



CARLOW ROUNDTABLE PROCEEDINGS

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Bringing Learning to Light with Collaboration Centers: Integrating Collaborative Pedagogies, Technology Innovations, and Spatial Environments for Academic Excellence

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A number of pedagogies (cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and team-based learning, among others) evidence increased learning outcomes through peer to peer and faculty to student collaboration (Barkley, 2010; Boss & Krauss, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Recent technological and space-planning designs afford opportunities to maximize these educational strategies through collaboration centers (CC) (Long & Ehrmann, 2005; Oblinger, 2006). Student engagement, through the interplay of learners, faculty, technology, and design principles, is supported through these evidence-based educational practices (Figure 1).

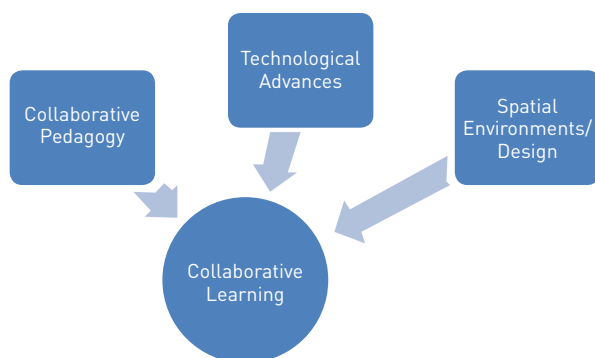


Figure 1.

Collaborative Learning: Convergence of Pedagogy, Technology, and Design

COLLABORATIVE PEDAGOGIES

Collaborative learning is an instructional method in which learners work in groups toward a common academic goal promoting individual accountability, group interaction, and problem solving (Barkley, 2010; Sousa, 2011). A variety of terms related to collaborative pedagogies are frequently used interchangeably. This article will distinguish between a few of them and discuss aspects of technological advances and spatial design that maximize their application. Groups may complete their work in a single session or over several weeks. In the case of team-based learning, teams may work together throughout the semester (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012).

There are theories on how collaborative learning improves the educational and psychological outcomes for students. These can be broadly described as cognitive, social constructivism, and motivational (Johnson & Johnson). Working toward a mutual goal enhances learning and

understanding. Positive goal interdependence promotes higher achievement and greater productivity than does resource interdependence (Johnson, Johnson, Ortiz, & Stanne, 1991). A short description of cooperative learning, problem-based learning, and team-based learning follows.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Cooperative learning focuses on individual work with peer feedback or on a specific, short-term project for one or more class sessions. The instructor provides detailed directions for the student activity, and students work on the assignment, giving each other feedback (O'Donnell & Dansereau, 1992). For group assignments, students might perform a lab experiment, write a report, carry out a project, or prepare a position paper. Creativity is enhanced through sharing ideas, just-in-time editing of work, and discussion of rationales (Johnson, Johnson, Ortiz, & Stanne, 1991). Socratic questioning to guide discussion, critical group reflection, and self-reflection are facilitated by the instructor (Lakey, 2010).

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a methodology that engages students in the active pursuit of data to accurately solve a simulated or real-life problem (Barrows, 1996). Student-centered learning occurs in small groups with teachers acting as facilitators or guides. A problem forms the basis for organized focus and stimulus for learning, strengthening the development and use of problem solving skills. Collaborative student effort is required to analyze and solve problems that reflect real-life situations. Higher order PBL uses unfolding (nested) problem cases that lead to more complex data analysis and decision making over time. It is generative, designed so that students follow different paths, necessitating construction of meaning. PBL is structured for inquiry, through compelling experiences, tapping rich data and primary sources. Students learn with and from each other (Boss & Krauss, 2007). These groups may complete their work in a single session or over several weeks.

TEAM-BASED LEARNING

Team-based learning (TBL) is composed of four components: readiness assurance, permanent teams, peer evaluation (as teams), and application exercises (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Learners are assigned materials to study independently prior to class. Individual learners take a multiple choice exam (I-RAT: Individualized Readiness Assurance Test) at the beginning of class to examine readiness to apply knowledge gained from the pre-class assignment. Then student teams retake the same multiple choice exam (the G-RAT: Group Readiness Assurance Test). Teams receive immediate feedback on their answers via an immediate feedback assessment technique (IF-AT). Teams have the option to write an appeal to the instructor if they believe that a question was unfair or poorly constructed. The instructor (being a content expert) gives feedback on any concepts that were unclear to the learners (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012).

Following the readiness assurance process, teams complete in-class application assignments that promote collaboration, using pre-class assignment knowledge, problem solving/higher order cognitive skills, and identification of learning deficiencies. Throughout the session(s) groups simultaneously share their answers for the application exercises questions. Large group discussion helps strengthen learning (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). TBL is particularly effective for large groups since it involves small group active experiences and offers more faculty interaction than traditional small group experiences.

SHIFT IN STUDENT AND FACULTY ROLES

Collaborative learning pedagogies necessitate a shift in roles for both students and faculty. Students are engaged in learning and lack invisibility, meaning no more passive “hiding” in class. Each student is accountable for direct involvement and sharing of ideas with their peers. Concepts must be directly applied to more realistic situations. Individuals are able to evaluate understanding compared to peers (Barkley, 2010; Boss & Krauss, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Students encourage and support the learning of the others in the group and can’t “hitchhike” off of the work of others.

Faculty roles also shift from instructor-centered to student-centered. Teachers become facilitators of learning by providing clear guidelines and directions. Students gain such important skills as managing group process, ensuring individual accountability, and offering Socratic questioning to cue inquiry and deeper thinking (Lakey, 2010; Taylor, n.d.).

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through collaborative learning, learners are engaged in highly dynamic interchanges of resources, ideas, analysis, and solutions to assignments. They are able to co-create outcomes more efficiently, accelerating decision-making and learning. Reported learning outcomes include enhanced learner engagement, group work, and idea exchange (Barkley, 2010; Boss & Krauss, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Deeper thinking regarding individual work is particularly important for weaker students who have been shown to achieve at a higher level through collaborative learning (Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Students learn to give and accept feedback and can reflect on individual work in comparison to the work of other students. Mutual goals and interdependence promote greater academic achievement and productivity than simply the sharing of resources (Johnson, Johnson, Ortiz, & Stanne, 1991).

