in one scheme such elements as a *prescribed curriculum*, *similar assignments for all students*, *lecturing* as almost the only mode of instruction, *standard tests* by which all students are externally evaluated, and *instructor-chosen grades* as the measure of learning, then we can almost guarantee that meaningful learning will be at an absolute minimum. (*Freedom to Learn* 20-21)

The democratic paradigm of education that Rogers describes in *Freedom to Learn* is drastically different from the conventional approach to which he alludes in this

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<sup>3</sup> All of the names of students used in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

paragraph. Whereas in the conventional classroom, the instructor directs the learning of the students by using teaching methods such as lecturing and a prescribed curriculum, in a democratic classroom, students have more autonomy to make choices regarding their own learning and more opportunities for self-direction.

Allison, a student from my composition class, discusses how her experience grant writing for Addicare, a non-profit agency that provides services for individuals recovering from drug addiction, was a meaningful, self-directed learning experience. Allison realized that the autonomy she had to direct her own project, though it was uncomfortable at first, eventually made it a more meaningful, empowering experience. She writes,

There were times when I wished I had some more direction from [the contact at Addicare], but then I realized that I didn't need direction from her. It was simply a lack of confidence in my abilities. I feel that with being able to direct this project, my work had more meaning to it and that I put more effort into researching the proper grants and in writing the letter. The project had more meaning because it was actually going to be used to benefit Addicare and the services that they provide to their clients. I want Addicare to be successful, and in order for them to be successful, they need the proper funding, which I can help them get.

Allison claims that working on her service-writing project not only helped her to become more confident and to feel empowered that the work she did could be beneficial to her service partner, but it also had personal meaning for her. Allison adds, "I feel like I have put more work into this course than I have in all of my others. Why is this? Mostly because the work that I do really matters to me. I want my work to be good, and I want to be proud of the job that I did." For Allison, because she was passionate about her work, she was willing to work harder. This is an important element of what Rogers

calls “whole-person” learning: if students can have some freedom to direct their own learning and be involved in projects that have real consequence in the community, then they sometimes develop a greater sense of passion about their work, which makes them willing to work harder, and the result is an increase in the effectiveness of their overall learning experience.

In addition to completing one writing assignment that was their service learning project, students completed several other writing assignments as well. While I had chosen the textbook for the class, a reader that contained essays, poems, and chapters from books written by professional authors about a variety social issues, students voted as a group on their reading assignments from that text, and after finishing a group of readings, they worked as a class to create their own writing prompts for their assignments. Usually the prompts they created were open, asking that they write on a topic related to reading assignments or to the class discussions about those reading assignments. In fact, their writing prompts were much like the ones I would have created. One student in my composition class, Janette, makes a statement that suggests the democratic structure of the class increased her sense of ownership in it and made her more passionate about completing her work:

I thought it was interesting that you trusted the students enough to make up our own assignments. I think that made the students want to work harder and make good assignments because we knew you trusted us to do this. I learned from this class that student-directed classes are more fun and exciting, because when you make up your own assignments you can pick topics that you are passionate about . . . My friend in her Composition class is writing about topics like Hamlet. I am not passionate about Hamlet, and I have been writing about Hamlet and these types of mundane assignments my whole life.

Rather than having students write about great works of literature, encouraging them to try to emulate the masters, a method that is typical in composition courses that utilize the outmoded current traditional rhetoric approach, Janette appreciated playing a role in the creation of the class' writing assignments.

Maxine Hairston, in her article, "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing" (1992), argues against what she sees as a "new model" of writing instruction, a model in which she believes instructors "put ideology and radical politics at the center of their teaching" (660). Hairston claims that writing instructors should not impose their own ideas on their students. She writes that the "new model" "is a vision that echoes that old patronizing rationalization we've heard so many times before: students don't have anything to write about so we have to give them topics. Those topics used to be literary; now they're political" (660). I suspect that many composition students are still being forced to write about instructor chosen topics, including literary ones as well as political ones, and the response of my student, Janelle, who sympathizes with her friend who must write about Hamlet in composition, supports this. Hairston, who suggests that students choose their own topics, is not arguing against a model of critical teaching, a model that encourages students to think critically, even about political issues. She is claiming that the exploration of these issues needs to be prompted by the students—not imposed on students by their instructor. Hairston asks of the theorists who believe in the "new model" of teaching composition, "Have they asked those students what *they* want to learn?" (665). She maintains,

We know that students develop best as writers when they can write about something they care about and want to know more about. Only then will they be

motivated to invest real effort in their work: only then can we hope they will avoid the canned, clichéd prose that neither they nor we take seriously. Few students, however, will do their best when they are compelled to write on a topic they perceive as politically charged and about which they feel uninformed, no matter how thought-provoking and important the instructor assumes that topic to be. If freshmen choose to write about issues involving race, class, and gender, that's fine. They should have every encouragement. I believe all topics in a writing class should be serious ones that push students to think and to say something substantial. But the topic should be their choice, a careful and thoughtful choice, to be sure, but not what someone else thinks is good for them. (670)

Like Rogers, Hairston realizes that student learning is enhanced when students are able to learn democratically—to be involved in choosing the direction of their learning.

I believe that student-generated writing prompts, and also service-writing projects, are effective means of providing students with opportunities for autonomous writing. My student, Elizabeth, attests to the benefits of democratic pedagogy in her response. She writes, “I used to think that writing was a boring assignment we had to do for our English teachers just to get a grade in the class. This class taught me to love what I am writing about and to be passionate about what I believe in.” Elizabeth adds, “I wrote about what I was interested in and researched what I liked; therefore, I put more input and time and love and effort into the papers and assignments.” Many of my students seemed to feel liberated by the experience of participating in a classroom with a Rogerian democratic component where they were involved in choosing the direction of their own learning. For me, one important goal in implementing a more democratic pedagogy was to encourage students to have more freedom to direct their own learning as a means to increase its effectiveness, but I also hoped that a Rogerian pedagogy

component would assist students in the process of discovering and learning to assert their voices so that they could function more effectively in a democratic society.

According to my students, participating in a democratic classroom environment helped them to realize that they could make a valuable contribution to the group effort. One student, Sally, asserts, “I think we had a lot of autonomy and it helped the class because it makes the students actually work harder. [ . . . ] It shows that [ . . . ] your opinion does matter.” A second student, Bradley writes, “I learned to voice my opinion more from this experience.” Uma makes a similar claim, “I felt that not only the teacher’s ideas are important, but that my opinion is important as well.”

Furthermore, in addition to helping students, like Sally, Bradley, and Uma, realize that they could have a voice in the class, other students suggest in their responses that participating in a more democratic classroom environment also led them to have an increased sense of responsibility for the outcome of the class and a sense of ownership of the class in general. Jason explains, “With the ability to choose what happened in the class, you felt like it was ‘your’ class.” Similarly, Rachel adds, “I [ . . . ] felt responsible for this class and the outcome of it.” One important effect of Rogerian democratic pedagogy is that it is validating to students because it communicates that they are respected as thinkers and learners. My student, David, conveys this idea when he writes, “The feeling of having some responsibility in the decision making aspect [of the class] really made me feel like the teacher did care about how we did and who we were. Yes, I did learn a lot through this approach. I learned a lot of personal responsibility.”

