CARLOW ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

CARLOW ROUNDTABLE 2009 PROCEEDINGS

Contents

Preface

MARY C. ROTHENBERGER, EdD, CARLOW UNIVERSITY

Carlow University, the first Catholic, women–centered, liberal arts university in Pennsylvania, prepares their primarily female student population for competent leadership and compassionate service in personal and professional life. Carlow University is sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas through the Conference for Mercy Higher Education. This conference comprises Mercy-sponsored colleges and universities, and was created for "the preservation and development of the core Catholic identity and mission of Mercy higher education in accord with the spirit, mission, and heritage of the sisters of Mercy." (CMHE Mission Statement)

The Carlow University Roundtable was conceived in May of 2007 as an opportunity for collaboration and collegial exchange among Mercy institutions. Although each Mercy institutions has its own culture, every Mercy institution shares the same heritage. In 2009, we embarked on our third Roundtable journey for a tour of the Holy Wells of Ireland, long known as sacred sources of wisdom and wellness. The theme was teaching in Mercy mission-centered institutions. Inspired by the wisdom of the wells, we drew from the waters of our common knowledge and explored how our heritage influences how and what we teach in these institutions of higher learning. Selected abstracts from these proceedings are the basis of this publication. The writings reflect an exchange of ideas, information, and methodologies among scholars from diverse disciplines and research backgrounds who hold a common interest in Mercy education.

Mary C. Rothenberger, EdD
Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School
Carlow University

Introduction

SISTER SHEILA CARNEY, RSM, CARLOW UNIVERSITY

WELL UP IN US, MERCY OF GOD!

In Celtic spirituality the number three is of primary significance. Every prayer centers on an invocation of our Creator, Redeemer and Spirit—the Trinity at the center of our faith. Long regarded as a mystical number three represents wholeness. Also at the center of Celtic spirituality is the tradition of praying at holy wells—some three thousand of which can be found in fields and mountains and at crossroads in and around the cities and towns of Ireland. Long regarded as places of healing and wholeness, the wells draw pilgrims seeking cure from a particular ailment or the return of a sense of wellness. At the third Carlow Roundtable participants not only pursued a deeper understanding of our common Mercy tradition and its influence on our ministry of higher education, but travelled as pilgrims to visit these revered sites. "Well up in us, mercy of God" was the mantra that we sang over and over as we made our way.

The Roundtable began in County Sligo at the Innisfree International College and Conference Centre overlooking Lough Gill. Here participants heard a presentation on the history of the holy wells to set the stage for the week ahead. Academic presentations included teaching honors courses, student engagement in mathematics, how to build a learning community, and a service learning project involving occupational therapy. Marie Martin, adjunct faculty at Carlow University from Omagh, Northern Ireland, who had keynoted the Roundtable two years previously, returned to share in a presentation about using technology to create international relationships for students with significant disabilities. While in Sligo, participants visited Tobernault—perhaps the most famous of Ireland's holy wells. This well is named for St. Patrick who, according to legend, used its water to baptize converts.

On the third day, participants set out on a pilgrimage to visit wells at Ballintubber Abbey in County Mayo, the monastic settlement at Clonmacnoise in County Offaly and Omey Island off the coast of Galway. Here, accompanied by a local archeologist, participants enjoyed a presentation on the ancient history of the island before visiting its well.

The next stop was Avoca where the final presentation of the Roundtable was given by Marie Martin, who reprised her 2008 reflections on learning as wandering. Glendalough, a monastic settlement in County Wicklow, is best known for its twin lakes. Just off one of the many pathways through its woodlands is a small well which participants visited during their rambles.

The last day of the pilgrimage brought us to Mercy International Centre. While there is no true well on the grounds, the rill which runs through the garden has become sacred to the Mercy family as through it run waters from every country where Sisters of Mercy minister. The visit to the Centre and to the rill brought pilgrims to the heart of our Mercy heritage.

Part of the ritual visit to a holy well is leaving behind a symbol of the prayers offered. Often this is a piece of cloth, tied to a nearby tree. Participants tied ribbons in their school colors to trees all over Ireland as witness to their presence in these holy places and to their hopes left behind. One prayer

offered at each well was for the ministry of Mercy higher education, for our fidelity to our heritage, for a faithful re-interpretation of its meaning in our current environment. The papers which follow offer testimony to the efforts of faculty in our colleges and universities to infuse their teaching with the values inherent in a Mercy education. We offer them as witness to the faithful work being done and as incentive for future efforts to bring the mercy of God to life in our institutions of higher learning.

Well up in us, Mercy of God!

Ethics across the Curriculum, on Being Bilingual

LOIS EVELETH, PHD, SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY

Can virtue be taught? What is virtue? And which of these two questions should we answer first? These questions are at least as old as Socrates who rejected the ancient notion of fate and raised questions about individual virtues, about the virtuous life, about education, about the just society, and much more that we now incorporate under the label *Ethics*. His search for answers emerged from the postwar malaise of Athens' defeat at the hands of Sparta in the Peloponnesian War and was thus a timely quest of the fifth century B.C.E. Nonetheless, his questions continue to beguile and compel us to work out plausible, even reasonable answers. The perennial interest in questions of vice and virtue, good and bad, right and wrong thus make them timeless for us as well as timely for Socrates.

The concept of ethics was further developed in the dialogues of Plato, a student and protégé of Socrates, and reached its first great milestone in the texts of Aristotle, whose Nicomachean Ethics is believed to be Western civilization's first book in ethics. Like Socrates and Plato before him, Aristotle holds that ethics is central to living well, or being excellent. Indeed, the Greek word for virtue was *arête*, which means *excellence*. Ethics is an eminently practical project, because humans must learn how to live well if they hope to live well.

Ethics was already hundreds of years old when Christianity emerged to offer an alternative view of human life and destiny. Belief in a Creator-God, in a life after death, in the brotherhood of all persons: such basic beliefs could not help but make a difference. Classical ethics based its principles on a philosophy of the person, a being not seen as created and loved by a God, a being not meant for a heaven. There was no Living Word in philosophical ethics, no incarnate God, no divine revelation, no theology, and no magisterium. It is safe to say that the two systems were, and still are, discontinuous. The two traditions have developed over two thousand years along separate paths; one, with a secular pedigree, the other, emerging from a deposit of religious faith and belief.

A useful analogy with which to put these two traditions to work is language: philosophical and religious ethics are like two languages. They are two conceptual-linguistic frameworks for understanding right and wrong, for improving human life, or for addressing any and all moral questions that come up in human experience. As with two languages, we want both to prosper; both are valuable. Our task is to bring them together so that they can jointly expand and enhance our moral horizons.

The task that has brought us to the Carlow Roundtable this year, viz. pedagogy in Mercy colleges and universities, is one that inspires me to examine both the secular and the religious traditions of moral thinking, or, more specifically, philosophical and Catholic morality. The examination is not to be scholarship alone, pursued for its own sake; rather, it is scholarship with pedagogical needs in view. I do not need to argue for the desirability of moral thinking, or for its place in an undergraduate curriculum; I assume this desirability. Furthermore, I believe that today's moral challenges are such that one or two courses, whether in philosophy or in religion departments, are not up to the task of providing our students with the intellectual and ethical wherewithal to address such challenges. I ask you, then, to consider with me the possibility of a large and cohesive vision of

ethics, i.e. ethics across the curriculum. If philosophical ethics is one language and Catholic ethics is another, then let us envision the possibility of our graduates being bilingual, i.e. being able to think, analyze, and reason moral challenges in both traditions; being able to move back and forth, as needed, in and between both traditions; being able to reason in both a secular setting and in a Catholic setting, as does a person speaking two languages with native fluency. This is an ambitious task, one that, to my knowledge, has never been done before. But the needs are great; *the field is white for the harvest*, and workers are needed. Such a project is not the work of a single person or of a single day, but let us today begin considering, in a preliminary way, what may be possible.

My approach begins with a survey of philosophical ethics. I will then outline some key differences between philosophical and religious ethics and propose workable pedagogy that is built upon the productive amalgamation of both traditions.

Consider moral thinking in its most general sense. Moral thinking has developed along two paths: philosophical ethics (rooted in the secular), and Christian ethics (grounded in faith). Philosophical ethics is descriptive when it investigates, as objectively as possible, the real ethical decisions made by individuals and groups, thus discovering what the actual issues are at this time and in this place, as well as how people have resolved their questions. By identifying a descriptive area, we can include areas of sociology, anthropology, and any other courses or programs that examine the actual practices of societies or groups. These will offer a spectrum of moral choices and traditions; topics such as pluralism, multiculturalism, toleration, group responsibility, and relativism would be appropriate and desirable. The social sciences are preeminent in such discoveries, especially anthropology, which introduces us to cultures other than our own. The descriptive option also includes metaethics, the branch of ethics that surveys and examines the language used by ethicians and includes elements of semantics and rhetoric. Included too is evaluation of the reasoning processes, logic, or deliberation by various writers and source material.

The prescriptive option opens up the whole area of what is traditionally known as ethics. Most of philosophical ethics is prescriptive in nature. Intuitionism and emotivism are prescriptive, but the most influential area, historically, has been normative ethics. Normative ethics is a set of theories, each of which provides its own vocabulary, assumptions, view of the person, guiding principles, and patterns of deliberation. There are three points of focus around which a normative theory is established: the action itself, the intention of the agent, and the consequences of the action. Every theory tries to deal with these three points of analysis, but each theory eventually emphasizes one point more than others. For example, the three varieties of consequentialism argue that the consequences of an action are the primary determinant of the goodness of an action; deontologism, on the other hand, denies that role to consequences and emphasizes instead the good will of the agent.