TECHNOLOGY

For collaborative learning to be maximized, technological enhancements are necessary. Some of the technologies that support collaborative methodologies include capture/replay processing that encourages “think through” interactions; real-time recording that provides group privacy and is

careful not to destroy social comfort; writeable surfaces throughout the classroom that capture and store the things written on them (Classroom 2000: Serving education through ubiquitous computing); real-time blogging during which students build collaborative notes on a course site or wiki; classroom chat rooms for students' meta-conversations; and access to intuitive videoconferencing, allowing virtual conversations to become comfortable extensions of classroom discussion.

Devices for mobile learning include wireless-enabled laptops/tablet PCs, wireless keyboards and mice laptops, mobile phones, and digital cameras. Wired computing and wireless networks are also needed, and bandwidth provisions must accommodate safe access and quick and efficient downloads of rich media objects.

SPATIAL DESIGN

Determining what activities the space must support is of utmost importance, in order to optimize intentional higher-order learning (Oblinger, 2006). Prior to the renovation of MIT's Guggenheim Laboratory, for example, the university decided which learning activities were critical for students to master and created spaces that would best support those activities). Once the activities and the space requirements are known and prioritized, design can commence (Long & Ehrmann, 2005). Specific architectural design should support learning. For instance, instead of meeting in the same classroom each time, classes may need to move to different rooms as needed. Consideration needs to be given to specialized learning spaces which might include thinking/conceiving spaces for discussion and deliberation; creativity spaces for composing, structuring, and brainstorming; presenting and broadcasting spaces; and demonstrations/simulation laboratories for practice and experiential learning. Flexibility should be considered: students should be able to easily move chairs and tables into pairings, groupings, or circles for whole class discussion or seminars (Collaborative learning: Small group learning page).

In addition to appropriate furniture for the physical learning environment, electrical access and natural light need to be considered. (Jisc; Oblinger, 2006). Numerous wall and/or floor outlets or charging stations are needed to support personal technological devices. Natural light creates an atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

COLLABORATION CENTERS

For collaboration to foster creativity and innovation, teams need high performance spaces that are more inviting and dynamic to augment their work. Examples of collaboration centers are found in a number of universities throughout the United States. The Student-Centered Activities for Large Enrollment Undergraduate Programs (SCALE-UP Project) at North Carolina University, the Law School Computer Lab at the University of Notre Dame, Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Technology Enabled Active Learning (TEAL) project, the Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, and the Active Learning Classroom research projects at the University of Minnesota offer a variety of collaborative design features and educational methodologies supported by technology to enhance collaborative learning.

While on a much smaller scale, a collaboration center at the College of Saint Mary, Omaha, Nebraska was created using media: scapes (media: scape), incorporating technology-augmented learning work spaces. A small group of two—eight students plugs in electronic devices (lab tops, iPads, etc.) to a central power source and, by pressing a puck (switch), are able to project and share information on integrated flat screens. The structural design focuses small-group work to the flat panel rather than on individual laptops. With a switch of the puck, learners interactively share information from mobile devices. Multiple workspaces within a classroom promote team synergism for larger student numbers. The faculty role moves to that of facilitator, shifting to learner-centered consultation (Figure 2). Media: scape workstations allow students to do individual work and enable them to share it quickly, preventing solo work or situations where one individual takes on the greatest workload. Media: scapes enrich team collaboration, making information integral and inclusive and amplifying everyone's ideas. The spacial design allows teams to co-create learning together, resulting in a seamless exchange of ideas between team members.



Figure 2.

*Students Collaborating
at a media: scape*

SUMMARY

Whether meeting virtually or across the table, collaboration centers create space where learners are engaged in a highly dynamic interchange of resources, ideas, analysis, and solutions to assignments, achieving outcomes more efficiently, accelerating decision-making, learning, and team work. Outcomes include quick idea exchange, improved brainstorming, increased engagement, enhanced group work, faster problem-solving of increasingly complex issues, increased higher-order thinking, and augmented digital sharing of resources (Barkley, 2010; Boss & Krauss, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Sweet & Michaelsen, 2012). Collaboration centers transform educational processes, reimagining the relationship of environmental design, technological access, student and faculty roles, and educational methodologies. Maximizing experiential learning with emerging technologies and a collaborative environment better prepares students for the fast-paced working world of their future.

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Impact of Mercy Leadership Academy: Teaching, Service, and Research

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How do Mercy values enlighten and enrich the teaching and administration environments of Mercy higher education institutions in the 21st century? How did participation in the Mercy Leadership Academy (MLA) at Gwynedd Mercy University impact this author's teaching, service, and research in a faculty role? This author and 15 other faculty and administrators at the university were privileged to participate in the 18-month MLA program which involved spiritually stimulating conversations, enriched discussions, delicious meals, and spirited community. This spiritual and intellectual experience, infused with warm Mercy hospitality, further affirmed and ignited participants' commitments to more intentionally integrate Mercy values into their respective roles at the university.

BACKGROUND

Prior research, teaching, and service activities have informed this author of the value of a Mercy education grounded in the liberal arts. A qualitative research study based on Paul Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological approach uncovered that baccalaureate nursing student (BSN) graduates challenged their own pre-existing biases and negative assumptions after interacting with homeless shelter individuals. They emerged with a new regard for the dignity of each individual, with such comments as "Our discussion made me move beyond suburban, white America" and "It made me realize a different point of view at times" and "You definitely have some of your thoughts and biases challenged" (Hermann, Jones, Winterhalter, 2012).