Courses that incorporate Rogerian democratic pedagogy continue to be the exception rather than the rule. Although Rogerian pedagogy does affect how students perceive their role, helping them to see themselves as more empowered, in most of their classes, students frequently have to function within a conventional model of education that communicates to them that it is the teacher's ideas that matter—not their own. In my students' responses, the issue of experiencing contradictory educational philosophies was frequently apparent. Students were fully aware of the dichotomy of democratic versus conventional educational philosophies. One student, Sam, comments, "I feel as though I contributed to the class more than I ever could in my other classes." Julie writes, "Compared to my other college courses this one definitely made me feel like I could voice my opinions freely, and I felt like I contributed to my class as a whole, which is something I do not get from my other classes." Angie claims "[The class] changed my outlook of the roles of a student because we were taken seriously." Another student, Deanna, also claims that the class helped her to reconstruct her notion of what it means to be a student. She writes, "My role as a student is to be active in learning—not to be treated like a robot that spits out information." Another student's response, Sean, indicates that he felt more empowered in a democratic classroom than in more conventional classes: "[In this class] I feel more like a teacher/student, but only in this class. In the rest of my classes, I feel like a normal student again." Sean's reference to feeling like a teacher/student is reminiscent of Paulo Freire's language in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Farhad is another student in my class who, to borrow

Sean's terms, discusses the issue of having to return from being a "teacher-student" to a "normal student" again after the term ends:

[This class] has changed my idea of the role of a student to one who is more responsible and instead of being spoon-fed what to do and what not to do, tries to come up with his own ideas and follow through with them. However, twelve years of being spoon-fed is tough to wean off of, and my new conception of the Student will probably not be realized in other classes.

Janette makes a similar claim. She writes, "In this class we were able to act more like a professor than a student. Then when I went to my other classes I went back to acting like a student. We were given more responsibility in this class than a student is in most classes." Many of my students, like Janette and Farhad, though they believed they had benefited from being in a classroom with a Rogerian democratic component, did not believe they would encounter Rogerian pedagogy in their future classes. Although I certainly believe the benefits of Rogerian pedagogy would be greater if students could continue to experience more democratic, person-centered classes throughout their educational careers, I am convinced by my students' responses that even if they have the opportunity to participate in only one RDP class, they will still have a meaningful learning experience that is worthwhile, one that in the words of my students, James and Linda, will help them to write for "more than just a grade" and to participate in "learning just to learn."

In addition to increasing the effectiveness of learning, linking service-learning pedagogy and RDP is also beneficial because it can help service-learning instructors overcome some specific challenges. Two of these challenges include how to facilitate

effective critical-thinking and reflection, an important aspect of service learning, and how to best assess service-learning projects.

Herzberg expresses his concern that without the element of critical teaching, service-learning work is charity only. He claims that “our responsibility for social justice includes but also carries beyond personal acts of charity” (317). The key to accomplishing this, he believes, is a critical pedagogy that helps students learn to analyze their assumptions about the world as a means to think critically about the forces that cause social problems, such as poverty, illiteracy, discrimination, and injustice, and to help them “transcend their own deeply-ingrained belief in individualism and meritocracy” (312). Herzberg’s challenge for service-learning practitioners to aim for a critical pedagogy is an effective means to emphasize the importance of ensuring that our students are engaging in significant reflection and critical thinking about issues related to their service work. Rogerian theory can assist service-learning practitioners as they address the challenge of how to facilitate effective reflection and critical thinking. Through the use of student-led discussion, what Rogers refers to as the encounter group, I was able to work towards overcoming the challenge of how to facilitate reflection and critical-thinking on issues related to my students’ service projects.

Overall, my students’ service-writing projects were diverse in nature. Some of these projects included creating and designing brochures for AIDS Outreach, Alliance for Children, and 9-1-1. Two of my students composed web pages, one for a local church and another for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. One of my students applied for grants on behalf of an agency that counseled individuals recovering from drug

addiction. Two others conducted research and created a fact card on how to recognize child abuse. Several students created flyers with facts about poverty and hunger, which would be used in mailings distributed by another non-profit agency for fundraising purposes. Since my students' service-writing projects involved a number of non-profit agencies, which were created in response to many different types of social needs and problems, I was particularly challenged by how to encourage critical thinking through class discussion on social issues related to each of their projects. One way I addressed this issue was by choosing a text for the class that contained essays, poems, and chapters from literary works, all dealing with a variety of social problems, such as homelessness, illiteracy, poverty, and discrimination. The text is entitled *Rereading America*, and as I have previously mentioned, the students chose the reading assignments from that text. I assured them that if they wanted to supplement those reading assignments with additional readings not included in the text, they were free to do so as long as the majority of the class agreed on the additional reading assignments. The students, however, seemed satisfied with the assigned text, and none of the students recommended any additional outside readings. I aimed to facilitate discussion over these readings by implementing elements of Rogerian psychological theory. For instance, I tried to create an environment in which students would play a large role in determining the direction of the discussion. I also aimed to be, as Rogers discusses, genuine in my responses, accepting and trusting of the individuals within the group, and empathetic. There may have been times during the course of the semester when I was more or less successful at conveying these attitudes, but I consciously aimed to convey

them in class meetings and in exchanges with my students. I also tried to think of myself and to act as an equal participant in class discussions—as neither an authority figure or an infrequent participant. The goal of these class discussions, ideally, according to Rogers, is that participants become involved in a process in which they learn to discover and to articulate their own beliefs while they also learn to better understand the beliefs of others. It is a process that may lead all participants to grow by enlarging their perspective of the world, and it is also a teaching method that encourages rigorous critical-thinking and reflection.

My students had an engaging discussion after they read an essay in *Rereading America* by James Fallows, entitled “The Invisible Poor,” in which Fallows argues that affluent Americans have become so separated from the experiences of the poor that they cannot relate to their plight and thus ignore them as if “they live someplace else” (360). Without being aware of it at first, my students’ discussion seemed to support Fallows’ argument. They began exchanging narratives about poor individuals whom they had encountered on street corners holding signs expressing their need for money. There was a great deal of consistency between these narratives in the attitude my students expressed about the poor individuals of whom they spoke. Many of my students, especially the U.S.-born ones, expressed a great distrust for poor individuals asking for money. My students believed that the individuals they encountered who asked for money were either con artists who would take advantage of them or addicts who would simply spend any money they received on liquor or drugs. Several students implied that the best thing to do was to ignore these requests for money. Implicit in their exchanges

was a belief that individuals who want to work can do so; individuals who are poor or homeless find themselves in that situation because of their own failings, their laziness or their addiction to drugs. What I found inspiring was that eventually, other students began to express perspectives that contradicted these. One student, Claudia, who was from Brazil, explained that in her country, many families are so poor that they are forced to live in boxes. There are children in her country, she explained, who are hungry and cannot afford to attend schools, which are mostly private. “These people want to work,” she said, “but there simply aren’t any jobs.”

Soon another student, Anna, explained that she had empathy for individuals who were addicted to drugs. She knew how difficult it was for those suffering from drug addiction to heal and to improve their situations because she could remember her mother’s struggle to overcome drug addiction, which was a difficult time in Anna’s childhood. Drug addiction and alcoholism, she explained, were illnesses that some people are never able to overcome.