The traditions, schools, and literature of philosophical ethics are rich and complex, and the theories, concepts, vocabulary, and unique reasoning processes of philosophical ethics are increasingly reflected and explored in contemporary society and culture. The growing field of applied ethics has two subdivisions. One type examines specific issues, e.g. abortion, animal rights, bioethics, the death penalty, environment, euthanasia, gender issues, immigration, justice, racism and toleration, roboethics, technology, terrorism, and war. The second subdivision, professional ethics, develops, examines, and applies principles and codes of behavior appropriate to individual professions, e.g. business ethics, engineering ethics, and medical ethics.

Distinct from philosophical ethics, the ethics of Catholicism has a different grounding and dynamic. Religious ethics exists within a religious tradition, emerging from the creeds or beliefs of this tradition. Religious ethics assumes religious faith and commitment on the part of the believers and in turn helps to shape their faith and commitment. What gives religious ethics its authority is ultimately the goodness of God, the Sacred, the Divine, or the Transcendent, however God is imagined and with whatever means of revelation the tradition is formed. Our Catholic tradition is especially complex and rich. In the early centuries, a small number of intellectuals whom we now call *Fathers of the Church* selected philosophical concepts and reasoning processes with which to intellectualize the faith as found in the Bible and as understood and accepted by the early church. Their achievements established Catholic theology. Through the centuries church authority has funneled this broad range of moral theologizing and opinion into an official pedagogy, called a *magisterium*. Accordingly, Catholic morality is one part of a highly-institutionalized religious tradition; its concepts, principles, and patterns of reasoning are defined by institutional authority in areas of faith and morals.

The differences between the two traditions are far too many for my work today. Still, several contrasts stand out.

Each school of philosophical ethics is grounded in a philosophy of the person, and, within this understanding of the person, the goal or meaning of life is inferred. Such a goal becomes a criterion against which to evaluate actions of the agent as either good or bad. Catholic moral theology is grounded in faith in an absolute, a transcendent, a divine, or god, and this faith is shaped by, or articulated in, a conceptual-linguistic framework of beliefs. The whole collection of beliefs originates in, or is derived from, scripture; but what constitutes scripture, and what these scriptures mean, are decided by church authority. A person has a special relationship with God, who is his creator and the center of his life. The life of a person is to know and love God. God, understood as infinite goodness, is the ultimate authority for any definition of human actions, moral, immoral, or amoral. Thus, the two systems differ in their grounding (philosophy of a person/faith); in their goals or rewards (wisdom or happiness/God); and in their respective definitions of good (what is reasonable/what approximates God).

While there are more than three differences, this outline is adequate to hint at the vastness of the project that I am asking you to envision with me. As academicians, we can be expected to focus our efforts on a curriculum, for designing curricula and teaching classes are what we do. So, if we are to consider this task at all, the arena of our efforts will be the curriculum. Curricula emerge, after great effort, from basic sources, such as academic requirements and traditions, professional needs, and the mission of the university. All of these are eminently sympathetic to "Ethics across the curriculum," and so the real challenge has to be willingness and a creativity to re-see and re-invent what we already do, in order to achieve a comprehensive framework. Or, to borrow an apt phrase, "to see the forest as well as the trees."

Here are some sample action steps for consideration:

1. Affirm the mission of the university.
2. Examine the concept *moral thinking* in broad-based discussion. Work for a consensus as to the interpretation of the concept.
3. Establish moral thinking as a necessary condition for living the mission of the university.

4. Conduct an inventory of existing resources, especially faculty.
5. Assemble a "wish list."
   For example: 3 credit courses; 1 credit courses; panel discussions; conferences; guest lecturers; film series.
6. Establish regular colloquia for ongoing renewal and oversight.
   Sample tasks: adding new components/resources; recognizing and/or identifying interconnections among the components; updating and keeping pace with emerging issues.

What will take the most effort and time, I predict, is making the interconnections between the two *languages*. We have all experienced the task of translating one language into another. We have all wavered, in the beginning, between translating the words literally, on the one hand, and translating the meanings, on the other. Even within one language there are nuances of differences. For instance, I have noticed for some time now that my students never say "You're welcome;" it's always "No problem." "No problem" bears some comparison to the Spanish "De nada" but is very unlike the Irish expression for *thank you*, viz. "May goodness be returned to you." My students and the Spanish minimize the significance of their deed, while the Irish move into a subjunctive realm of blessing. Should we undertake the task of creating a cohesive vision of ethics across the curriculum, we will probably find that the two traditions are incommensurable in places. For instance, for a philosopher, wisdom or happiness will be the goal or meaningfulness of human life, while, to a Catholic, God alone is this goal or meaningfulness. Ideally, our graduates should see key differences such as this and be at home in both traditions. They should know how to reason in both secular and religious terms, know when both may be appropriate, and know when to employ both systems. The philosophically minded may search for wisdom and happiness, but there are no guarantees that they will achieve such goals or find their lives enriched and made meaningful thereby. It may turn out, then, that virtue is its own reward; but one may take comfort in seeing himself as a person of virtue. Our two "languages" are not incommensurable completely, however. In both traditions humans are free to deliberate and to make choices accordingly. They may choose the good or the bad, the right or the wrong; and they are responsible in either case. Decisions affect not only external states of affairs but affect the agent as well; all of our decisions affect us. For instance, Socrates, in the *Apology*, "It is better to suffer wrong than to do it." Compare this to St. Paul in *Romans* 3:8: "Or why may we not do evil that good may come of it? This is the very thing that some slanderously accuse us of teaching; but they will get what they deserve." Both are saying that we may never do evil, even for the sake of good, not only because we may bring about bad consequences but because we, as agents, may ourselves be degraded by our choices.

Through the centuries both kinds of moral thinking have evolved. One in particular holds special interest for those of us committed to Mercy colleges and universities, viz. the unique rendering of the Catholic tradition as achieved by Catherine McAuley. Hers was a translation that posited mercy and justice as the locus of asceticism and service. However, those who have embraced her legacy in higher education know well the challenges posed by currents of secularism, postmodernism, and even antipathy toward organized religion. These trends make the distinction between secular and Catholic moral thinking necessary; each must be embraced, and some intersection should be sought. If virtue is to be taught or "caught" in undergraduate education a new approach, even a new methodology, would seem to be in order. Athens did not answer the famous question raised first by Socrates (*Can virtue be taught?*). But maybe Athens and Jerusalem together can do so.

Discovering the Wells of Mercy in "Medieval Life and Thought," an Honors Course at Gwynedd-Mercy College

CAROL BRESLIN, PHD AND EDWARD J. MILLER, PHD, GWYNEDD-MERCY COLLEGE

Those of us who have chosen to teach at colleges founded by the Sisters of Mercy are from time to time invited to reflect on the Catholic and Mercy heritages that should underline our work. We are also called to respond to what has been identified as the "persistent question" for us at these colleges: "How do we know we are faithful?" (Stevens 1) As the two of us prepared to participate in the 2009 Carlow Roundtable in Ireland, where we would gather with colleagues from other Mercy institutions, this question served as a lens through which to view our own teaching experiences. All participants were to describe how our work is influenced by the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy, who sponsor 17 colleges and universities in the United States. Particularly inspirational for the two of us was the conference theme of "The Holy Wells of Ireland" that was to shape the movement of the conference, both geographically and intellectually.

Who are the two of us? Carol Breslin is director of the Honors Program and professor of English at Gwynedd–Mercy College, with particular expertise in medieval literature. Ed Miller is professor of religious studies at Gwynedd-Mercy College, with special interests in medieval philosophers and theologians. Over a decade ago, we teamed to teach the "Medieval Life and Thought" honors course. In terms of our Mercy heritage experience, Carol has taught at Gwynedd for over 40 years. Ed has been in college education equally long, the last 17 years at Gwynedd.

As we attempted to describe the particularities of our course and to offer insights on the merits and requirements of successful team teaching in preparation for Carlow Roundtable 2009, we discovered that our course, at least in the manner we team teach it, already reflected a fidelity to Mercy values even though we never intentionally designed it that way. As if looking into a well to grab a reflection, we pondered our teaching strategies and perceived Mercy principles springing to our eyes. Our years at Gwynedd seemed, in a silent and unstructured manner, to have socialized the two of us into inculcating those Mercy values that the "persistent question" evoked.

"Medieval Life and Thought: Voices from the Middle Ages" is an interdisciplinary, team–taught honors course. It is the second in a sequence of six courses that constitute the Honors Program, a series of enriched liberal arts courses developing the theme of "The Quest for Community and Freedom: the Individual and Society."[1] Our class focuses on texts representing the voices of several important figures, voices that tell the story of their times, shaping the period known as the Middle Ages while making a lasting impact on Western culture.[2] Here you will find represented the great St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo and Father of the Church, and Boethius, consul of Rome and author of the influential *Consolation of Philosophy*, along with Anselm, Aquinas, Chaucer, voices of Islam, and monasticism and those of several remarkable medieval women. These voices constitute the very important *well* of texts upon which we draw as we work in this course. Discussing and interpreting these texts with our students reveals how consonant these voices are with the essential Mercy characteristics described in *Culture and Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education*. But before we examine those essentials, we need to back up and reflect for a moment as the above Assumption #1 regarding those who staff Catholic/Mercy institutions now and in the future:

> Mercy Colleges/Universities will be sustained into the future in the
> Catholic tradition and the legacy of Mercy by dedicated men and women
> who have been resourced in the legacy of Catherine McAuley and the
> Sisters of Mercy who demonstrate Catholic belief and practice in their
> personal and professional lives. (Stevens 1)

We have had much experience as students and teachers in Catholic institutions and have interacted closely with several Sisters of Mercy over a long period, absorbing as if by osmosis their spirit and orientation. It has been our joy to share our experience of faith and the Mercy charism with our students. This we do not do in any proselytizing manner, but in being ourselves as scholars and teachers. Our personal faith emerges naturally and unabashedly. Medieval texts on morality, prayer, scripture, pilgrimage, salvation, the existence of God, and monasticism, found in the writings of Augustine, Julian of Norwich, Abelard and Heloise, Aquinas, and others, often lead to rich discussions that clarify and examine issues in light of personal experience and faith, even struggling faith, as is often the case with students. In our class, we seek to enter into the experience of the medieval mind's "faith seeking understanding," and very often we discover something about our own faith lives in doing so. Such exercises respond directly to the directive offered by *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* that Catholic education carry on "a continuing reflection in the light of the Catholic faith upon the growing treasury of human knowledge" (Stevens 2).