The development of a capstone leadership and management course which incorporated a service-learning leadership project is another example focusing on teaching service activities. The course's service component is based upon Mercy values and is in line with the social policy statement of the American Nurses Association (ANA) that guides the nursing professional. The overall goal of the project included the cultivation of holistic baccalaureate nursing students as professional Mercy graduates and citizens of the world, emphasizing social responsibility. Some of the students selected local settings such as homeless shelters or homes for special needs children or adults. Others immersed themselves in an international mission experience to the Dominican Republic, where they provided basic health assessment care to residents in the sugar-cane communities known as bateyes.

Nursing literature and professional organizations strongly support curricular goals that foster the development of social responsibility within the nursing student. Kelly, Connor, Kun, and Salmon (2008) point out that the ANA Code of Ethics and the International Council of Nurses emphasize

education that informs and engages students in an understanding of the barriers to health and the complex social problems of our time, such as poverty and unsafe and inadequate living conditions, as part of the ethical and social responsibilities of the nurse. Mill, Astle, Ogilvie, and Gastaldo (2010) urge nursing educators to develop strategies and experiences that foster the development of local and global citizenship. Student experiences with social justice assist them in transferring a sense of social responsibility into their professional careers (Redman & Clark, 2002). This calling aligns with the Mercy mission and with the learning outcomes of Gwynedd Mercy University.

Participation in the MLA enabled deeper personal reflection on the research findings and on teaching and service-learning activities. This reflection helped the author recognize the importance of the continued integration of Mercy values in teaching, research, and service activities. Furthermore, in addition to the continued integration of Mercy values, more explicit identification of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy in the 21st century is warranted.

IMPACT OF MERCY LEADERSHIP ACADEMY (MLA)

MLA participation prompted an intentional identification of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy through the development of a phenomenological qualitative study designed to capture the meaning and significance of an international mission trip to the Dominican Republic in early 2013. The 24 junior and senior Mercy nursing students who made the trip were invited to participate in this study by anonymously recording their perceptions based on their interactions with the residents in the bateyes. They gathered their observations and reflective comments in a double-entry journal. Guided by specific question prompts, students were requested to select a Critical Concern of the Sisters of Mercy (Earth, Immigration, Racism, Women and Children, Non-violence) and connect this concern to their perceptions. A psychiatric nurse was available for student counseling, in case the reflection generated upsetting responses.

In preparation for this service-learning experience, students familiarized themselves with the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and were educated about the logistics of using a double-entry journal. The objectives of this type of journaling were: (1) to reflect on the lifestyle of a person in the Dominican Republic compared to their own (2) to engage with the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy and apply these concerns to observations in the Dominican Republic, and (3) to reflect on the Dominican Republic experience and its' impact on the student's life as a person, professional nurse, and citizen of the world.

Upon arrival in the Dominican Republic, students were reminded of the challenge inspired by the Sisters of Mercy: "Our challenge is to foster a contemplative spirit, to be moved to act in solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the earth to bring about a more merciful and just world" (Sisters of Mercy Hermanas de la Misericordia). In addition, each student was given a copy of the booklet, *Nurturing the Global Citizen Within*, and was asked to read and reflect on the messages in the booklet. Later, students shared insights gained from reflecting on both the Critical Concerns and the booklet.

See Table 1 for the double-entry journal structure and specific prompt questions for the days in the Dominican Republic.

Table 1.

OBSERVATIONS	REFLECTIONS
Feb. 25: What did you observe? What did you encounter?	Feb. 25: What emotions did you experience as you reflect on the day's observations or encounters? What does the phrase "the luck of birth" mean to you as you reflect upon the day? What was your overall reaction to the day?
Feb. 26: Select one or more of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy (earth, racism, nonviolence, women and children, immigration). What did you observe or encounter today related to the critical concern/s?	Feb. 26: How can reflection on the Critical Concerns in the Dominican Republic impact your own life? How does this reflection assist you in expanding your world view? How can you continue to nurture the global citizen within you?
Feb. 27: Select one or more of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy (earth, racism, nonviolence, women and children, immigration). What did you observe or encounter today related to the critical concern/s?	Feb. 27: How can reflection on the Critical Concerns in the Dominican Republic impact your own life? How does this reflection assist you in expanding your view of the world? How can you role model being an informed global citizen and professional nurse when you return home?
Feb. 28: What did you observe? What did you encounter?	Feb. 28: Describe the most moving or powerful experience over the past days? How has this experience changed or not changed you as a person or nurse? What does this experience mean to your life?

Student reflections were gathered March 3-10, 2013, the week following the trip to the Dominican Republic. Students were asked to respond to the following question: How did your service to the residents of the Dominican Republic in the bateyes enhance your commitment to social change related to one or more of the Critical Concerns?

Students first addressed the idea of luck of birth:

Basically means that the only reason I am the one coming here to help them is because I got the privilege of being born in America, it's the luck of the draw....

Another student commented: *My first thought was 'what did I do to deserve what I have in my life'...I do come out of this day with more appreciation for my life than words can describe...*

A third student wrote: *Even though I consider myself lucky for being born in America, a small part of me envied the families in the bateyes because they were content, they were happy, and they didn't "need" more...*

Concerning the Critical Concern, Women and Children:

A student commented: *There were children everywhere with only bare minimal clothing on, mothers walking around trying to get any help they could...* The student's response: *I really had a hard time taking it in.*

Another student explained: *During an assessment, an 11-year-old girl told us that she was sexually active. The student's response: I tried to explain to her that she does not have to give her body to be worth something. Women do not have very much freedom. They use their bodies in hopes that they will become pregnant and find a husband to care for them.*

Regarding the Critical Concern, The Earth:

A student commented: *I got to perform community assessment; people did not have a method of getting safe water directly... Had to travel to fill up a large bucket, the sewage system was barbaric...* The student's response: *I can educate myself on changes to preserve the world.*

Referring to the Critical Concern, Racism:

A student commented: *All the kids were so happy to play the games with us. They were of different races. The student's response: I gained an amazing example to live by at home...I can look past a person's skin color to respect human dignity of all.*

Regarding the Critical Concern, Non-violence:

A student commented: Something that we all claim that we want in our lives...even though the environment was run-down... There were no visible weapons and, when asked, the residents stated that they felt safe. The student's response: It struck me how the families seemed dedicated to each other, which is a fundamental part of having a community of peace and non-violence.