After Anna, a few other students began to articulate more empathetic perspectives about homelessness, poverty, and drug addiction. As a result of this discussion, students had an opportunity to not only express their own perspectives but also to begin to listen and to understand differing perspectives. This allowed them to reflect upon and to think critically about some of their assumptions about the world, which they continued to reflect upon in their writing of expository essays.

Most importantly, these class discussions provided a forum to reflect upon social issues related to students’ service projects. For instance, on one occasion, a

student, Antonio, described how AIDS Outreach was making a difference in the lives of families affected by AIDS. He had visited the agency to discuss his service-learning project and to conduct interviews, when he discovered that the agency had an on-site grocery store, in which many AIDS victims and their families, who were largely poor and from the inner city, could shop for food that they could not afford otherwise. By this point in the term, the poor were not “invisible” to Antonio, as Fallows argues in the essay we had discussed at the beginning of the term. Antonio became so passionate about wanting to help at AIDS Outreach that he volunteered at a summer camp for children affected by AIDS, and he also participated with a group of his classmates in the AIDS walk, a fundraiser for AIDS Outreach.

Antonio was one of several students who decided to continue working with his service partner after our class had ended. Another student, David, decided to continue volunteering as webmaster for Mothers Against Drunk Driving. He had created some web pages for this agency as his service project. Faith, a student who had participated in creating a brochure for Alliance for Children, decided to continue to do volunteer work for that agency after the end of the term. Luis, who had conducted research and completed a fact sheet on hunger and homelessness for his service agency, decided to volunteer for a local mission to serve the homeless population in his community. These students found their service work meaningful enough to continue doing it even when they were not earning a grade or course credit for their work.

I believe that linking service learning with Rogerian Democratic Pedagogy helped me in my attempts to address the challenge of how to encourage reflection and

critical thinking about some issues connecting students' service work with their class work, and I also believe it helped me to address an additional challenge—how to best assess students' service projects. Nora Bacon, in her article entitled, "Community Service Writing: Problems, Challenges, Questions" (1997), asserts,

Evaluating community service-writing documents pushes us against the limits of our expertise. When I ask other CSW teachers how they determine grades, many describe evasive maneuvers—they give every student a high grade, or they award credit for effort, or they fold the CSW paper into a portfolio and assign a single grade for the whole semester's work. Others face the grading demon squarely. Recognizing that they cannot judge by the textual features they value in essays (clear thesis, well-developed paragraphs, syntactic variety, and so on) and that no comparable list of formal qualities will be relevant to the whole set of community-based documents, they attempt to evaluate each document on its own terms, judging how well it accomplishes its communicative purpose. [. . .] Teachers who grade community-based writing on its own terms are essentially guessing what its outcome will be. This is a difficult matter, since we as teachers are outsiders, too; unfamiliar with the community agency's goals, the paper's audience, and the genre, we are ill equipped to judge. (48-49)

I agree with Bacon that evaluating service-writing projects poses certain challenges because composition instructors are faced with the task of evaluating writing that is outside the genre of the conventional essay. The sheer diversity in the types of service-writing projects my students have completed makes it virtually impossible to evaluate every student's work using the same criteria, especially the criteria that are typically used for evaluating student essays. Furthermore, as Bacon asserts, we cannot effectively grade these projects on how well they accomplish their rhetorical purpose either because it is impractical and impossible to do so; we cannot follow those projects into the community in order to determine how their audience responded to them.

I strongly disagree with Bacon's assertion that portfolio assessment is an "evasive maneuver" that composition instructors use to avoid "facing the grading demon squarely" when it comes to evaluating service-writing projects. Portfolio assessment, because it is holistic, allows students' grades to be determined based on the work they have completed during an entire semester, so their grades more accurately represent that work, including how it has been revised. Portfolio assessment emphasizes the importance of revision because students do not receive a grade until they have had an opportunity to revise their work in response to feedback they have received from other students and their instructor, which I believe more effectively helps students to improve their writing. Furthermore, portfolio assessment works to shift students' focus from thinking primarily about grades to thinking more about the business of writing and improving their writing.

One of the most important discoveries I made as a result of linking service-learning pedagogy and Rogerian pedagogy is that they work to provide students with opportunities to find motivation for writing and for learning that is more meaningful than that of simply working to earn grades. Portfolio assessment is particularly useful for service-learning instructors because the goals of these teaching methods are consistent in this way—both shift the students' focus toward learning and away from working primarily for a grade. Moreover, instructors who use portfolio assessment must still face the challenge of how to best assess service-writing projects if these are to be included as one of the projects in students' portfolios.

Bacon suggests that one solution to the problem of how to grade service-writing projects is “to call upon the expertise of the site supervisors, encouraging their input in working through drafts and assigning grades” (49). Bacon adds that in some community service-writing classrooms, “students are encouraged to participate in evaluation as well” (49). I would assert that service-learning practitioners should consider involving both the students and their community partners in the evaluation of students’ service projects.

This is not an argument for having students become the sole evaluators of their work. When it comes to facing the challenge of evaluating students’ writing projects, Rogers’ theories on education are particularly useful because they reject the idea that grading should be done solely by the instructor, an idea that seems inconsistent with the very goals of service learning, a pedagogy in which the process of learning is viewed as experiential and social, influenced by the community and by other students as well as by the instructor. It seems fitting that in service-learning courses, the evaluation of a student’s work might be influenced by feedback from service partners, from other students, from the instructor, and by that student’s self-evaluation.

My students received feedback on their work from other students and from me, and most received feedback from their service partners as well. This feedback was offered to students during their process of writing, when they could refer to it while revising their work, and it was also offered after their portfolio was submitted. Since students received such extensive feedback on their work and had several opportunities

to see how their work compared with the work of their peers, I believe they were able to evaluate their own work in an informed manner.

In many instances I agreed with my students' self-evaluations; however, there were some instances when I did not agree with the grades they proposed for themselves. Rogers claims that an important part of taking responsibility for one's own learning and making choices as to the direction of that learning is also to take "the responsibility for the consequences of those choices" (188). The instances when I most seriously disagreed with my students' self-evaluations occurred primarily with students who chose not to complete their work.

I believe that the overwhelming majority of my students thrived in a democratic classroom environment in which they were entrusted to take responsibility for their own learning. They claimed that as a result they were more motivated to learn, and they found their work more meaningful. Many of my students reported discovering a sense of passion about their work, and they asserted that they found themselves working and learning for reasons other than to earn a grade. In this way, they were learning, in Rogers' terms, as "whole persons." Rather than only to earn course credit, they aimed to write as a means to help in the community, and they aimed to learn simply for the sake of learning because they were passionate about their work. What is also evident from my students' responses is that Rogerian pedagogy linked with service-learning pedagogy helped them to feel a sense of empowerment. They claimed that they felt more confident about voicing their opinions as a result of the class, and they became convinced that their opinions did matter. Many students in the class expressed that they

believed they had made more of a contribution to the class than they had in their other classes. They became self-directed learners—student-teachers who could direct their own learning and could also learn from each other—not passive students directed only by their teacher.