Ex Corde also serves as the source of four characteristics that are said to "provide the essential foundations for an institution to consider itself Mercy" (Stevens 2). They are:

1. Regard for the dignity of the person
2. Academic Excellence and Life-Long Learning
3. Education of the whole person: body, mind, spirit
4. Compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children (Stevens 3).

Our course addresses each of these features through its program of readings and in its classroom environment of respectful dialogue. Apropos characteristic three, course readings and seminar discussions treat those fundamental questions that infiltrate body, mind, and spirit without distinction: What is the nature of evil and is there any remedy (St. Augustine)? What is the nature of the good that will satisfy the longings of the heart even in the throes of suffering (Boethius)? What is the nature of love, and is it truly free or fated (Chaucer, Hrotsvit)? Does praying really work (Aquinas)? Most students have a thirst for these matters. With the right kind of teaching and conversation, we have discovered that this Mercy value is a well, so to speak, for contemporary students not unlike the woman-at-the well story in the Gospel of John.

The rule of the Sisters of Mercy, which interprets the vision of Catherine McAuley, calls the Sisters to "…the most assiduous application to the Education of poor girls…and the protection of poor Women of good character."[3] The curriculum adopted for "Medieval Life and Thought" offers students numerous opportunities to examine the lives and concerns of medieval women and to experience vicariously the struggles of several women writers to raise their status in a society that regarded women as inferior, unworthy of education, and powerless over their lives. Over half of the course is devoted to the writings of medieval women like Hrotsvith of Gandersheim, Marie de France, Julian of Norwich, Christine de Pisan, and Heloise, all of whom create or project strong, intelligent, creative female personalities for whom education has been critically important.

Hrotsvith of Gandersheim was a tenth-century Benedictine canoness sent to the royal monastery at Gandersheim by her family. Educated in the Latin classics, she probably knew the works of Ovid, Horace, Terence, Boethius and others. Author of several plays, legends, and epics (all in Latin), she is memorable for her female characters—holy virgins and martyrs—whose behavior in very challenging situations purposefully emulates the nobility, courage, and prowess in battle of great epic heroes.

Christine de Pisan, late fourteenth-century writer at the French court of Charles VI, also champions the virtues and talents of women, insisting that they are worthy of an education comparable to that given to their male contemporaries. In *The Book of the City of Ladies*, a work intended to counteract the stereotypical portrayal of women in the romance literature of her day, Christine describes a city of educated, talented ladies who have contributed to the building of civilization and culture.

In her famous *Shewings*, the fourteenth-century mystic and anchoress Julian of Norwich asserts the feminine in the divine, creating a maternal image of God that illuminates the mystery of the incarnation, forgiveness of sin, and the nature of prayer. Having an orientation that is more worldly than Julian's, Marie de France writes lais and fables in which bold, aggressive women seek equality and power in their relationships with men. Most impressive of all the women we study is Heloise, able and passionate partner and correspondent to Abelard, one of the greatest philosophical minds of the twelfth century. Thus we see the fourth characteristic, mentioned above, of Mercy underpinnings manifested in our teaching.

As our students listen to and reflect on the many medieval voices that are heard in our course, we are eager for them to add their own voices to the conversation, and we employ several strategies to facilitate this. Classes are conducted seminar style. With fewer students per class we can arrange ourselves in a circle, which allows for more intimate and productive conversation. We further encourage dialogue by accompanying each reading of a primary text with some sort of writing or discussion prompt. One prompt that we have used focuses on the topic of monasticism and arises quite naturally out of our reading of the "Letters of Direction" exchanged between Heloise and Abelard. Students are asked to respond to the following question: Can you see yourself as a monastic, embracing a life of prayer, study, and work? Their answers usually bring to the surface very important aspects of this form of spirituality and generate revealing insights regarding medieval and contemporary tastes. Another strategy that we employ to encourage lively dialogue in our classes is to model such dialogue ourselves. As team teachers, we are both present for all classes. Although we alternate primary responsibility for leading each class, both of us read and prepare all assigned texts and participate fully in each class, respectfully and carefully inserting comments, questions, and clarifications as appropriate. Student evaluations indicate that this is an aspect of our team teaching that they find most enjoyable and instructive.

Student voices also shape our course through writing. All of the courses in the Honors Program are writing intensive. Students in these courses do the standard kinds of writing, including short response papers and longer research papers. But several courses, including "Medieval Life and Thought," make use of alternative forms of writing like journals and letters. Students in "Medieval Life and Thought" are required to write six letters throughout the term, at intervals of 10 days or so. Letters are usually addressed to the instructors and students are invited to engage current readings and discussions in whatever way they choose. They are told to make their letters as honest, lively, and personal as they like as long as they address the intellectual and emotional concerns of our readings and discussions. Both instructors read and respond briefly to each letter, commenting on

the content and writing. Errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling and such are noted by checks in the margin, and students must follow them by identifying and correcting errors when they submit their compiled letters at the end of the term. In addition to these initial brief responses, the instructors alternate in drafting a letter of response to the entire class. We use these responses to highlight student insights and creativity, clarify misconceptions, and address writing issues.[5] By mid-term we usually invite students to be more creative and adventurous in terms of the audience being addressed in their letters and in the voice of the letter writer. Accepting our invitation, many students adopt medieval personas and address their letters to some of the authors of our texts or to imaginary recipients. One popular persona is that of Astralabe, son of Heloise and Abelard, who is often given voice as a writer of a letter to his famous parents in which he forthrightly questions them about their tumultuous lives. At the end of the term, students must submit compiled letters, free of grammatical errors. The compilation is preceded by a page that introduces the letters to the reader and highlights important themes, and it is concluded by an afterward in which students reflect on what has been gained from the letter-writing project.[6] The instructors jointly evaluate, respond to, and grade the compilations, which count for one-third of the final grade.

This writing assignment has many advantages for both students and teachers. Most importantly, the letter writing seems to relieve some of the anxiety usually associated with writing. Students see writing letters as much less daunting than more formal kinds of writing. Free of anxiety, they speak in a more natural, authentic voice. Understanding and trusting that they are engaged in an ongoing exchange of letters evaluated holistically at the end of the term, they feel free to take risks and seem less concerned with writing what they believe their teachers expect. The result is creative, original thinking and writing, as well as the release of insight—the critical thinking that every teacher encourages in students. Additionally, the letter format has enticed, from time to time, a student's reflections on his or her personal spirituality in an appropriate and uncontrived manner, such being the natural consequence of the primary texts we employ. An added bonus is that these letters can be fun to write and read for both students and teachers, and they serve marvelously as springboards to discussion. We often have our students read passages from their letters as a way of beginning class.

In addition to the letter-writing project, our students also prepare a brief research project of seven to 10 pages. In it, students select a year during the Middle Ages and attempt to sketch out a picture of important developments that characterize that year around the world. Thinking globally, students get the sense that the Middle Ages is not just something that is limited to events in Western Europe. The original value governing this research project was to have students appreciate cultural diversity. It was cultural diversity as well that motivated us to put greater emphasis on Islam following the tragic events of 9/11. The appreciation of cultural diversity is, in fact, grounded in a deeper regard for the dignity of human persons. Once again, it was in the light of preparing for Carlow Roundtable 2009 that we came to notice an already-existing connection between cultural diversity and the first characteristic of Mercy education, "regard for the dignity of the person" in our course.

To the voices of our students and the diverse cultures represented in their research papers, we add our voices as team teachers. "Medieval Life and Thought" has been a genuine team effort from the beginning. We, the instructors, designed the course together, agreeing on topics and texts, choosing reading materials, and designing assignments in unison. Together we presented the course to our colleagues in the School of Arts and Sciences for scrutiny and approval. Each spring when the course is given, we are present and prepared for all class sessions. We read and respond to all writing and tests, confer to compare their assessments, and assign grades jointly.

Team teaching done well enriches the educational experience for students and teachers. Students get to see two individuals from different disciplines interact, disagree, compromise, and share feelings on a variety of issues. And they receive the added bonus of experiencing two different personalities and teaching styles. For faculty, team teaching offers opportunities to learn from an expert in a different field, to stretch and exercise mental muscles in new ways. It provides a deep well of colleagueship in which one can find welcome support for trying new and risky teaching strategies. There is always someone with whom to "reality check" or test new ideas, a colleague to keep one on track and on one's toes.

These features of team teaching cannot simply be summoned up on command. In our own Honors Program there have been some unsuccessful teams. Ours has been a success, and we have tried to deduce why. The basic answer is that the chemistry between the two of us is right. As prosaic and ambiguous as "having the right chemistry" sounds, it remains spot on. We are both interested in matters of the mind and matters of the spirit. We are not self-conscious in revealing what is in our hearts. It is common for professors to display their minds to students and each other; rarer, however, to reveal one's heart. Furthermore—and this sounds prosaic too—we like each other. As much as anything, mutual liking fosters a strong, positive learning environment.