CONCERNING THE CRITICAL CONCERN, IMMIGRATION:

A student commented: *I was partnered with an interpreter and started to inquire about her life story. The student's response: I was so inspired by her story and truly found a new perspective on the issue of immigration. I have expanded my view of the world because the concept of interdependence not only makes sense, but I witnessed and experienced it firsthand.*

Sample responses to the last prompt were conveyed by a student who accompanied a faculty member to a bateye where a very sick woman was suffering from a brain tumor. Despite the lack of resources, the student commented: *This was very eye-opening to me. The people had absolutely no resources and are trying to provide the best care to the woman, and they are succeeding.* Another student commented: *I was hoping to be transformed by this experience, but I could not predict nor fathom the intensity and depth of change. I feel I truly understand the importance of global citizenship...the blinders of being an American citizen have been removed...I now feel an investment and pride in the global society, for we are all brothers and sisters.*

In addition to a recognition of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, other themes were identified that connect to The Four Hallmarks of a Mercy Education: dignity of person; academic excellence and lifelong learning; education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit; and compassion and justice to women and children.

Regarding the dignity of the person, one of the students took a Polaroid picture of a bateye resident and gave it to the resident for his/her personal possession. The resident's reaction to this gesture was overwhelmingly positive. Concerning academic excellence and lifelong learning, students identified the impact of economic poverty evidenced by inadequate housing, a lack of clean water, and overall health care conditions. They were motivated to increase their knowledge of these factors, with a desire to improve the human condition. Regarding education of the whole person: body, mind, and spirit, student comments verified an appreciation of the holistic education they had received and affirmed the importance for all human beings to have this opportunity. As described previously, in the Critical Concern of Women and Children, students readily identified the enormous obstacles that all the residents of the bateyes had to overcome, especially women and children.

CONCLUSION

Some preliminary implications from this study for Mercy nursing education involve the integration of the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy more explicitly throughout the curriculum, as well as connection of these Concerns to service-learning activities. Encouraging students to build community among themselves, increasing opportunities for students to interact with different cultural groups, and empowering students to recognize the positive differences they have made in clients' lives is imperative in informing future mission trips and in developing socially responsible nurses who are global citizens, grounded in a 21-century Mercy worldview.

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Veterans and the Mercy Mission

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In 2008, Saint Xavier University began to participate in the Yellow Ribbon Program, a federal program to help former soldiers reintegrate into civilian society. The university provides various levels of support for these former warriors including financial, advising, academic, and social support. Veterans are encouraged to seek the level of assistance needed. Currently we have about 80 veterans enrolled. As a Vietnam veteran and a faculty member, I was invited to contribute to the planning and execution of our version of the Yellow Ribbon Program.

In many ways, veterans are a population at risk, and it is a Mercy tradition to serve populations at risk. Often veterans are vulnerable because they may be fragile from participating in, or witnessing, acts of inhumanity for which they were not prepared. They are a minority population because their experiences put them outside the norm. Sometimes they can't speak across the divide. Connecting their experiences to those of the average student might take enormous effort. Validating their experiences might be beyond the skill of some faculty.

As with racism, now subtle and toned down but still prevalent, so it is with discrimination against returning GIs. It is easy to feel, yet difficult to pin down. After 9/11, and the fife and drum extravaganza that followed, many young men and women went into the service with the same sort of patriotism and sense of adventure that we did in the early years of Vietnam. Soldiers have returned to a more positive public acceptance, however, one not mimicked in the work place.

The economic downturn that followed closely on the heels of the huge military build-up, and the costs of invading other countries while neglecting local infrastructure, has made employers cautious. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is no longer a new diagnosis. Veterans have demonstrated difficulties in reintegrating into civil society. There may be medical expenses as well as social disruption resulting from hiring a returning vet. Military training is not the traditional training for peacetime workers. Choosing to serve in the military may also be interpreted as an indication of other difficulties in the home, or in the background, of the returning soldier. Openings in employment are few, so why take any risks to the bottom line by hiring unstable veterans as employees?

The Yellow Ribbon Program is one effort to aid soldiers in their transition back to civilian life. When I was asked to participate in some meaningful way in the Yellow Ribbon Program, I considered how I could be of some service to my fellow veterans. In my day, I had been only one month back from the war zone when I started at San Jose State University. I was on a short chain. Many events could easily trigger my anger or my incredulity. I was attending the university on full battle alert. Loud noises triggered "duck-and-cover" reactions. Difficult dialog triggered hostile responses and a quick return to a "fight or flight" posture. The first few months of college were

remarkably challenging for me, and for my wife, who returned to college with me. She helped to keep me contained and to bring me back to the present moment and the immediate tasks before me.

In a conversation with Sister Sue Sanders, vice president of mission and heritage here at Saint Xavier, I discussed creating a support group called Conversations Across Wars. Couldn't soldiers benefit from talking with other soldiers? Certainly veterans knew some of the difficult transitions to civilian life that these young men and women might face. And were not hospitality and respect core values at this Mercy institution?

Sister Sue recognized my enthusiasm for a project of conversation, saying that I seemed to have embraced it as more of a mission than as just a way to work with Yellow Ribbon folk. She held a memory of our conversation as she wrote a grant to support our radio station, WXAV 88.3 FM. What if we created a radio show of interviews with veterans by a veteran? she wondered. Would conversation flow more easily if it were veteran talking to veteran? Sister Sue proposed such a show modeled after her show, *God Matters*. We would allow veterans to tell their human stories. She wrote me into her grant proposal.