On the other hand, the implementation of Rogerian pedagogy introduces a different challenge that it is important to address—namely, occasional student resistance to an unfamiliar pedagogy. I frequently grappled with the issue of how I should best deal with one student, Tom, who unlike the rest of his class, did not seem to be functioning well in a democratic classroom environment. This student resisted by refusing to engage in almost every class activity. During class discussion, he would refuse to make eye contact with any participants by looking out the window, hiding his face behind the campus paper, and in one instance, talking on his cell phone during class. At that moment, before I even had a chance to comment, his classmates voiced their own frustration with Tom, and they asked him why he chose to continue attending class when he seemed to care so little for it. Occasionally there are students in conventional classrooms who act rudely, so it should not be surprising that there will occasionally be students in a classroom with a service-learning or Rogerian democratic component who will act rudely as well. However, rather than simply acting rudely, this student seemed to me to be challenging the pedagogical philosophy of the classroom environment.

During one of my several conferences with Tom, he explained that he felt impatient with the dialogue in the class. He considered it a waste of time to listen to his

classmates' opinions during class discussions, and he did not think he could learn anything about how to improve his writing from them during peer review meetings. He communicated to me that he wanted me to teach the class in the conventional way. He wanted me to be more authoritative. This is not an uncommon situation for teachers who use Rogerian democratic pedagogy.

In her article "Attitudes and Expectations in a Shared Responsibility Classroom" (1992), Chris Madigan describes her encounters with student resistance to Rogerian pedagogy: "The student reaction you can be 99% certain to encounter in some form is resistance. Tell a class that you're letting them help determine what the class will do, and after polite silence and even some polite cooperation, some will complain that they took the class to learn from you, that if they knew what to do they wouldn't need you, and that you're not doing your job" (198). Madigan explains that most students are "used to being directed," and they "prefer to accept what they know rather than embrace what they don't, especially when the new role adds considerable responsibility" (198).

However, learning that involves the whole person, one's emotions and one's intellect, is foreign to some individuals, students and instructors, who may have been educated conventionally since they first entered school. Inevitably, one issue concerns some individuals about democratic pedagogy: is experiential learning that involves the whole person, including one's emotions, less intellectual? Does democratic pedagogy make it difficult for students to learn course content? This, I would argue, is the primary concern of skeptics of both service learning and of democratic pedagogy. While the idea

of democratic pedagogy calls into question the legitimacy of idea of “course content,” at least as it is defined as material the institution or the instructor, as opposed to the students, deems important, I would argue that for the overwhelming majority of students, experiential learning, including service learning and democratic learning enhances students’ ability to learn intellectually because it functions to help students to be more passionate and motivated about their learning, which allows them to learn in a more effectively. I believe that Rogers’ student, Samuel Tenenbaum, would agree.

During one student-led discussion, a student in Rogers’ class of 1958, who was referring to the “emotional process” that Rogers’ pedagogy seemed to encourage, asked, “Should we be concerned only with the emotions? Has the intellect no play?” In response to this student, Tenenbaum asked the class, “Is there any student who has read as much or thought as much for any other course?” Tenenbaum claims that the answer to this question

was obvious. We had spent hours and hours reading; the room reserved for us had occupants until 10 o’clock at night, and then many left only because the university guards wanted to close the building. Students listened to recordings; they saw motion pictures; but best of all, they talked and talked and talked. In the traditional course, the instructor lectures and indicates what is to be read and learned; students dutifully record all this in their notebooks, take an examination and feel good or bad, depending on the outcome; but in nearly all cases it is a complete experience, with a sense of finality; the laws of forgetting begin to operate rapidly and inexorably. In the Rogers course, students read and thought inside and outside the class; it was they who chose from this reading and thinking what was meaningful to them, not the instructor. (307)

Tenenbaum asserts that being in Rogers’ class, for most of the students, was a “meaningful” experience, one that changed some of the students, making them more “sympathetic” and “understanding” (306). He asserts that he “saw shy persons become

less shy and aggressive persons more sensitive and moderate” (306). Despite the benefits that many students experienced in Rogers’ class, however, Tenenbaum notes that Rogers’ nondirective teaching “was not 100 per cent successful” (307):

There were three or four students who found the whole idea distasteful. Even at the end of the course, although nearly all became enthusiastic, one student to my knowledge, was intensely negative in his feelings; another was highly critical. These wanted the instructor to provide them with a rounded-out intellectual piece of merchandise which they could commit to memory and then give back on an examination. [ . . . ] For the authoritarian person, who puts his faith in neatly piled up facts, this method I believe can be threatening, for here he gets no reassurance, only an openness, a flowing, no closure. (307-308)

In Rogers’ class, according to Tenenbaum’s description of it, students participated in a lively discussion that was, in large, directed by themselves. For students who are accustomed to hearing course content delivered in lecture form, a more democratic, Rogerian class can certainly be disorienting. Tenenbaum provides an apt description of a typical student-directed discussion, one that, though engaging to some, could be seen as frustrating to another because, in his words, it provides “no closure” (307).

The Rogers method was free and flowing and open and permissive. A student would start an interesting discussion; it would be taken up by a second; but a third student might take us away in another direction, bringing up a personal matter of no interest to the class; and we would all feel frustrated. But this was like life, flowing on like a river, seemingly futile, with never the same water there, flowing on, with no one knowing what would happen the next moment. But in this there was an expectancy, an alertness, an aliveness; it seemed to me as near a smear of life as one could get in a classroom. (308)

Tenenbaum’s description of an encounter group’s dialogue as being like “a river” is apt because its course, like a river, is unpredictable and spontaneous. The student-led discussions in our classroom with a Rogerian component seemed frustrating

to my student, Tom, who was impatient with the unstructured dialogue exchanged among his classmates. However, while Tom, who claimed that he did not think he could learn from his fellow classmates, had a negative experience in a democratic classroom, most of the other students in the class seemed to thrive in an environment where they could freely express themselves and make a significant contribution to the class. One of my students, Angie, claimed, “I have learned a lot more about me and other people by the discussions that we had in class.” Another student, Nancy, expressed a similar sentiment, “This class taught me that I can learn as much from my fellow students as I can from my teacher. [ . . . ] Most of all I loved that I got to learn a great deal about how other people think and believe.”

It should be expected that in every classroom with a Rogerian component there will probably be a student, or a few students, who persistently and strongly feel negatively about democratic pedagogy. For me, this was the most disturbing aspect of being the teacher-student of a Rogerian, service-learning classroom, and I spent a great deal of time during this particular semester worrying about how I might encourage my student, Tom, to become engaged in the activities of the class. Frankly, I finally had to admit to myself that it is almost impossible to ensure, regardless of the pedagogy of the class, that every student has a successful, rewarding experience, even though that may be the goal of the instructor. From the responses of the majority of my students that semester, the class was experienced as a success, and I am convinced that what would have been worse than a certain amount of dissent regarding a Rogerian pedagogical

style, would have been the loss of the opportunity for the majority of students to have benefited from it.

Tenenbaum writes of Rogerian pedagogy, “What better method is there to engross the individual; to bring him, his ideas, his feelings into communication with others; to break down the barriers that create isolation in a world where for his own mental safety and health, man has to learn to be part of mankind?” (309). Perhaps Tenenbaum is correct that democratic pedagogy helps individuals learn to more effectively function among and with others, and that such an education is important for mental health. If this is the case, even those who are the most persistently resistant to Rogerian democratic pedagogy stand to benefit from it the most because it provides an opportunity for them to learn how to better function as a part of a diverse community.