We would hope that team teachers grow into genuinely liking each other. A few things help it along. You need to be flexible with each other and with the syllabus. Class plans become skewed; a topic invites longer treatment than first guessed, and the following class needs to be rearranged. Second, a personal excitement in the other professor's subject matter is a boon to the team relationship. Finally, we might mention the need for pedagogical judiciousness. We do not wish this lofty phrase to mean more than the sense of prudence for when to insert yourself into a discussion that the other professor is developing and when to keep silent even though ideas are flooding your head. The opposite of such prudence is the tendency, so common among professors, to score intellectual points, to interject in order to show the students that "I, too, know things about this topic my colleague is developing."

One final well that is vital to the success of "Medieval Life and Thought" and to the interdisciplinary, team-taught Honors Program of which it is part is administrative support. For effective team teaching to occur, academic administrators need to be firmly committed to the concept and willing to give it both the moral and financial support that it requires and deserves, even in these economically challenging times. Anything less threatens to undermine the kind of team teaching described here and to radically alter the experience of students and teachers in these courses.

The opportunity to participate in the Carlow Roundtable serendipitously gave us the impetus to examine our course in "Medieval Life and Thought" in a new way. When we looked deeply into its wells—the texts, our students, ourselves as team teachers—we discovered that the uniqueness of the course lies not only in its goal of academic excellence but in its less obvious dimension—the *Ursprung* of Catholic/Mercy teachings and tradition that flow through its design and implementation, refreshing and revitalizing the teachers and students who experience it each spring.

NOTES

[1] See Appendix A for a complete list of Honors courses.

[2] To consult our syllabus, go to the following URL: http://www.gmc.edu/academics/arts_sciences/ documents/LIB101-Medieval-Life-and-Thought-Miller-Breslin.pdf

[3] *The Rule and Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy*. N.p.: Ireland, 1926.

[4] See Appendix B for a sample of a student letter with professors' comments, the letter as yet not reflecting the final grammatical corrections made by the student.

[5] See Appendix C for instructors' letters to the entire class.

[6] See Appendix D for a student's after word.

APPENDIX A

Gwynedd-Mercy College Honors Program Curriculum
Lib 100: Origins of the Western Tradition
Lib 101: Medieval Life and Thought
Lib 102: The Modern Age
Lib 200: American Experience I
Lib 201: American Experience II
Lib 300: Towards Global Community

APPENDIX B

February 24, 2006

Dear Dr. Breslin and Dr. Miller,

Last semester we discussed original sin, free will, and fate. We determined that man had free will to choose or not choose to give in to the temptation in the Garden of Eden and was punished and continues to be punished for the choice. It seemed to me that something was wrong with our analysis because of the omnipotence and omniscience of God. If God knows all, including what will happen in the future, then what becomes of hope? What good is prayer? There would be no point in striving for success if the future is predetermined and pre-known. The negativists would be right in excusing their failures because of "God's will." We would have no responsibility for ourselves if everything were God's fault.

Boethius has an interesting viewpoint on this subject and helps us understand how both freedom of choice and pre-knowledge can coexist. He makes two powerful points, both "outside the box." First, he tells us that the divine view of the future is different from the human view. It is the "knower" who is important, not what is known. Boethius states "Since, therefore, as we have just shown, every object of knowledge is known not as a result of its own nature, but of the nature of those who comprehend it…" (p. 132) Second, Boethius says that God sees all past, present and future actions in the present. He bends time and sees everything in the present. He says, "Each future thing is anticipated by the gaze of God which bends it back and recalls it to the presence of its own manner of knowledge…" (p. 137) For that reason there can be freedom of choice, prayer can

be effective, and good and bad behavior can be rewarded or punished. Best of all, man can strive for excellence and take responsibility for his actions, successes and failures.

Speaking of taking responsibility, I was impressed with the writing of Hrotsvit. First, I admired her for her success as a writer in a time of male dominance in literature, second I admired her cleverness in saying that she emulated the work of Terence to gain interest and respect for her writing. Third, her depiction of the high morals possessed by the characters in the play and story made me realize that the dedication, or perhaps obsession, that enveloped the martyrs of that time period. The way Hrotsvit corrected the negative image of women in medieval society was evident in her work. An example is the behavior of the three virgins in *Dulcitius*. Their adherence to their beliefs and their absolute faith and confidence in immortality in heaven is amazing. For example, Agape says, "Nothing can force us to deny our avowed faith in His holy name, or to soil our virginity" (p. 199).

Another work by Hrotsvit I thought highly of was *The Passion of St. Pelagius*, which depicts the conflict between the Muslims and Christians in the tenth century. Similar to *Dulcitius*, the main character, Pelagius, is martyred when he refuses the advances of King Abd ar-Rahman. A Christ-like figure, Pelagius could not be mutilated when thrown on the rocks of the riverbank. Hrotsvit narrates, "Pelagius accordingly received the shining palm for his martyred death, having earned it through his praiseworthy end" (p. 195). This story must have been inspirational to the new Christians who viewed their religion differently from the character Diocletian in *Dulcitius*. When speaking to the three virgins, he says, "You abandon the worship of our established cult, and you chase after the futile novelty of Christian superstition." The girls take their religion very seriously. Irene says to Sisinnius, "But I shall receive the palm of the martyr, the virgin's crown! I shall enter the heavenly bridal chamber of the King Eternal. To Him are honor and Glory forever!" (p. 209).

Hrotsvit and Boethius's works were influential in their time and continue to be to this day. They demonstrate in an interesting format the beliefs of the people during the time of the early Christian church, and their views are still interesting and significant.

Sincerely,

Noelle H★★★★★★★

Well done, Noelle. Your analysis of Boethius's thought on free will and pre-destination is quite lucid. And you demonstrate its practicality by linking it to your own "confusion" in our previous course and how Boethius's teachings helped to clarify your understanding. It's rather wonderful when a required reading, or academic course, actually becomes meaningful in our everyday lives. Boethius's book does this for many of us.

CB

Dear Noelle,

Well done on both authors. The act of "knowing," as God knows, that is to say, as a knower existing in eternity and therefore in every moment at once, is the notion of eternity that enables Boethius to maintain human freedom and God's omniscience. Only one further element needs to be added to Boethius's view, and that is the two different kinds of necessity. Perhaps when we get to Aquinas, I will refer back to it. It is hard to elaborate in brief.

I'm sure you suspected that Hrotsvit's "depiction of high morals"—your very nice phrase—refers not only to the characters in her story but as an invitation to the same moral stance in the readers of her day. This is the value of "lives of the saints" literature.

You have a nice flow to your writing.

EJM

APPENDIX C

April 3, 2003

Dear students of medieval studies,

Your letters become more interesting as you learn to deal in more imaginative ways with our assigned readings. Our recent texts are more conducive to such treatments than were, for example, *Beowulf* or Boethius's *Consolatio*. "The Knight's Tale" and "The Miller's Tale," along with the story of Abelard and Heloise, fill our imaginations with medieval scenes and dialogues, and our minds bump up against quandaries these stories present us.

A few students accepted our invitation to adopt a different persona. Jaclyn wrote as an *embedded* knave [emphasis mine to reflect a current adjective] in the pilgrim party to Canterbury, spying on folks to get the real scoop on them. Her sister, Carolyn, was Jonathan Swift, ventilating to an unknown correspondent about medieval "tribulations" from those "duplicitous" characters in Chaucer, curious barbs from an Anglican priest and satirist. Lynn wrote as Arcite to Chaucer, complaining of the prison imagery the poet rigged up for nearly everyone in the tale. The rest of you kept to the customary way of addressing personal letters to both of us. (Dr. Breslin and I will keep you wondering whether we note or care who gets first and second billing in the address line. Caveat scriptor!)

Many fascinating observations or questions were raised in your letters, and I note a couple of them. Lauren wondered why Chaucer, so influenced as he was by Boethius, didn't make Emily into a "Lady Philosophy" figure. He didn't, of course, and the dynamics of a love triangle remained possible to him. Does Theseus play a philosopher's role to some extent in Chaucer's scheme? Here's another musing from Lauren: What's to stop the wheel of fortune from turning yet more, after Palamon and Emily get married? I suppose Lauren is wondering whether "living happily ever after" describes any relationship in the medieval world? (My own suspicion is that more of them reached this plateau than most Americans do on first try.)

This brings me to your ideas of love and marriage, or love and lust, which were noted by so many. Joe put it as pointedly as possible when he asked whether love needs a conjugal contract, echoing Heloise's palmary phrase that being mistress is preferable to being wife.

Not many medievals would have subscribed to Heloise's position, and some of you—I'm thinking of Francesca and Jennifer L.—take her to task on it. But if you think Heloise was more correct in matters of the heart, you could retort that church doctrine and the small-town mentality of medieval village life and manorial life simply put a damper on the joy of sex by putting a premium on family duties.

Although it would be centuries before Alex Comfort pens a best seller on the above theme, the medievals—at least those who read Latin and had access to mss—had their Ovid and his *Art of Loving* and *Remedies of Love* to consult if they wanted pointers on wooing and sexual mechanics. A big difference holds, however, between then and now, and it has nothing to do with Comfort's "how to" mechanics. It has to do with the value of commitment, and this is something the medievals valued. Feudal society was based on commitments and oaths and allegiances. Even the sacraments were understood as *pledges*, and Augustine's choice to describe the sacred rituals as *sacramenta* harkened to the normal Latin word for an oath. The question Heloise's comment presses on us is whether lovemaking in an uncommitted context makes you happy. No, not just a momentary happiness but does it bring you to an achieved and enduring happiness? (Thank you, Boethius, for the more precise and proper question.)