Once Saint Xavier got the grant, Sister Sue approached me with the idea. Generating conversation, even healing conversation, with veterans, and conducting interviews and hosting a radio show were not, to my mind, exactly the same thing. As I hesitated, because I hated to read orally and feared the microphone, Sister Sue encouraged, saying "well, I already wrote you into the grant." Peter Kreten, radio station director, assured me he could help me overcome my fears about being on the radio. He could make my uneven reading flow. It was Peter who made my work possible.

Peter and I thought we could knock out 10 interviews over the course of two semesters and have our broadcast. We've interviewed 15 veterans thus far. Finding willing veterans and creating scripts that could showcase the interviews proved to be time consuming. We are more than two years into the project. We created our first batch of radio shows. But we have continued conducting interviews and are creating a second set of 10 shows.

Surprisingly, our conversations were not limited to veterans in our Yellow Ribbon Program. In fact, recent veterans resisted telling their stories to a microphone. Our spokespersons cover World War II, Korea, Afghanistan, and the two Gulf wars. Two Vietnam vets were willing to record stories. None of these folks portray themselves as heroes. They are folks who stepped into their duties with patriotic hearts, survived the hardships of war, and made a place for themselves, back in civilian life.

We made contact with Honor Flight Chicago, a group that takes World War II and Korean War vets to the monuments in Washington, D.C. These vets are then given a ceremony honoring each of them for their service. For the Korean War vets, this may be the first time they've gotten public recognition. Honor Flight identified for us quite a few of the older veterans we interviewed.

As we honed our show for a late February start, we hoped to expose the social commitment these veterans displayed through their patriotism and service, their commitment to their fellow soldiers, and their personal roles in our country's history. I have been honored by the conversations in which

these veterans engaged, and I hope our broadcasts honored them. But I think there is more to it than the production of our radio show.

I am told that James Keenan, S.J. (2004) believed part of Mercy was the effort to enter into the chaos of another person's life with the intent to help. When someone honors you with a story, a truth from his or her life, he or she opens a window into his or her soul. Truth tends to compel compassionate listening and it is instinctual to want to help. Amazingly, witnessing another's truth, listening deeply, is in some way tossing a lifeline to a floundering person. Listening is an act that both enters one into the chaos of another and helps with the healing process of that other.

I took the stories told by our most recently returned veterans and listened to their uncut tapes. In the taping, these stories had their own momentum. In listening, I've attempted to locate a central issue that the teller wanted to convey. We used the same series of questions throughout our interviewing to guide our guests, but each veteran took his or her response a particular direction. I retell three of these stories here.

I

His platoon thought he was weak, did not stand up for himself. Did he think he was different? Yes, a little. He was religious. He wore a cross, carried the Bible, and had a Crucifix near his bunk. He was transferred from Korea to Germany and from there deployed to Iraq. He had no real trouble in Korea, though he spent time alone or with one Korean friend, but in Germany, where they were staging for combat, that was a different story.

When he arrived in Germany it was to join an already established platoon. These boys started hazing him almost from the first day. He called it roughhousing, but his glasses were broken more than once, and he would have shirt burns where the fabric would chafe his skin. And he could never fully relax or rest easy.

Our interview method was to meet over drinks or a dinner for an off-the-record discussion first. An open invitation was sent out over the campus e-mail to all known GI's. Join us for a beer and supper at Gilhooley's, our campus bar. Andy was one of our takers. As the group talked over dinner, he told me he would do the interview if he could talk a little about bullying. He was six feet and muscular, so I thought he had bullied someone and was feeling guilty. I guided him, during the formal interview, with questions in and out of the Iraq experiences. It was not until about 45 minutes into the interview that he became more explicit about the bullying experience.

I finally asked "what stories stay with you from Iraq?" He talked about witnessing the systematic butchering of what began as a live goat on a picnic table in a public park and how primitive and shocking it was. Passers-by would name the part they were willing to pay for and the butcher would hack off that part. That image stays with him.

I used humor throughout the interview and great caution about sounding judgmental. I said something about that being a scapegoat who missed the escape part. And, laughingly, said by way of encouragement, "any stories about people bullying?"

They were hanging in the attic of the barrack, a large space for group relaxing. The air conditioning made that possible in Iraqi heat. Some of the boys were playing a bowling game with a roll of duck tape. Andy sat with his back propped on an upright pillar that came up through the attic to support the roof. He saw the tape roll past, but it did not return. Two men grabbed him and ran some tape around him and the beam. He shook free. Six men finally pinned him and taped his arms behind him and his legs together. As they leaned him against the pillar they discovered only enough tape left to go around him once. By then he was limp and his glasses had been broken, again.

A sergeant came into the room and shouted, "Stop horsing around." Most of the men took one last poke at Andy and stepped away. Then one man grabbed his legs and started dragging him to another part of the room. He took a couple of hits from seated men as he was dragged past. Laughing, the sergeant said, "Alright, alright, I said that was enough, now knock it off." The perpetrator dropped Andy's legs, letting his heels bounce on the hard floor. Most of the men were in stocking feet.

The next morning he was told to report to the security platoon, the one that provided security for the company captain, and where all the "misfits" were assigned. The boys had made their point. He was there only a week and was reassigned to the scouts where he was a driver for folks who went out in the community looking for enemy movement. Andy only had a couple of weeks left before he was shipped back to Germany with his original platoon, but folks were in transit home, or to other assignments, so they no longer needed the entertainment of bullying.

From Ohio, and a family of three generations of Army, Andy felt betrayed by his own unit and not welcome in the Army. He hoped to become a priest, but shortly after our interview he left Saint Xavier to visit his sister in Oregon. He did not return to campus and now lives in Nebraska. He still seemed ill at ease with the person he had become.

We sent him the interview, and he released it for our use. We have a rough take of each interview and then we cut it up to assemble our stories for the radio show. We chose not to use the bullying in the shows we have done so far, but this was the story that bothered Andy most, and that he wanted to tell.

II

Russ came to our second open invitation to veterans who had identified with the Yellow Ribbon Program. He was earning his MBA, had been in school since January, and had gotten back from Afghanistan in July. It was now March. He was remarkably muscular with barbed wire tattooed around his biceps.