On the other hand, if the goal of Rogerian pedagogy, and other forms of liberatory pedagogy, is to free students, then teachers of those pedagogies must accept student resistance as a legitimate way to express that freedom. Thomas Rickert, in his article, “‘Hands Up, You’re Free’: Composition In a Post-Oedipal World,” argues that the problem with even the best and most radical forms of liberatory pedagogy is that they run the risk of replicating the situations that they attempt to work against; they run the risk of “reinscribing disciplinary modes of authoritarian violence” (291). He suggests that teachers should perhaps value forms of student resistance in the writing classroom as “acts” that can have an achieved social effect (314).

My student, Tom, who created frequent “acts” of resistance toward Rogerian pedagogy and service-learning pedagogy, took quite a bit of risk to express his

dissatisfaction with the class. Consequently, Tom's expression of dissatisfaction also frequently served to increase and unify the support of the majority of the other students for the teaching methods of the class, which was almost certainly an outcome that Tom had not anticipated or intended. Moreover, at the beginning of the semester, I reviewed a policy stated clearly in the syllabus that any student who did not want to participate in the service-learning component of the course could propose an alternate writing project to complete instead. This would have been a positive and productive way for Tom to complete the requirements of the class while still resisting one of its methods. Tom did not express an interest in completing an alternate project.

Overall, even with the occasional and inevitable student resistance to Rogerian democratic pedagogy, I believe it can produce actual change in students, helping them to be more comfortable expressing themselves, to become more moderate and understanding of others, and to better understand themselves. It also effectively teaches students to learn for themselves, to think for themselves, and to learn passionately as well as intellectually. Linking service-learning pedagogy with Rogerian democratic pedagogy is particularly useful because each method works to enhance the other and to assist the other in accomplishing its purposes. Service-learning pedagogy provides students with an additional opportunity, as part of a Rogerian strategy to teaching, for students to have freedom and autonomy to make their own choices regarding their learning experiences and to continue their learning experiences beyond the walls of the classroom. Moreover, service-learning pedagogy helps accomplish certain goals of Rogerian pedagogy. In the composition classroom, for instance, service-writing projects

help to empower students, convincing them that they can affect change in their communities and that their voices do count. Service learning also helps students to experience whole-person learning, learning that involves them intellectually, because it emphasizes critical thinking and reflection, emotionally because it encourages students to learn what they are passionate about, and physically because it is experiential. Since service-learning pedagogy is person-centered, encouraging students to learn as whole persons, it helps students to experience what Rogers calls significant learning, learning that it is meaningful and can change students. On the other hand, Rogerian democratic pedagogy works toward fulfilling the purposes of service-learning pedagogy because, first, it helps to explain why service learning pedagogy is such an effective teaching method, helping students to learn intellectually and passionately. Second, Rogerian theory helps to illustrate that service-learning pedagogy can be as academically rewarding and intellectually challenging for students as it is socially valuable. Third, Rogerian pedagogy provides instructors with a means to address the challenge of how to encourage critical thinking and reflection through student-directed dialogue, a Rogerian pedagogical method also called the encounter group, and fourth, it provides instructors with a means to address the challenge of how to best assess students' service projects by considering students' self-evaluations of their own work in addition to feedback provided by community partners and by other students. When used in conjunction, service-learning pedagogy and Rogerian democratic pedagogy in composition provide a means for students to discover what it is to write for more than just a grade and to understand what it is to learn simply for the sake of learning.

CHAPTER 6  
ADDITIONAL TEACHING METHODS FOR FACILITATING  
DEMOCRACY IN THE CLASSROOM: AREAS  
FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It is neither practical nor is it likely that many compositionists would want to offer classes that are entirely and strictly Rogerian. My goal in this dissertation, however, has been to illustrate that teachers and their students can benefit when democratic pedagogical components are introduced into the composition classroom. In other words, I am not arguing in this project that compositionists should use Rogerian teaching methods to the exclusion of all other teaching methods, even sometimes more conventional ones; however, I assert that we can learn from Rogers that it is beneficial to incorporate into our overall pedagogy democratic teaching methods, such as those that encourage students to learn actively, to develop a sense of ownership of their projects and their work, to assert their voices, and to have an increased sense of responsibility for their own learning. While Rogers never discussed service learning and public writing specifically, these are methods that I have found accomplish the same goals in teaching composition today that he advocated for facilitating freedom in the classroom during the last half of the twentieth century. Such teaching methods can function to involve students in their projects emotionally as well as intellectually, thus

improving the effectiveness of their learning. As I have incorporated more of a Rogerian Democratic Pedagogical component into my overall teaching, I have noticed the difference in my students' responses, in their attitudes, and in their work.

The biggest challenge for composition instructors attempting to facilitate a democratic learning environment is navigating between working to empower students and to take a much less authoritative role in the class, while still having the responsibility as one employed by the institution to provide rationale that the class is being run effectively. For me as an instructor, it does not work when I try to emulate Rogers' teaching methods too closely, and this is the primary reason that has compelled me to develop a modified RDP approach to teaching writing. For example, I do create the parameters of the class myself, such as outlining the major assignments that should be submitted and determining how much they will count towards students' final grades, but the students play a large role in negotiating the details of those assignments, like working on their own to find the the non-profit organization they wish to partner with for their service-learning projects, and negotiating with a representative from that organization to decide what type of writing project should be completed. The goal is to keep in mind the major aspects of Rogers' philosophy, but to be flexible enough to implement a democratic pedagogy that works with an instructor's personal style of teaching and that is appropriate in terms of method and technology for the composition classroom of the twenty-first century.

I have demonstrated in this project how one type of service learning, namely community service writing projects, can be used as a teaching method to facilitate a

more democratic composition class. One of my students, Allison, aptly describes the effect that the service-learning component of our course had on her. She claims that service learning

gives my writing a purpose [ . . . ] because I am helping the community. It also brings issues that are facing our society into a new light because when doing this project it becomes personal. The work that is done really makes a difference in someone's life. It is not only a learning experience for school but one for life as well.

Allison's comments provide a good example of the characteristics that Rogerian theory tells us increase the effectiveness of student learning. She claims that her service-learning project gave her "school" experience as well as "life" experience. Her project had personal meaning for her as well as academic meaning. Since Allison's project gave her writing a real rhetorical situation, it helped her write more passionately and with new purpose. Moreover, she alludes to the fact that her service-learning project helped to change her views on particular social issues, which she could "see in a new light."

As I continue my research on Rogerian democratic pedagogy, I plan to focus on other teaching methods that, like some types of service learning, help involve students both cognitively and emotionally in the class so that they learn more effectively. While service learning projects like the ones described in this project are one type of public writing project, I am particularly interested in conducting further research on other types of public writing in composition. One of these methods involves the use of webfolios and other class web projects. My students publish their major papers and class projects, including their service-learning projects, Rogerian argument papers, and position papers, in an online portfolio, or webfolio, of their work. As with most types of

portfolio assessment, these webfolios are graded holistically. Students do not receive grades on their papers and projects when they are first submitted. Instead, students receive feedback on how to improve their work from their peers and from me, and they have most of the semester to revise their work and to improve it before they publish a final draft in their webfolio. Most importantly, webfolio writing, as a type of public writing, allows students to publish their own work, which I would assert is a final stage of the writing process that needs to be explored more extensively.