Enough people in American society, in the 1960s and early 1970s, tried uncommitted love relationships and found them wanting and disappointing. Poll after poll today, on the seemingly fixated topic of sexual satisfaction, discovers that committed relationships appear integral and necessary for the desired satisfaction. The pollsters are discovering that married people are the most satisfied and happiest persons in our society. (I realize you may be thinking that divorce, American style, is at 50 percent of first-time weddings. This is true, and I am not reflecting on what's involved in making good conjugal choices.) It's worth reflecting in this medieval course whether what goes around comes around. Even though commitment, medieval style, involved people being almost automatically socialized into it, it's worth reflecting whether their valuation of commitment needs to be "owned" today by conscious choices we make in an American society that does not socialize us into lasting commitments very readily.

Best Wishes,

Ed Miller

April 14, 2005

Dear Class,

Maybe it's the change in the weather (Spring seems to be here, finally!) or maybe it's that I'm feeling better after a month-long struggle with a sinus infection, or maybe it's the inspiration provided by our most recent texts. I'm not sure! But I found this to be an especially pleasing set of letters. Whether you were speaking in the voice of an adopted persona or opining in your own inimitable voices, your letters offered "God's plenty," to quote my buddy Geoffrey Chaucer, and Dr. Miller and I could certainly see the fruits of our class's collective labors in your outpouring of creative and analytical thought.

It would take several pages for me to give an account of all that you covered, and I am determined to keep my response to a page or so. So let me issue a few compliments, record a few particularly attractive quotations, and offer a brief observation.

First, the compliments—they should always come first, don't you think?

- To Colleen, a.k.a. Ana, for her delightful voicing of the young girl sent by her sister Beatrice to serve the sisters at the local convent in hopes of correcting some errant behavior—Colleen, your Ana speaks with authenticity and charm. I truly hope that she was allowed to go home— and quickly.

- To Will, who bravely and eloquently voiced a woman, Beautiful Flower, in a "put-down" letter to her hopeful lover, ingeniously weaving together the handful of courtly love lyrics discussed in our class: I doff my virtual cap to you, Will, and your fictitious couple. I especially loved the sharpness with which the lady rebuked and rejected the would-be lover, acknowledging forthrightly what seemed to be a one-night stand, but reminding him of her new status as a married woman with no time for his romantic notions. Right on, Beautiful Flower! Hrotsvit would approve.

- To Louis, Kim, John, Jennifer, Alan, Shawn, and Karin for their detailed reflections on everything from Terry Schiavo, the pope, and Anselm to the habits worn by nuns, the appeal of the monastic life, and the anti-Semitism of the Prioress.

Second, the quotations—

- From Shawn after reflecting on the strong women he has met in our texts: "Clearly, my male-dominated imagining of the Middle Ages is in drastic need of revision." Yes!

- From Louis on the bad press given to the Prioress: "I find it a double standard that the fictional Prioress should be viewed with so much critical contempt while Hrotsvit enjoys a place of honor. The only difference is that where Hrotsvit wrote of Muslims and pagans, the villains of the "Prioress's Tale" are Jews, and in light of the events of the twentieth century, this is taboo."

- From Alan on Chaucer and anti-Semitism: "I don't think Chaucer really hates Jews; I think he was trying to make the Prioress more real… [by] calling the Jews evil. After all, just because you're not an African American… you're… [not] a racist if you write a story about someone who hates Africans…"

Finally, an observation: Many of you wrote with intensity regarding whether you could see yourselves as monastics, expressing admiration for those who choose this vocation and finding some aspects of it—the opportunity for reflection and quiet—attractive. But most admitted that they would not choose this life, often because they tended to view entering the monastery as escaping from the world, rather than offering help and solace to a world badly in need of both. In my individual responses I tried to persuade the writers that this might be a less than accurate view. I have never been a monastic; in fact, I've never been inside a "working" monastery, so I probably shouldn't speak. But I have the impression from reading I've done and teaching that I have received that very often people who enter the monastery are not so much fleeing the world as rushing to embrace it in a prayerful, loving, compassionate, holistic way that those of us who are in and of the world cannot begin to imagine. When they enter the monastery, they take with them all of their humanness—flaws, sins, temptation, desire, anxiety—and they struggle with these the rest of their lives, just as those of us on the outside do. We saw this in Heloise. And most of them live in community, where they must get along with and tolerate the personalities and foibles of people they

probably would not have chosen to live with. So it may seem as if they are withdrawing from the world, but I think that they are just exchanging one version of the world for another that has its own special challenges. But enough! I promised to be short, and I've gone on all too long.

So… fare well during the rest of this glorious spring. We need to make one final push to the end of the semester and the end of what has been for me a fine experience of this course.

Best Wishes,

Carol Breslin

APPENDIX D

Afterword

I know that I have stated this in my letters, in class, and throughout the semester, but I highly appreciate and value your constant and thoughtful feedback. As an instructional method, I believe it encourages us as students to think deeper and work harder, while also increasing the value of our work because it is thoughtfully responded to. We have had this awesome correspondence in all our submitted work, but it is exemplified in our letter correspondences. The content of this class was so much to cover in such a short time, barely glossing over some of the material, that the letters allowed me to say what I did not get to say in class, or pushed me to think deeper on a given topic. (For students who do not naturally like to speak up in class, this is an even more valuable experience.) Your responses allowed me to find some answers to questions and extended my learning outside the restricted time of actually being in the classroom. It also increased an interpersonal understanding and respect between professor and student because much more is revealed in a "letter" (which is definitely a more personal form of writing than a paper or essay) than just a reflection or response. I think showing how much effort you put into responding to our work makes us want to give back just as much, so that no one works in vain. I also valued the grammar check up.

This was a new experience for me (letter correspondences with my professors), and I am honest when I say that it was a more valuable experience than I originally thought it would be. Thank you so much for your hard work!

Deborah S★★★★
May 2, 2008

WORKS CITED

The Rule and Constitutions of the Sisters of Mercy. Ireland: np, 1926.

Stevens, Sr. Maryanne. "Culture and Characteristics of Mercy Higher Education,"
     Gwynedd–Mercy College, http://www.gmc.edu/about/missionvalues.php
     (accessed July 7, 2009).

Student Engagement in the Mathematics Classroom: Using the Language of Mathematics as a Tool for Teaching and Learning

KRISTI BOWERS, MS, MOUNT ALOYSIUS COLLEGE

Developmental mathematics courses are essential in providing students with the background and proficiency needed to be successful in required college level mathematics courses. In general, students tend to have negative attitudes towards both remediation and mathematics. Memorization of rules and algorithms did not work for these students the first time around. They need to understand the concepts that support the rules, so they can retain those ideas, and then apply them (Hammerman, Goldberg).

Many of these students possess low indicators such as poor high school grades and/or below average SAT scores and are required to take anywhere from three to nine credits of developmental mathematics before attempting college level mathematics. Any level of mathematics course can create anxiety and tension in a student who lacks confidence in his/her skills. This additional requirement of a series of developmental courses is certainly daunting to the student who has a history of low grades and poor performance.

Students can typically identify themselves as either a "how" learner or a "why" learner. The "how" learner is one who needs clear, defined steps for *how* to solve a problem and must practice that process to proficiency before moving on to understand the *why* of each step. The "why" learner, on the other hand, cannot process even the most clearly defined steps without a solid understanding of *why* each step must be completed and *why* it must be done in a specific order. Only when the *why* is fully understood can the learner move on to *how* it is accomplished. Thus, one group moves from "how" to "why" and the other group reverses this movement.

For example, in solving a first degree equation like $5(x - 3) = 20$. The how learner follows the series of steps until the process is completed and finds that $x = 7$. Once one has solved a number of similar problems, one can begin to identify the patterns that emerge and can apply those patterns to solve more complicated equations. The *why* learner however, needs to have a solid understanding of various concepts. They must understand the *terminology*, e.g. variable, constant, and equation, the *notation*, e.g. use of parentheses, and finally, the foundational *axioms* or principles of equations, e.g. what is done to one side of the equation must also be done to the other side of the equation to preserve the equality of the statement. If the student is prepared for the process of solving equations by understanding the terminology, the notation, and the axioms, then the student can more easily follow the steps to solve the equation.

TERMINOLOGY

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, by the time students reach sixth grade (11-12 years) they should understand 43 mathematical terms and concepts from the previous year. Reading research supports a strong connection between vocabulary knowledge and comprehension.

Likewise, the link between mathematics vocabulary knowledge and mathematics comprehension is critical because without knowledge of mathematics vocabulary, complex concepts cannot be understood and more advanced tasks cannot be performed (Findlan, Portman, & Shields 2005).

In the developmental mathematics classroom, it cannot be assumed that students have much prior knowledge of mathematical terms and concepts, but they do have prior knowledge of some terminology outside the math classroom. Students need clearly defined terms, and these terms should be related to concepts that the students already understand. For example, the term "variable" is typically understood as describing an object apt to vary or change. This can easily be connected to the use of the term "variable" in mathematics. A letter or symbol holds the place of a number that can change from one situation to the next. The term "constant" is also understood as an object that does not change or vary. Any specific number is a constant. The value of five does not change. It is always five.

Similarly, developing the concepts of an algebraic expression versus an algebraic equation can be accomplished by relating the terms to English usage. An expression, like $5(x − 3)$, is a phrase or fragment, not a complete thought, and can be simplified or changed, but not solved. An equation is akin to a sentence. Consider the previous equation, $5(x − 3) = 20$. It has a subject, $5(x − 3)$, a verb, =, and a direct object, 20. An equation, then, is a complete thought and can be solved for a numerical answer, like $x = 7$. Note that $x = 7$ is also a complete thought and can be considered similar to a sentence.