He came across the crowded bar in a rapid, nearly angry, walk, leaned in over the table, interrupting conversation, and said, "Are you the man I'm supposed to talk to!" I was a little startled, and actually frightened by his intensity. "My wife says I have to talk to someone about my experiences." Pete, my partner in this project, and I looked at each other, each wanting to say, "she means someone who can help you," but neither of us wanted to turn him away. He intently eyed each of us.

“Of course,” I said. “Do you want a beer?”

“I will only have one! I haven’t got much time.”

“Well, let me explain what it is that we are doing. We are looking for a few vets willing to tell their stories, for a recording that we would use on the radio, with other stories. We have no particular slant, and you would have complete control over what is broadcasted. You will hear the recording before it would go on air and can tell us if there is anything you don’t want on it. And we would love to hear your story.”

He sat and talked a little background with us. He explained that he had been a company executive officer of logistics until he had a couple of months in country and had then moved to operations reconnaissance platoon leader, leading a platoon of men on missions that served the larger battalion. He was usually six to 10 miles out from the forward operating base, and his platoon was broken into squads of eight to 10 men who worked in pairs observing the enemy and making certain that plans for movement, at company or battalion level, did not lead into dense enemy contact.

He said he wanted to talk about a couple of incidents that happened during his tour, and he was eager to talk to us for the radio. He set a date and left, with the same intensity with which he arrived. Pete and I had a little side chat while the other guests continued to talk to each other. Pete’s comment was “I hope this all goes well, that man is intense.”

Russ followed my questioning more completely than any of the other interviewees. We talked for over two hours. He came to our studio looking as intense as he had the night at the pub. Three of us were there when Russ came to the station, Pete and me, and our consultant, Steve, as we all thought there might be safety in numbers. But Russ just wanted to tell his story, and we recorded it without a break.

He told us how his team worked, and what daily life was like for a recon platoon. He explained how they used their Strykers to draw near to an observation point, and then moved out in pairs on foot. He carried his own radio to reach battalion, but each squad leader had a radio, as well, so they could coordinate movements and call in helicopters and artillery fire.

I sensed he had a particular story to tell. He had mentioned it that first night, but avoided it in our interview until near the end. I probed and finally got him to tell what he seemed to want to tell.

They had moved into an area where there had been problems along the road. Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) had taken out a number of convoys and this time the whole battalion would be moving forward through the area. He knew his vigilance could save lives.

He and his team had used their Strykers and moved to an area close to the trouble spot, located a hill with a view of the road, and set up observation points. Not long after being in place they saw a car moving down the roadway but acting out of the ordinary. It would progress a little way and then stop over to the side. Two figures got out and moved to the back of the car. They opened the trunk

and seemed to do something. They got back in the car and moved forward. This happened three or four times. Our captain and his partner were pretty certain they were witnessing a bomb planting crew.

They waited for the car to draw close where they could watch the movements and provide sniper fire if needed, and they called in the choppers. Two choppers bore down on the car, hitting it with rockets and 50-caliber machine gun fire. Just as the choppers moved into strike formation a man jumped from the car and ran off into the desert. The other figures in the car had been caught in the barrage.

Russ' team approached the scene to confirm the kill. All were horrified to find a family, two women and a girl wounded and in bad shape, a man and a boy dead. The trunk, where they hoped to find bomb materials or shovels, contained a large number of unhurt ducks. The families had been relocating a flock of ducks. Their movements had something to do with the ducks. No bomb materials were found.

Of course the mistake had to be reported up the command. Everyone not in the field second-guessed Russ and his team. They were labeled murderers, and people at headquarters said those "scouts" have no respect for life. The man who escaped filed complaints, and all the military brass turned on Russ and made his error in judgment nearly criminal. No one up the line of command took any responsibility. Russ and his men have to live with the fact that in war innocent people get killed!

Russ is a caring human. He said he took confession much more seriously in the war. Nearly daily, he took out his Bible and flicked open a page, ran his hand down the page, and selected a random passage to read. It was his form of prayer. He wanted to be right with God should his time be at hand. Russ said he wanted his story to be told so that people might be "less quick to judge" returning warriors.

III

Cindy Sheehan spoke at Saint Xavier about the loss of her son in a purposeless war. I went to hear her, thankful someone was speaking against the war; Karen went in order to protest the university bringing her to speak. The audience was divided, but weighted against her speaking. They drowned out Cindy's reading of her son's poem with chants and catcalls.

Of course, I knew Karen as a fellow faculty member, and I knew she had only recently returned from Iraq. So when I asked her if she would speak about her experiences, she remembered me as an antiwar protester and was quite skeptical. Peter, my partner, knew her by reputation as one of the most popular nursing instructors. We invited her to one of our gatherings for drinks and food.

She thoroughly enjoyed the comradeship of the other young veterans who came that evening, and she listened as we told our purpose and method. She phoned me the next day to say that she wanted the opportunity to tell her story, again. Could she bring her two kids, now nearly out of their teen

years, as they had never heard her story. We set it up for the following week around each of our teaching schedules.

Karen's reserve unit was prepared for an overseas rotation; the unit's first. She'd been in the reserves for 18 years, since college, and had reached the rank of major. Though well prepared, the unit was held up for three months at Ft. Steward, Georgia, waiting for their assignment. Karen said ambiguity defined her life for the next three years.

Finally they were assigned to a combat support hospital in Kuwait City. It was a six-month assignment, which morphed into a year. But the year passed, mostly receiving troops from field hospitals in Iraq and preparing them for transport to Germany. Just a little shy of a year, on Easter Sunday morning, her unit, which had been waiting on the tarmac for a flight home, were loaded into a C-130 and transported to Bagdad. It was a night landing, and in 2004 US military personnel did not travel on land at night. So they slept at the airport as best they could.

The next morning her unit was divided into three parts and she was in the part assigned to a field hospital in the Green Zone. She was normally an intensive care nurse, though, until now, she'd been serving in logistic, being certain everyone got to where they were supposed to be. She was newly assigned night duty in a hospital ward.