Frequently, my students, especially the ones who do not have experience with web design, are intimidated at the beginning of the semester at the prospect of being required to design web pages and to complete a webfolio of their work. While the assignment sounds challenging to some of my students, I generally reassure them that with software such as Microsoft FrontPage or Adobe Dreamweaver, web design is much easier to accomplish than they might at first imagine.

I have found that when students discover for the first time that they can publish their own papers, which can then be read by a potentially large audience, it can be quite an empowering experience. One student, Whitney, seemed overwhelmed with the assignment at first, but when I helped her to publish her index page, she looked at me with astonishment and asked, “Is my work online?” When I answered that it was, her facial expression visibly changed, and I could see what a sense of accomplishment this gave her. Often, publishing webfolios of their work seems to make students feel that they can have a voice and participate in the ongoing discussion about issues that concern them. They realize that people outside our classroom may read their papers and

opinions, and this raises the stakes for them. Students work harder to revise and to improve their papers. They become more emotionally involved in their work. My students strive to find the right images to add to their papers to help them convey their messages, they work to find backgrounds that are visually pleasing, and many even add sound and other advanced features to their webfolios in an attempt to make them as good as possible.

One student, Mark, who wrote several papers during the term on the issue of whether the government should have the right to eavesdrop on the conversations of private citizens, added a soundtrack to his webfolio of people reading the Fourth Amendment:

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The sound added another dimension of support for his position paper against a policy signed during President George W. Bush's tenure that gave the Federal Bureau of Investigation authority to eavesdrop on the private conversations of United States citizens. In addition to conveying his argument through his text and through sound, Mark conveyed it visually as well by depicting on his index page an image of a large eye, reminiscent of George Orwell's *1984*, which would change its appearance and look in the direction of each link the user scrolled over, as if to demonstrate that big brother was indeed watching. Mark clearly had a strong sense of ownership of his webfolio, which he had become emotionally involved in creating. The result was a well-polished,

thought-provoking webfolio in which Mark had not only done well at writing argument to persuade, but he also had used visual argument and aural argument exceptionally well to convey his message.

In addition to webfolios, another method I use to make my classroom more democratic is the use of student-selected music during writing workshops. Some students have been tempted to miss class on writing workshop days or to leave early, which communicated to me that they did not believe there was anything useful to them happening in class on those days; however, I believe the writing workshops are some of the most critical classes during the term because that is when students are actively involved in the business of creating texts, and I wanted to encourage better attendance of them. Since I use webfolio assessment, the process of revision is a major focus of the class. The entire class is organized in order to put an emphasis on the process of writing, giving students the opportunity to revise and to improve their papers before they submit them for a grade. Additionally, students learn during these workshops from each other, discovering new web design ideas and learning how to implement them. Since one of their major projects, the service-learning project, is a collaborative one, it is also important to have workshop days when they can meet with their entire group to communicate about their service-learning projects and to work on writing them together.

I have noticed a big improvement in student attendance and participation during writing workshops since I began asking individual students to volunteer to provide the class with background music on those days. It is a simple idea, but it has changed the

atmosphere of the class tremendously. I find that more students work at their computers until the end of the class when I must now remind them to leave before the next class period begins. They more fully participate during the workshops and have an increased sense of ownership in the class. They are taking the responsibility of helping to create their classroom environment.

Another area in which RDP can play a large role in helping to increase student ownership and participation involves the online composition classroom. Students in distance learning courses must take more responsibility for their own learning because they do not meet face to face with a teacher and other students on a regular basis. For this reason it is urgent that online composition instructors create a strong sense of community within their online courses as a means to keep students engaged and to prevent students from dropping out of the course, which is sometimes a problem in online courses. Discussion board and chat room assignments in distance-learning composition courses function to create a greater sense of community for distance-learning students and an increased sense of ownership of the class. Online instructors differ in large degree on how much they should participate in and guide the direction of online dialogue within discussion forums. As an RDP instructor, I give a very broad, open-ended writing prompt, in which I ask students to post any question or response to the particular reading assignment and to post two responses to their classmates' posts. Then, I depend on the students to guide their own discussion, and I generally do not participate at all. My goal is to help students to feel that the discussion forums are their own, that they are free to express themselves openly and honestly, and that there is not a

particular response that I expect from them. What I have found is that by using this RDP approach to facilitating discussion within the online composition classroom students often post many more times than required, which indicates that they are engaged and taking ownership of the forum. I have been happy to witness how effectively students work collaboratively and think critically within these discussion forums. For example, in the following discussion thread, several students work collaboratively to explain what Brent Staples meant in his essay, “Black Men and Public Space,” when he claimed that as a black man he often whistled when he passed white women who were walking in the city at night, and for him this was the equivalent of a “cowbell that hikers wear when they know they are in bear country”:

**Beth:** What do you think Staples meant when he said, “It is my equivalent of the cowbell that hikers wear when they know they are in bear country”?

**Meg:** A hiker would wear a cowbell so that any bears that are in the area could hear them coming and be warded off. In the same way, perhaps Staples whistles to ward off any fear that might enter the minds of the people in his vicinity, people who might take him as a threat.

**Tony:** [. . .] His whistling is a way without talking to say: “I’m just here to get somewhere, and I am not a threat.”

**Martin:** Ladies and gentlemen, this is “bear” country, vicious angry bear country, vicious bears that will attack any innocent bystander in the wrong place at the wrong time. Why would an intelligent human intrude on bears unannounced knowing their vicious nature. In that same sense why would an intelligent black man walk the streets of America and intrude on Caucasians unannounced. I believe you’re all in the ballpark, but what you are missing here is the underlying context. When a hiker wears a cow bell it is to scare the vicious bears away. In that same way Staples is not the bear but the potential victim of the bears. He is whistling for his protection, not theirs.

**Beth:** Thank you, Martin. I do believe that you got it right!

**Mandy:** We all have to remember that in life we are the same inside. [. . .] He whistles the familiar tunes to distract the eye from the outward differences [. . .] Great job Martin.

Initially in this discussion, the students suggest that Staples' whistling is a way to make sure others whom he is passing are not threatened by him. It is interesting that it is Martin, an African-American student, (I know the student's race because he has posted his picture to the class), who offers a different perspective, that Staples whistles because he is the one threatened, not the people he is passing on the street. Martin helps the other students understand how terrifying it can be for a black man who finds himself "in the wrong place at the wrong time," much like a hiker finding himself among "vicious" bears. Furthermore, I should add that Martin became so engaged in participating in this discussion forum that he posted many more times than he was required by the assignment. This discussion thread, and Martin's as well as other students' committed participation, is an example of how students in an RDP online course can learn effectively and collaboratively in a student-led discussion forum, gaining critical insight into challenging questions on their own.

While the major emphasis within this project has been on the use of service learning as an effective RDP teaching method, there are a number of other types of public writing projects that can help instructors to create a more democratic learning environment, which benefits students and increases the effectiveness of overall student learning. These methods merit further attention by compositionists and could be productive areas for future research, including webfolio writing and other web-based writing projects as well as discussion board and chat room writing within online courses. As I continue my teaching and research in composition studies, I will remain committed to developing and to implementing RDP methods that encourage students to

have an increased sense of ownership of the class, an increased sense of responsibility for their work, and an emotional involvement in their work in addition to a cognitive one because I have seen how this kind of pedagogy functions to improve student motivation, the quality of student work, and the meaning that students' work has for them.

APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGY OF ROGERS' MAJOR WORKS AND THEIR  
ABBREVIATIONS

- Rogers, Carl R. *Measuring Personality Adjustment in Children Nine to Thirteen Years of Age*. New York: Teachers College, 1931. *MPAC*
- , *The Clinical Treatment of the Problem Child*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1939. *CTPC*
- , *Counseling and Psychotherapy: New Concepts in Practice*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1942. *CP*
- , *Counseling With Returned Servicemen*. Washington, DC: United Services Organization, 1945. *CWRS*
- , *Client-Centered Therapy: Its Current Practices, Implications, and Theory*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1951. *CCT*
- , and Rosalind F. Dymond, eds. *Psychotherapy and Personality Change*. Chicago: University Press, 1954. *PPC*
- , *On Becoming A Person*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961. *OBP*
- , et al. *The Therapeutic Relationship and Its Impact: A Study of Psychotherapy with Schizophrenics*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967. *TRII*
- , and B. Stevens. *The Problem with Being Human*. Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1968. *PBH*
- , and W. Coulson, eds. *Man and The Science of Man*. Columbus, Ohio. Charles Merrill, 1968. *MSM*
- , *Freedom to Learn: A View of What Education Might Become*. Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1969. *FL69*
- , *On Encounter Groups*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970. *OEG*

---, *Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives*. New York: Delacorte Press,

1972. *BP*

---, *On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact*. New York:

Delacorte Press, 1977. *OPP*

---, *A Way of Being*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980. *WB*

---, *Freedom to Learn in the 80s*. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill, 1983. *FL80*

## APPENDIX B

### ROGERS' THEORY OF PERSONALITY

- I. Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the center.
- II. The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is, for the individual, “reality.”
- III. The organism reacts as an organized whole to this phenomenal field.
- IV. The organism has one basic tendency and striving—to actualize, maintain, and enhance the experiencing organism.
- V. Behavior is basically the goal directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.
- VI. Emotion accompanies and in general facilitates such goal-directed behavior, the kind of emotion being related to the seeking versus the consummatory aspects of the behavior, and the intensity of the emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behavior for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.
- VII. The best vantage point for understanding behavior is from the internal frame of reference of the individual himself.
- VIII. A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.
- IX. As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of self is formed—an organized, fluid, but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of

characteristics and relationships of the “I” or the “me,” together with values attached to these concepts.

- X. The values attached to experiences, and the values which are a part of the self structure, in some instances are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values introjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly.
- XI. As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either (a) symbolized, perceived, and organized into some relationship to the self, (b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self-structure, (c) denied symbolization or given a distorted symbolization because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.
- XII. Most of the ways of behaving which are adopted by the organism are those which are consistent with the concept of self.
- XIII. Behavior may, in some instances, be brought about by organic experiences and needs which have not been symbolized. Such behavior may be inconsistent with the structure of the self, but in such instances the behavior is not “owned” by the individual.
- XIV. Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies to awareness significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self-structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension.

- XV. Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.
- XVI. Any experience which is inconsistent with the organization or structure of self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self-structure is organized to maintain itself.
- XVII. Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of any threat to the self-structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived, and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences.
- XVIII. When the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals.
- XIX. As the individual perceives and accepts into his self-structure more of his organic experiences, he finds that he is replacing his present value system—based so largely upon introjections which have been distortedly symbolized—with a continuing organismic valuing process.

APPENDIX C

A SERVICE-LEARNING, COMPOSITION CLASS SYLLABUS

# English 1302 Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing II

## Course Requirements

Fall 2006

Section 022, 11:00-12:20 RH 311B

Section 024, 12:30-1:50 RH 311B

### Texts and Materials

Wood, Nancy V. *Perspectives on Argument*. 5th edition

A handbook of your choice

A dictionary of your choice

A jump drive

### Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to sharpen your ability to read critically, to think critically, and to express your opinions in writing and in discussion about subjects that are still at issue. The emphasis is on argument as it functions in a democratic society. In 1302, you will learn to understand and to participate in argument, and since argument occurs everywhere, the material you learn in this course will be useful to you on the job, at home, at school, and in a variety of other private and public spheres. You will publish your work in an electronic portfolio, or a webfolio, on your own student website, which you will develop using Microsoft FrontPage. In addition to FrontPage, you will learn how to use Microsoft PowerPoint in order to compose a presentation at the end of the term. You may also gain experience using Microsoft Publisher to complete a service-learning project.

This class contains a service-learning component, which will provide you with a real rhetorical situation for your writing. You will write with purpose for a real audience and provide a service to the community at the same time. You will also gain solid writing experience that you can include on your resume. Some examples of service-learning writing projects include designing brochures, creating fliers, designing web pages, writing press releases, applying for grants, or creating PowerPoint presentations. You will contact the agency of your choice to arrange your own community service writing project. If you do not wish to participate in the service-learning component of the course, you can complete an alternate persuasive writing project, and it will not adversely affect your grade.

### Course Policies

**Requirements:** You will be required to complete all writing assignments that you will submit in an online portfolio, a webfolio, and you must also attend one mandatory conference.

**Conference:** I will require at least one conference with each of you, and you will sign-up for this later in the term. The conference will last about 15 minutes, and it will take place before you submit your final webfolio. During your conference, you must be able to explain to me how you plan to revise your papers before you submit them in the final webfolio. I am available for additional conferences by appointment.

**The Webfolio** is a portfolio of your work that you will publish on your own website, which you will create using Microsoft Front Page. This type of assessment gives you an opportunity to revise your work before you submit it for a grade at the end of the term. You will receive feedback from your peers and from me, which you will use to guide you during your process of revision. I believe that we learn the most about how to improve our writing by revising it, and with webfolio assessment I can coach you on an individual level to help you do this. You will not receive a grade on your writing until the end of the term, but because you will get plenty of feedback on your writing, you will probably be well aware of your progress throughout the semester. If at any time you are uncertain about your progress, please speak to me about this.

Your final Webfolio must include the following items:

- The annotated bibliography of seven sources
- The exploratory paper
- The community service writing project or alternate writing project and a copy of the email confirming its electronic submission.
- The Rogerian rhetoric project
- The position paper
- The Toulmin analysis project

In addition to the Webfolio, you must complete the following:

- An introduction to the portfolio (You will complete this in-class writing at the time you submit your portfolio)
- A self-evaluation of your portfolio

**Reading Quizzes:** You will take very informal quizzes over all assigned reading material. If you read closely, you should do well on these. I give quizzes to encourage you to complete the reading assignments, and the questions on these quizzes concern main ideas from your reading assignments. Unless you have extenuating circumstances, I will not allow students to make up missed quizzes; however, I do drop the lowest quiz grade before averaging the rest.

**Grades:** To pass the course and earn three credit hours, you must complete all assignments. Your course grade will be determined as follows:

- Portfolio 60%
- Quizzes 15%

- Presentations (one PowerPoint and one oral) 15%
- Participation in group work (in collaborative writing project and in several peer writing review groups) 10%

Your final grade will be A, B, C, Z, or F. The English Department does not assign the grade of D for first year English. If you complete all of the course work but have a final average below C, you will be given a Z (which has no effect on your GPA) and allowed to repeat the course for credit. If you do not complete all of the course work and do not drop the course before the last drop date you will receive an F.