Particularly for the *why* learners, terminology must be presented clearly with multiple examples and contexts and then utilized consistently. Meaningful connections should be made between vocabulary words based on a student's prior knowledge. Repeated opportunities should also be afforded for student interaction with vocabulary (Findlan, Portman, & Shields 2005). Correct and consistent usage of terminology is the first key to developing real understanding of mathematical concepts.

NOTATION

Students often have difficulty with mathematical notation due to the many different ways in which mathematical processes and ideas are expressed. For example, multiplication can be represented by the following, "x, ★, ( ), · " or even nothing, as in the case of "xy" to represent the product of these two variables (Ernst–Slavit, Slavit, 2007). In the case of parentheses, one notation can represent multiple processes. In the expression $5(x − 3)$, the parentheses are used both to contain and separate the inner expression, $x − 3$, and to indicate multiplication by 5.

Again, consistency in use and development of a clear understanding of both how and why a particular notation is used builds a strong foundation for further application. Consider the use of parentheses, as in $5(x − 3)$. Parentheses in mathematics, as in English usage, are used to separate an idea or thought from the rest of the expression. They can be considered a basket in which the idea or thought, in this case $x − 3$, is placed. Since parentheses are also used to indicate multiplication, the expression $5(x − 3)$, indicates that there are five baskets each holding $x − 3$. This explanation leads the students to see that combining all the baskets would result in five x's minus five 3's or $5x − 15$. Students now have a basis for understanding and correctly applying the distributive property of multiplication over addition.

Fraction notation is another commonly misunderstood concept for students taking developmental mathematics courses. Students typically remember that the top number is the numerator and the bottom number is the denominator, but they fail to grasp the underlying meaning of the notation itself. In a fraction such as 2/3, the denominator, 3, indicates what is being counted, in this case, thirds. The numerator, 2, indicates how many of those thirds were counted. So, in essence, 2/3 tells us that there are two objects which happen to be called thirds. Once this notation is clearly explained, the concept of finding a common denominator in order to add fractions can be developed. This concept will be explored further in the section on axioms.

These examples stress understanding of the notation, as opposed to memorization of rules. Students can then see the natural progression as they move from one concept to the next. This second key to understanding is built upon the terminology that they have learned and provides the connections among various concepts. This provides both motivation for the present, and less fear of the future (Hammerman, Goldberg, 2003).

AXIOMS

Once a student has a proficient comprehension of the terminology and notation for a particular skill set, that student needs to understand the foundational principles, or axioms, that are involved. This is the stage where students can make connections from previously learned material to newly presented material. These connections provide relevancy and validity to the learned material.

For example, once a student has learned the terminology and notation of the distributive property, as discussed earlier, the student will be better able to apply this information to the use of that property within the context of a first degree equation. The equation, $5(x - 3) = 20$, can be shown to be manipulated into the new equation, $5x - 15 = 20$, by applying the distributive property. Now, the equation is in a more familiar format and the student can apply the steps of solving a first degree equation by isolating the variable on one side of the equation with the constant on the other, $x = 7$.

One axiom that should be reinforced in the example above is that any operation can be performed on one side of the equal sign, as long as the same operation is performed on the other side, as well. An equal sign can be likened to an old-fashioned scale used in a country store. A shopkeeper would measure out flour on one side of the scale and put small weights on the other side until the scale was balanced. Once the scale is balanced, the shopkeeper can add or remove flour from one side as long as he/she also removes the equivalent amount of weight from the other side. In the example, $5x - 15 = 20$, the amount of 15 can be added to both sides of the equal sign, resulting in the simplified equation $5x = 35$. Once again, the axiom can be applied by dividing both sides by 5, resulting in the solution, $x = 7$.

A second axiom to be stressed is that if the stated problem is an equation, then the solution will also be an equation. Here, the stated problem was $5(x - 3) = 20$ and the solution was $x = 7$, both equations.

As a final example, consider the fractions 2/3 and 1/4. If the notation is understood, then the fractions can be thought of as two objects called thirds and one object called a fourth. In order to add or subtract these fractions, the axiom of combining like terms must be understood. Basically, this axiom states that one can only combine things that have the same name. The old saying,

"One can't add apples and oranges," originates from this concept. One cannot add two apples to three oranges, unless they are called by the same name. Adding two pieces of fruit to three pieces of fruit, will then result in five pieces of fruit. The same applies to thirds and fourths. One cannot add thirds and fourths, so one must find a common name, or a common denominator (i.e. twelfths).

Relevance can be added to this axiom by citing other examples. When decimals are added or subtracted, the place values must be aligned vertically, as in a checkbook. The place values are also how decimal numbers are named, so in essence, it is the names of each place value that are being aligned. When combining variable terms, the axiom also applies. The term *5x* indicates five objects that can be called *x*. That term can only be combined with other variable terms that also refer to *x*. Hence, *5x* added to *3x* results in a total of *8x*.

The understanding of these fundamental axioms is the third key to building the mathematical foundation so necessary for the remedial student. These basic principles show the relevance of one concept to another and reinforce the idea that mathematical rules can be consistently applied in several contexts.

SUMMARY

Although this article primarily addresses developmental mathematics courses, these principles could be extended to most introductory, survey, or skills-based content course. In a language course, whether it be English composition or a first-level foreign language, students must build a basic vocabulary (terminology), utilize correct grammar and punctuation (notation), and then apply appropriate syntax (axioms) to their reading and writing of that language. Students who intend to study any area of health care typically have to take one or more anatomy and/or physiology courses before beginning their upper level content courses. In these courses, the students learn the correct names for the parts of the human body (terminology), they learn how those parts connect to and interact with one another (notation), and they learn how all the parts and systems contribute to the whole organism (axioms).

REFERENCES

Ernst-Slavit, Gisela, and David Slavit. "Educational Reform, Mathematics, & Diverse Learners: Meeting the Needs of All Students." *Multicultural Education* (Summer 2007): 20-7.

Findlan, Cinda, Cyndy Portman, and Darla Shields. "Word Meanings." *Mathematics Teaching*, 190 (2005): 37-9.

Hammerman, Natalie and Robert Goldberg. "Strategies for Developmental Mathematics at the College Level." *Mathematics and Computer Education* 37.1 (2003): 79-95.

Creating and Maintaining Enthusiasm: The Professors' Guide to Building a Community of Learners through Multifaceted Lessons

CHRISTINA SHORALL, EDD, CARLOW UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Frightening. Simply horrifying! A sea of glazed eyes, a chorus of groans, lifeless postures, all indicators of… class of the living dead! Yes, just when you thought you had them on the edge of their seats, you lost them. Not to worry! You'll have their attention again when you mention the information will be on the final. No doubt a chorus of questions will even follow. But, do we have to stoop to such measures to keep our students awake… alive?

The goal of instruction is the acquisition of skills and knowledge by students. Increasingly, institutions are also focusing on the ability to transfer those acquired skills and knowledge to life outside of the school. Transfer occurs when students can successfully relate what they have learned in school to a new situation. In order to accomplish this, however, students must initially attend to the information presented in the classroom. Implementing various methods of instructional delivery increases attention and impacts the likelihood of transfer.

Instructional strategies can be divided into two major categories: (1) direct instruction, a teacher-centered strategy, and (2) student-centered instruction, which focuses on guiding students to construct their own understanding. Traditionally, models of teacher-centered instruction have prevailed in the college classroom. However, current research indicates student-centered instruction that considers students' prior knowledge, learning styles, affective thoughts, and social or cultural environment maximizes instructional effectiveness. If students participate in actual activities, the likelihood of transfer of learning to real life improves. For this reason, instruction should center on students having the experiences as opposed to the teacher merely imparting experiences. If students have the experience, they can construct an understanding that connects with their prior knowledge. Retention and recall are improved by building knowledge in this manner.

Creating and Maintaining Enthusiasm: The Professors' Guide to Building a Community of Learners through Multifaceted Lessons will assist instructors in creating a routine format for their course with a variety of student-centered instructional options to maximize attention, retention, collaboration, and transfer.

THEORY

Current trends in pedagogy suggest that potentially all types of learning have a sequence that maximizes interest, retention, and recall. By effectively sequencing information, instructors can simulate authentic and experiential learning situations in the classroom. Ideally instruction adheres to the following format: tapping of prior knowledge for motivational and assessment purposes; introduction of new content; interaction socially and environmentally to increase transfer; and finally, shared and multifaceted evaluation.

Because prior knowledge and misconceptions play a part in knowledge construction, instructors must initially assess each individual student's beliefs before instruction begins. Prior knowledge must be considered in the classroom because students will not arrive as blank slates. Students come to school with prior knowledge and concepts that influence how future learning is assimilated, and students with misconceptions will continue to misconstruct knowledge until their instructors correct them. Assessing prior knowledge accomplishes the following objectives: it identifies students' misconceptions; it determines the current level of students' understanding; it establishes what students thought was important to remember; it ascertains what students found interesting enough to retain. Prior knowledge has also proven to be motivational. Students who believe they have background information in an upcoming topic approach that topic with greater confidence than students who believe they have little or no familiarity with the subject matter.

The introduction of new content provides the core for most classroom experiences. For constructivists truth is a viable construct, and viability is a form of *consensual domain*. Experiential worlds belong to individuals, but through *social interaction* these worlds become adapted to one another to form consensual domains: areas where the interactors' mutual expectations are more or less regularly realized. (McAvoy & Paparozzi). While constructivists maintain content for instruction cannot be prespecified, this *core knowledge domain* may be. One can and should define a core body of information. At this point, students often have little directly transferable prior information about a content or skill. In this beginning stage of schema construction and integration, it serves the learner for the domain to be somewhat well structured, skill-based, and literal (Jonassen). Activities for the introduction of the content domain should move from fairly well defined to increasingly complex to avoid oversimplification of material by students at the later stages of knowledge construction.