Karen, now a lieutenant colonel, outranked all the other nurses on the floor. They watched her with doubt, thinking she would hide behind her rank and never do much at all. "I had to prove to them that I knew what I was doing," she recalls. "I had trained 18 years to do my part in this war. I knew that soldiers on the battlefield were able to do so much more for America than I was. I worked hard in those long nighttime hours. At last, I was assigned my own patients and began to gain the respect of those around me."

A young sergeant had taken shrapnel in an explosion of an IED. It entered his head just below his right ear and exited just above his left ear. "We were making him as comfortable as we could while he was dying."

Karen had never lost a patient, but a mentor instructor back in nursing school had told her that no one should die alone. She shouldered that instruction with compassion. She made a point of being with this young soldier as much as she could be during her shift. She was most unhappy about the day nurse who drew back from this client. She felt strongly the need to pass on the lesson she'd learned from her mentor.

One day, the commanding officer of the young sergeant came to visit. He was ill at ease, stood in the doorway, and was just about to bolt when Karen came over and took his hand and walked him over to the sergeant. "Sit down," she told him. "Hold his hand. Let him feel that you are present." As the young officer left, an hour or so later, he stopped Karen and thanked her.

As it happened, she was with the sergeant when he died. She was very present, holding his hand and wiping his bandaged brow. She felt the life pass from him. She called the team that would transport

him to the morgue, but she needed to go with them, too. She went to the morgue and she made sure the body would be shipped to his parents.

She said that her most moving experience was as a witness. They had a young boy, who was probably twelve but was small and more like a seven-year-old, perhaps because of early malnutrition. He had been hit by a half-track, armored vehicle. His lower half was a mess, but the nurses had done everything correctly for the boy's treatment. He had been there for six or eight weeks. He was to stay until he was well enough to transfer out of the Green Zone to a civilian hospital, where his family might visit.

Though they had given him all the appropriate care, the boy was failing to thrive. No one seemed to know what to do with him, and they feared he would die soon. Karen was explaining a particularly bad night to the day nurse who shared the same patient. The day nurse turned to the young boy and lifted him out of his bed. She held his body close to hers and rocked him. Karen said it marked a turning point for the boy and became part of his treatment. She said, "I watched that young lieutenant holding and rocking the child, as any mother might, and I kissed her on her head for genius and compassion." This child survived.

CONCLUSION

No one story speaks for the experience of humans at war. Each veteran holds on to something essential that makes his or her story unique, purposeful, or painful. It is his or her war, and it is a truth that needs to be spoken. As soldiers transition back to civilian life, many need to be heard, validated. The distance between the two worlds is often daunting. A witness, a compassionate listener, may help bridge the distance with less anxiety. We, the community of the university, through our hospitality and compassion, can ease their return to the fold of humanity at peace.

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Literature and the Light: Reading in a Mercy Context

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Early one morning 47 years ago, as a sophomore engineering student at Villanova University, I sat in a classroom in Vasey Hall awaiting the start of a course entitled Modern American Poetry. As I glanced through the class text, a book incorporating the work of writers such as Elizabeth Bishop, Richard Eberhart, Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Richard Wilbur, and others, my expectations were not high.

I was enrolled in the class because I was required to take an English course, and this one fit my schedule. Had it not been for that frustrating matter of “core requirements,” I would have filled my day with additional math or science courses—the courses I loved, the courses that “mattered.” I would never have chosen a poetry course; even among English courses, poetry would have been my last choice. But it fit.

As things turned out, that course “fit” in ways I never anticipated. Within a week or two, I was looking forward to “modern poetry” and poems such as Bishop’s “The Fish” or Eberhart’s “What If Remembrance” with more enthusiasm than that with which I approached any other course—including my beloved math and science courses. Poetry, taught as one of Henry James’s “windows” on the world, alerted me to the fact that, while I was thoroughly enjoying the symmetry and challenges of math and sciences, I had been missing a human focus. I delighted in exploring abstractions and my own mind, but I had left little room for the human connections.

Modern American Poetry changed all that. It changed everything—ruined my life, as I tell my students, usually with a smile. I went from studying the world—objectively—to seeing both the world and other people more fully than I had done before. Language, with its rhythms and colors and even tastes, somehow challenged me to live more fully and to feel more fully human.

I never looked back from that point.

Flash forward 26 years to the point where I was retiring from the Air Force and my position as professor of English at the United States Air Force Academy. My time at the Academy had been an extraordinary gift, a chance to spend my days engaging with brilliant colleagues and gifted students. I moved from the Academy to Mount Aloysius College, a small Mercy College on a mountaintop in western Pennsylvania.

It was at Mount Aloysius that I received another, perhaps more important, gift. I was introduced to the life and teachings of Mother Catherine McAuley, and her story helped me more fully understand something I had glimpsed in that classroom in Vasey Hall: the parallels between entering imaginatively into the world of a literary character and using the imagination to share the perceptions of another human being.

The centrality of what is frequently termed the Golden Rule within the Judeo-Christian tradition—Love thy neighbor as thyself—is affirmed in Deuteronomy and Leviticus in the Old Testament as well as in the Gospels of Luke, Mark, and Matthew. Similar ethics of reciprocity are to be found in many other wisdom traditions—Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Taoism, and others. Recognizing that almost universal centrality, however, does not make loving one’s neighbor as oneself a simple matter. How can we love our neighbors as ourselves without knowing them as well as we know ourselves?

Catherine McAuley had an answer. As Joanna Regan and Isabelle Keiss put it in *Tender Courage: A Reflection on the Life and Spirit of Catherine McAuley, First Sister of Mercy*, “She connected the rich to the poor, the healthy to the sick, the educated and skilled to the uninstructed, the influential to those of no consequence, the powerful to the weak to do the work of God on earth” (135). Catherine’s gift was the insight into the “ignorance” of both the uneducated have nots and the educated haves:

Having experienced the rich humanity of the poor she had visited in cottages, huts, and classrooms, Catherine knew them not as barbarians but as victims with many deficiencies to be addressed. She also knew that the rich, lacking the experiences which she had had that helped her to understand the poor, were victims of false assumptions and inherited prejudices. (Regan and Keiss 28)

The miracle of Baggot Street is the success in bringing those groups together, with the connections made between the educated and uneducated in the classrooms being the foundation of mutual understanding.