The Z Grade: The Z grade is reserved for those students who turn in their work in a timely manner and participate in the class, but whose grades are still below passing. The "Z" grade means that you must repeat the course. It does not affect your overall GPA. An "F" is given to a student only if he or she does not complete the course requirements.

Save all of the work you have completed in this class until you receive your final grade from the university.

## Class Schedule Fall 2006

### Week 1

T 8/29 Introduction to the course. WebCT activity.

TH 8/31 Read: *Perspectives on Argument* Chapter 1; In class: Assign issue proposal, an in-class writing

### Week 2

T 9/5 Meet in the Central Library rm. B20: Avoiding Plagiarism. Gretchen Trkay

TH 9/7 Read: *Perspectives on Argument* Chapter 2  
In class: Quiz over Chapters 1 and 2; Write the issue proposal.

### Week 3

T 9/12 In class: Begin work on service writing projects within collaborative learning groups.

TH 9/14 Read: POA Chapter 3  
In class: Quiz over chapter 3; Assign Annotated bibliography; Discuss the rhetorical situation

### Week 4

T 9/19 Read: Chapter 4  
In Class: Quiz over this chapter. Exploratory paper assigned.

TH 9/21 Meet in the Central Library rm. B20: Researching Your Topic. Gretchen Trkay

### Week 5

T 9/26 In class: Work on the exploratory paper and the annotated bibliography

TH 9/28 Due: Peer Group draft of exploratory paper and annotated bibliography.

### Week 6

T 10/3 Read: Chapter 5  
In class: Discuss Toulmin analysis; Assign Toulmin analysis projects  
Due: Exploratory Paper and Annotated Bibliography

Quiz over this chapter.

TH 10/5      Due: Toulmin analysis projects  
In class: Presentations of Toulmin analysis projects

**Week 7**

T 10/10      Read: Chapters 6, 7 and 8  
In class: Quiz over these chapters.

TH 10/12     Read: Chapters 10, 11 and 12  
In class: Quiz over these chapters. Assign Position paper.

**Week 8**

T 10/17      In class: Writing Workshop for position papers and/or service projects

TH 10/19     Due: Peer Group Draft of the Position paper.  
In class: Peer group review of the position paper.

**Week 9**

T 10/24      Due: Position paper.

TH 10/26     Read: Chapter 9  
In class: Rogerian rhetoric project assigned

**Week 10**

T 10/31      Due: Peer group draft of the Rogerian rhetoric project.

TH 11/2      Due: Rogerian rhetoric project.

**Week 11**

T 11/7        Due: Peer review draft of the service-writing project

TH 11/9      In class: conferences and writing workshop; focus on revision.

**Week 12**

T 11/14      In class: conferences and writing workshop; focus on revision. Service-projects must be submitted electronically to service partners by today!!!

TH 11/16     Due: Final Webfolio.  
In class: Write the introduction to the portfolio.

**Week 13**

T 11/21 In class: Prepare for the debate. Assign Powerpoint presentations.

TH 11/23 No Class. Thanksgiving Break

**Week 14**

T 11/28 In class: Debate

TH 11/30 In class: Powerpoint presentations

**Week 15**

T 12/5 In class: Powerpoint presentations

TH 12/7 Feedback on Webfolios returned.

APPENDIX D

WRITING PROMPT FOR STUDENT REFLECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION

### Reflective Writing and Self-Evaluation

If you give your consent, I will use your responses for my research involving the effectiveness of certain teaching methods, specifically service learning and Rogerian pedagogy. If I discuss your specific responses in my dissertation, or in future publications such as journal articles or books, I will make certain that your identity will not be revealed.

I do / do not give my consent for my responses to the following questions to be used for research purposes

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part I Service-Learning Project/Optional Project

1. Describe your service project or your optional project. If you worked collaboratively, describe how you contributed to the project.
2. If you worked collaboratively, what did you learn from this experience?
3. What were the challenges of working collaboratively?
4. What were the benefits of working collaboratively?
5. Please describe in as much detail as possible what you learned from working on this service-learning/optional project.
6. Do you feel that you had the authority to direct your own service-learning/optional project? What effect, if any, did your autonomy or your ability to direct your own project have on your learning? What kinds of emotional responses did you have to this experience?
7. Has your thinking about a specific social issues(s) changed as a result of your service/optional project, and if so, how has it changed?
8. What difficulties did you experience while completing this project?
9. What were the benefits and successes of participating in this service-learning/optional project.
10. Would you be interested in taking another service-learning course in the future?
11. Do you think you might do service work or volunteer work in the future?

#### Part II Student-Directed Learning

1. Describe in as much detail as possible what you thought about the amount of autonomy/authority you had in this class. What did you think about being involved in the decision-making process regarding course policies, reading assignments, writing assignments, due dates, etc. Did you learn from this experience? If so, what did you learn?

2. Has this experience affected the way you conceive your role as student? If so, how?
3. What kinds of emotional responses did you have to your student-directed learning? Did you feel disoriented? Liberated? To what degree, if any, did this kind of pedagogy contribute to your sense of personal “ownership” of or “investment” in the success of the course?
4. Do you think that this kind of classroom pedagogy is common at UTA? Do you think it should be common, or even could be common?
5. Describe your experience of participating in the evaluation process of your own work as well as the work of other students. Did you learn from this experience? If so, what did you learn?
6. Has your thinking about this type of learning environment changed throughout the semester? If so, please describe your initial impressions of being a participant in this type of learning environment, and also describe how your thoughts may have changed about it throughout the course.

### Part III. Self-Evaluation

1. How have you utilized your opportunity to revise your work this semester? What specific changes did you make to each of your projects/assignments?
2. How has your writing changed over the course of the semester? Has it improved? If so, in what way(s)?
3. Has your thinking about what it means to be a “writer” changed over the course of the semester? If so, how has it changed?
4. What are the strengths of your portfolio?
5. What are the weaknesses of your portfolio?
6. What would you do to improve your portfolio if you had the time?
7. Have you have met the minimum requirements of the assignments in this portfolio?
8. Have you exceeded the minimum requirements for any of the assignments included in the portfolio?
9. What grade do you think your portfolio deserves, and why do you think you deserve that grade?
10. To what extent, if any, should “effort” be factored into your grade? If you believe effort should be factored into your grade, how do you think your effort is made evident in your work? How would you go about assessing your effort?
11. What grade do you think you deserve for your participation in the class, including your participation in class discussion, peer review of projects, peer evaluation, and by your class attendance in general. Why do you think you deserve this grade?
12. What grade do you think you deserve for your presentation, and why do you think you deserve this grade?

13. Calculate your grade. If the portfolio is worth 80% of your grade, participation is worth 10%, and the presentation is worth 10% of your grade, what grade do you feel you deserve for the course? (A=4, B=3, C=2, Z=1, F=0. Multiply your portfolio grade by .80. Multiply your participation grade by .10. Multiply your presentation grade by .10. Add those three numbers together. )
14. Do you agree with the weighting of the grades, so that the portfolio is worth 80%, participation is worth 10%, and the presentation is worth 10%? If so, why? If not, what changes would you make to the weighting, and why would you make those changes?

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