Current trends in instruction and learning stress the social negotiation of understanding and meaning after the content domain has been presented. Central to this is collaboration as a means of evaluating alternative views and testing ideas (Bendar & Duffy). In addition, the environment where learning takes place must eventually match the complexity of the environment where students will be expected to transfer their knowledge from the classroom (Salomon & Perkins). The arena of social interaction as a means of clarifying ideas and fleshing out one's beliefs by way of defense and explanation has become popular in today's classroom. Cooperative learning, projects performed in coordination with the community, and peer tutoring all encourage social interaction of students. The transfer of skills to the environment from the classroom presents somewhat of a concern to those who have witnessed a lack of transfer of skills by students (Spiro). To promote transfer, educators are encouraged to maintain the complexity of the environment in which students hope to transfer their skills. Lack of transfer often results from the school environment being so different from the nonschool environment (Spiro). If the complexity of the environment is maintained and students are assisted in understanding the existing concepts in those environments, authentic transfer can occur (Perkins). The proposed authenticity and complexity of the scholastically created environment should fall in a proximal range of the student's knowledge. Another issue that relates directly to successful transfer deals with learning the content while using it. While traditional curriculum separates the learning of the content from its use, functional context stresses having students discuss, diagnose, or explain various phenomena after they have been provided with instruction on the authentic task. Starting from less complex and increasing in difficulty with mounting competency, content and tasks blend and provide a context that is authentic and allows the student to acquire integrated skills.

Evaluation is a process of explanation, performance, and effective planning. Evaluation, like the construction of meaning, should be performed in an arena of negotiation. Although construction of knowledge is done as an individual endeavor, enough meaning must be shared so that communication, discourse, and speculation can take place. It follows then that negotiation should exist in evaluation. Goal setting, analysis, and performance evaluation should be shared by the individual and the instructor as well as other learners. This creates a real world scenario in that evaluation of one's actions in society need to be self-monitored; the individual's self control in addition to the laws that guide society create a harmonious situation. Evaluation has too often been used as a punitive means of keeping students focused on goals set by forces outside of themselves. If society hopes for self-guided members, the skills and tasks associated with self-evaluation of one's actions must be practiced before adulthood. With the learner taking part in the assessment process, metacognition and self-analysis are fostered. Students guide and judge their own construction of knowledge with assistance from instructors (Jonassen).

Multiple perspectives and products should be considered when evaluating. Several paths might lead to a solution, and improved paths might be found when students are given the freedom to construct their own solutions to problem solving as opposed to memorizing current axiomatic theories. Because people construct knowledge in a subjective manner, according to constructivism, evaluation needs to be assessed by several individuals in order to be fair to a student who also maintains a unique construction of meaning. A group of reviewers has the potential to appreciate different facets of the learner's construction. Experts bring their particular insight, and novices provide the fresh perspective the student might be experiencing. Instead of one set of goals, a multitude of skills are assessed and appreciated by the separate perspectives represented (Jonassen). When educators must evaluate products in addition to process, several products as opposed to one should be assessed. In keeping with the theory that few authentic tasks have a single product or outcome, students should be given the benefit of exhibiting their construction of knowledge through several avenues. A more accurate assessment is acquired through multiple products representing multiple dimensions, viewpoints, and techniques. A mix of experts and novices should comprise the evaluating group.

APPLICATION

Such dry theory would seem to inspire rather than discourage sleeping in the classroom! The above mentioned theory only serves to provide a platform for our next exploration: formatting one's class to create and maintain enthusiasm. If one builds her/his lesson format on the four facets for effective retention and recall, (tapping of prior knowledge, introduction of new content, interaction socially and environmentally, and shared and multifaceted evaluation) one can construct an initial format model. By dividing a class period into segments, as listed on the following chart, one increases that likelihood that students will attend. Changes in presentation modes and active participation by students increase attention and retention.

Assessing Prior Knowledge	Content Domain	Interaction Socially and Environmentally	Multifaceted Evaluation

Each academic discipline pursues unique skills and goals. Science students investigate in laboratories, and sociology students explore the human condition in society. For this reason course activities should be tailored to their specific discipline. Each section of the course format can be filled with options/activities from which an instructor can choose. The following serves as a sample for an education course.

Assessing Prior Knowledge	Content Domain	Interaction Socially and Environmentally	Multifaceted Evaluation
Mock Test	Demonstration	Field Placement	Test
Survey	Lecture	Project	Critique
Open Ended Question	Reading	Lab Work	Presentation
Game	Role play	Writing Assignment	Discussion
Discussion	Speaker	Debate	Product
	Technology	Problem Solving	Demonstration

This format with accompanying activities accomplishes two seemingly unrelated objectives. A predictable sequence of events (the format) is established in the classroom that enhances retention. When students know what to expect next, they tend to focus on that upcoming activity. The second objective dovetails with the first. Although students know what to expect next in the format, they do not know what form the specific activity will take. Anticipation and variety coexist. As the semesters progress, one can accumulate a large repertoire of possible activities through collaboration with both instructors and students. The format is both consistent and dynamic, adjusting itself to varying populations of students as well as courses.

WORKS CITED

Bendar, A.K. and Duffy, T.M. "Attempting to Come to Grips with Alternative Perspectives." *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates, 1992.

Driscoll, M.P., McCown, R.R., Roop, P.G., Griffin, M.M. and Quinn,G.P. *Educational Psychology: A Learning-Centered Approach to Classroom Practice*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996.

Duffy, T. and Jonesson, D. *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992.

Eggen, P. and Kauchak, D. *Educational Psychology: Windows on Classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1999.

Jonassen, D.H. "Objectivism vs. Constructivism: Do We Need a New Philosophical Paradigm?" *Educational Technology: Research and Development*, Vol. 393 (1991). 5-14.

Jones, V. F. and Jones, L. S. *Comprehensive Classroom Management*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2001.

Lefrancois, G.R. *Psychology for Teaching*. Ontario, Canada: Wadsworth, A Division of Thompson Learning, 1999.

McAvoy, R. and Paparozzi, C. *Constructivism: What It Is and Is Not*. New York: Meaningful Learning Research Group Publications, 1996.

Ormrod, J.E. *Educational Psychology: Developing Learners*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2000.

Perkins, D.N. "Art as Understanding." *Art, Mind, and Education: Research from Project Zero*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989.

Perkins, D.N. "Technology and Constructivism: Do They Make a Marriage?" *Constructivism and the Technology of Instruction*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1992.

Salomon, G. and Perkins, D. "*Cognitive Analysis of Expert Knowledge: Input into Design of Training.*" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, 1989.

Shorall, C. *Pass the Praxis: A Guide to the Principals of Learning and Teaching*. Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2004.

Spiro, R. *Cognitive Flexibility Theory: Advanced Knowledge Acquisition in Ill-Structured Domains*. (Tech. Rep. No. 441) Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading, 1988.

Occupational Therapy, Service-Learning, and the Mercy Mission

KRISTIN B. HAAS, OTD, OTR/L, COLLEGE OF ST. MARY

The occupational therapy (OT) department at College of Saint Mary (CSM) recognizes the need for engagement strategies that involve students and faculty in service-learning throughout the curriculum. There is also value in incorporating community partners in service-learning development. The value of the relationships built with faculty, students, and community partners is critical. Students need to understand the collaborative and symbiotic model that drives service-learning as well as the critical role they play in service-learning and community. Mission integration between CSM and the community partner is vital.

Traditional modes of teaching still dominate most academic classrooms. Often, out of necessity, professors teach students the theories and methods that pertain to their field of study through lecture alone. Research indicates students need to be able to relate what is being taught in the classroom to their lives and future careers. These connections are not always clear through traditional classroom instruction. Lacking service-learning and mission-integration, students must rely on memory and abstract thought, two methods that restrict learning in most students. By actually implementing OT skills and methods, students develop their critical thinking as well as discover clinical competencies.

Integrating service-learning within the OT program at CSM demonstrates a commitment to the college's mission: to educate women to serve others compassionately; to engage in academic excellence, scholarship, and life-long learning; to recognize the dignity of each person; and to develop personally in mind, body, and spirit. Students have the opportunity to critically analyze this mission with their own mission and values, as well as the mission of the community partner through the service-learning experiences in the OT program.

The purpose of this paper is to outline how one OT program at CSM has integrated service-learning with the Mercy mission of the college, the program mission, and the missions of the community partners. There is a recognized need by the faculty for service-learning integration throughout the OT curriculum to assist in meeting the program and college mission. In addition, the faculty in the occupational therapy program has learned specific strategies to assist with selecting service-learning projects that meet program and college needs. Finally, this paper will discuss how this program appraises the service-learning components in the curriculum.

OT is an allied health profession that guides people of all ages and backgrounds toward independent and productive life and work. Through the use of therapeutic activities or occupations, occupational therapists assist individuals with physical and mental disorders to live meaningful and holistic lives. Occupational therapists work in a variety of settings including schools, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, community mental health sites, neonatal intensive care units, and hospice.

Service-learning is defined as "a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities" (Learn and Serve America). Service-learning is an integral part of the OT program at CSM. The curricular threads of the program include writing

skills, critical thinking and problem solving, building professionalism, appreciation of cultural diversity, and increasing research skills. All of these threads are addressed when faculty choose to utilize service-learning opportunities in their courses.

When selecting service-learning community sites for a course, one must look at mission congruence, in addition to several other factors. Obviously the mission of the OT program is aligned with the mission of the college and the Mercy mission. However, as an instructor utilizing service-learning one must examine the mission of the community site to determine congruence between the site and the college/program. This will ensure students are working with community partners who have a common vision and goal for their involvement with their constituents. This is an important first step to establishing working relationships with community sites.

An example of mission integration with community sites is as follows. The mission statement for CSM is: "Committed to the works, values, and aspirations of the Sisters of Mercy, CSM is a Catholic university dedicated to the education of women in an environment that calls forth potential and fosters leadership. This mission inspires us to: Academic excellence, scholarship, and lifelong learning; Regard for the dignity of each person; Attention to the development of mind, body, and spirit; and Compassionate service to others." (College of Saint Mary). The OT program mission statement reads: "The Occupational Therapy Program at the CSM strives to provide a high quality educational environment and foster academic excellence and leadership among women. Graduates become occupational therapists who are prepared to integrate the spirit with the mind and body through occupation. The program prepares students to deliver quality occupational therapy services and respond to fluctuations in the overall health care system. Graduates of the program are equipped with the knowledge and skills to promote quality of life that is expressed in meaningful doing or occupation. The Occupational Therapy Program emphasizes providing compassionate, ethical occupational therapy services to all individuals, particularly those who are vulnerable to compromised health and quality living." ("Combined" 8). In selecting service-learning sites, faculty looked at the missions to ensure parallels. For example, Mercy Housing is one site the OT department at CSM uses. Their mission statement is "To create stable, vibrant, and healthy communities by developing, financing, and operating affordable, program-enriched housing for families, seniors, and people with special needs who lack the economic resources to access quality, safe housing opportunities" (Mercy Housing). The mission statement for another community partner, Morton Magnet Middle School, is "the development of a commitment to learning and the personal success of each student in the school. We seek to provide a caring atmosphere to ease the transition from elementary school, while developing critical thinking skills, fostering acceptance of responsibility, and improving academic performance through the recognition of individual learning styles. In conjunction with academics, we will guide our students toward developing a sense of self-worth, good character, active citizenship, good health, and an awareness of lifetime work and leisure options. We will encourage an awareness and understanding of other cultural heritages and respect for the diversity found in our school and society." As one can see, these missions fit well with the Mercy mission of the College and the OT program. The congruence assists students in working toward common goals and aspirations. In addition, the mission statements fit with the objectives and outcomes of the courses in which the sites are utilized.

Other factors that are important when selecting community sites for service-learning will also help one examine mission congruence. For example, establish whether the relationship can be ongoing. Is there an opportunity for reciprocal learning with the students and the site participants? It is important that the community site have a commitment to student learning and a common vision for

the project. It is also important that faculty take the time to ensure the community site understands service-learning and their role in the experience. Finally, the facility and faculty must work together to provide the right challenge to the student for authentic learning to occur.

The OT program at CSM integrates service-learning throughout the curriculum. In the introductory OT courses students initially learn about service-learning in the curriculum through examples, lectures by service-learning faculty, and completing a four to six hour service-learning project with reflection afterwards. In the middle level coursework students have opportunities to utilize independent learning assignments to master course concepts through several means including service-learning. Students write a critical reflection of these self-directed and initiated learning experiences stating how the experience relates to course content, what they learned from the experience, and implications for their future practice. During this time, students in the program also take a course on educational principles in which they explore the theory, research, and benefits of service-learning.

The largest and most in-depth service-learning projects in the OT curriculum occur during a fieldwork (internship) and health promotion course. During these courses a mini needs analysis is utilized to ensure the students are meeting the authentic needs of the community site while utilizing the skill sets needed to be an occupational therapist. The mini needs analysis includes obtaining information such as a facility overview, program development, SWOT analysis, program goals, strategies to meet these goals, program evaluation, and references to back up the programming. These courses are self-directed and steps differ for each student. Students have an opportunity to assist in selecting the community site they would like to work with. Most of the semester and much class time is spent in the community planning and implementing programs. The students work alone or in groups to determine the fit between what OT can offer and the needs of the population served and community site. They then implement the programming along with any long lasting projects left at the site. Faculty believe we should not just come in and 'do' but leave something of substance for the facility to continue as the students phase out. Examples include education of staff, clientele, or families; program development; resources development; or assisting facility staff in any way possible. Again, this is determined along with the programming from the mini needs analysis the students complete.

Finally, it is important to include service-learning in outcome assessment for the course and for the program. There are several ways that this can be done. One is for the faculty to utilize a modified logic model. Faculty can set up these models to help ensure that outcomes and objectives are met. One example would include goals for the community site and students, activities to meet these goals, the objectives or outcomes expected from these activities, the indicators that the outcomes have been meet, who is evaluated (students, consumers), where the data will come from and how, and by whom the data will be analyzed for meeting the stated objectives. Another example of outcome assessment is to have students document their learning and experiences in a professional portfolio or assignment. This documentation could include pictures, references, reflections and/or materials created for the community site. It is important to survey students, faculty, and community partners both at midterm and semester's end to ascertain whether the goals are being met. Such short surveys might allow constituents to discuss whether the partnership is beneficial, if professionalism is being met, if expectations are being met, outcomes, what was liked best and least, and how the experience could be improved. These outcome assessments assist faculty in modifying experiences or providing mentorship/facilitation as needed to the students and community partners.

Most importantly for service-learning to be successful, genuine critical reflection must occur. Faculty must provide guided and open reflection with the students. There are many ways to do this including written, oral, pictorial, and role playing, to name a few. This is a time faculty can play into student's creativity and learning styles. There are many resources available to assist in the critical reflection of service-learning projects.

Examples of projects and programming by CSM's OT students can be useful to highlight the above. For instance, the OT department has had an on-going relationship with Mercy Housing at the Women's Care Center of the Heartland (WCCH) for approximately five years. WCCH helps those who desire a life-style change and the opportunity to plan a secure life for themselves and their babies. Students have implemented programming for the women that include nutrition, health relationships, health life-styles, baby care, and making baby items such as blankets and nursing pillows. In addition, the long term projects that have been left include a birthing plan in both Spanish and English, a video that is used with volunteers and potential donors, a notebook of community resources, and the creation of a boutique of donations for both baby and mother.

Another example involves OT students traveling with faculty to Belize, Central America to work in rural clinics, school systems, and a newly-opened school for disabled children. Students were able to really focus on the cultural and socioeconomic components during this experience. Students assisted doctors, nurses, and educators in providing well baby checks, working with disabled adults and children, assessing classrooms, and developing programming and curriculum for the disabled school. Long term projects that were left were care plans for children attending the special needs school, and supplies for both the typical schools and special needs schools with instructions on proper use of supplies and activities. These are just two of many examples of OT students' involvement in both the local and global community utilizing service-learning to meet educational outcomes.

In conclusion, one way to improve outcomes and meet objectives in coursework while living the Mercy mission is to integrate service-learning. Service-learning gives students an opportunity for real life experiences and critical reflection. By ensuring congruence of mission statements, utilizing a mini needs analysis, building community relationships, and utilizing outcome measures, faculty can meet course objectives while having students experience real life situations. Many times traditional modes of teaching dominate academic classrooms. Out of necessity in most cases, professors stand before a class and teach students the theories and methods that pertain to their field of study. They also assign reading to convey and affirm the instructor's lecture. Many professors lack the resources (time and funding) to assist students in efforts to relate what is studied to their own lives and the world they live. Students need to understand the relevance of what is being taught in the classroom to their lives and their future careers. These connections are not always clear through traditional classroom instruction.

Literature and research tells us that students must have the ability to work well with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, diverse issues and needs, and socioeconomic statuses. However, without experiences in the field working with people, many do not attain these skills and learning experiences before they graduate. Research and methods studies support the implementation of multi-faceted approaches to learning so that skills are improved. This paper challenges faculty to improve their teaching outcomes through the use of authentic service-learning in their courses.

WORKS CITED

Learn and Serve America, The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, "What Is Service Learning?" Learn and Serve, http://www.servicelearning.org/what-service-learning (accessed June 30, 2009).

College of Saint Mary. "Mission of CSM," College of Saint Mary, http://www.csm.edu/About_CSM/Mission_of_CSM/ (accessed June 30, 2009).

Mercy Housing. "Mercy Housing," Mercy Housing, http://www.mercyhousing.org (accessed June 30, 2009).

STEERING COMMITTEE – CARLOW ROUNDTABLE

Mary C. Rothenberger, EdD
Associate Provost
Dean of the Graduate School
Carlow University

Susan O'Rourke, EdD
School of Education
Carlow University

Mary L. Onufer, MS
Graduate Dean's Office
Carlow University

Sister Sheila Carney, RSM
Special Assistant to the President for Mercy Heritage and Service
Carlow University

THE CARLOW UNIVERSITY PRESS ADVISORY BOARD

Jan Beatty, MFA
Louis J. Boyle, PhD
Clare M. Hopkins, PhD
Marilyn Lewellyn, PhD
Robert A. Reed, PsyD
Mary C. Rothenberger, EdD
Louise C. Sciannameo, MLA
Eleanor B. Wymard, PhD

MISSION STATEMENT

Carlow University, a Catholic, women–centered, liberal arts institution embodying the heritage and values of the Sisters of Mercy, engages its diverse community in a process of life-long learning, scholarship, and research. This engagement empowers individuals to think clearly and creatively; to actively pursue intellectual endeavors; to discover, challenge, or affirm cultural and aesthetic values; to respond reverently to God and others; and to embrace an ethic of service for a just and merciful world.

CARLOW ROUNDTABLE