Rightly considered, the experience of literature has the potential to stimulate an expansion of consciousness, moving the individual reader or listener beyond the confines of her or his life experiences and making possible a connection with the Other. As the philosopher Kenneth Burke suggests, literature provides “equipments” for living (304). The study of literature is, among other things, about opening our eyes to the Other. When such a connection becomes the ground for love of that Other—i.e. my neighbor—Catherine McAuley’s ultimate purpose is supported. And, of course, empowerment through literature is a subset of empowerment through education, a central concern for Catherine McAuley throughout her short life.

In *Why Read?* Mark Edmundson maintains,

What’s missing from the current dispensation is a sense of hope when we confront major works, the hope that they will tell us something we do not know about the world or give us an entirely fresh way to apprehend experience. (46)

Catherine McAuley’s efforts to establish connections between the educated and uneducated were a practical means to help both groups see the world afresh through personal encounters. Her efforts fostered mutual *knowing*, knowing the Other, the neighbor.

Using literature classes as vehicles for helping students apprehend experience more broadly is a way

of helping students *connect* with people who differ significantly from the neighbors they know. At a micro level, that is not unlike the kind of connecting at which Catherine McAuley was so successful.

Just about any literary anthology can be a treasure chest when it comes to encouraging students to enter imaginatively into the experiences of the Other. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's frequently anthologized short story "The Yellow Wallpaper," for example, has sometimes been seen as a horror story, akin to something written by Edgar Allen Poe, because the reader gets to watch in horror as the female narrator gradually loses her mind. However, the story, based on Gilman's own experience of being treated for neurasthenia with the "rest cure" of Dr. Silas Weir Mitchell, is as much an illustration of the damaging effects of one human being attempting to control another human being, even when the motivation is love, as it is a horror story. As the narrator, Jane, tells us, her husband "says that with my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fantasies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency" (318). The husband, John, confines Jane in a rented "colonial mansion." At the end of the story, John has fainted after discovering that Jane, believing herself to be someone who had been imprisoned behind the "yellow wallpaper" of her room, has torn off all the paper and is crawling around the perimeter of the room. Fully disassociated from her identity as "Jane," she creeps over her unconscious husband, saying, "I've got out at last . . . in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back" (328).

Reading "The Yellow Wallpaper" and being drawn in to the narrator's perspective through Gilman's use of a first-person point of view, students are stunned to recognize the damaging effects an assumption of knowing what is best for another human being can have. As many of my students are enrolled in health-related programs, they get a double whammy: John, in addition to being Jane's husband, is a doctor. Students studying to be nurses or physicians' assistants will sometimes see their own desires to fix people reflected in John's well-intentioned efforts to help Jane. They've shared Jane's perspective, even as it was going off the rails. In reading the story, they're looking through the "wrong" end of the scope, seeing things they've never seen before. In seeing the world of the story through Jane's eyes, they discover in her a human being, a person to be loved rather than a problem to be solved.

Similarly, students who have grown up in a rural area and are now attending college at a small school on a mountaintop in western Pennsylvania are taken aback when they encounter James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues," with its stark portrait of Harlem in the 1930's and '40's. They ride the subway with the narrator who sees his own face, "...trapped in the darkness which roared outside" (Baldwin 75). They share his comparison of the boys he is teaching to the boys he and his brother once were:

These boys, now, were living as we'd been living then, they were growing up with a rush and their heads bumped abruptly against the low ceiling of their actual possibilities. They were filled with rage. All they really knew was two darknesses, the darkness of their lives, which was now closing in on them, and the darkness of the movies, which had blinded them to that other darkness, and in which they now, vindictively dreamed, at once more together than they were at any other time, and more alone. (Baldwin 76)

My students sit in a darkening room with the narrator, surrounded by the old folks who gradually fall silent:

The child knows that they won't talk any more because if he knows too much about what's happened to them, he'll know too much too soon about what's going to happen to *him*.
(Baldwin 84)

The rhythms of Baldwin's lines and the shapes of his words carry the students to a state of being they've never experienced before except in the abstract. As they read and talk about the story, that abstract is transformed into something real, something in which they feel themselves drowning with the narrator. Despite dramatic surface differences between my students' situations and those of Baldwin and his characters, they've made the connection.

Most of my students are 18 to 21 years old. They are just at the point of moving beyond the teenage perspective. For that reason, their encounter with Robert Hayden's poem "Those Winter Sundays" can be quite moving:

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.
When the rooms were warm, he'd call,
and slowly I would rise and dress,
fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love's austere and lonely offices?

At first students are distracted by language or details they don't understand. What are "banked fires"? What is the sound of "cold splintering, breaking"? What does "austere" mean? And where are those "lonely offices," and what do they have to do with anything?

Once all of those issues are resolved, they can re-read the poem and really begin to "hear" it for the first time. And it's the *hearing* that gets them. As they come to the final two lines, knowing now what all the words mean, the rhythm captures them. Standing in their midst, I see hints that they are coming to recognize something unexpected in this poem. These young people on the threshold of adulthood and even parenthood, in some cases, see themselves as they've been—as we've all been—in taking parents and parental struggles and sacrifices for granted. Every time I've had my students

read this poem, the result has included at least a few cases of actual tears flowing in a room filled with quiet, reflective nodding.

Harold Bloom says we read for a kind of “transcendence,” because we cannot know enough people profoundly enough” (Bloom 29). As Catherine McAuley connected people through direct, purposive contact, reading literature allows us to connect with the Other—our neighbor—through our imaginations. *Scientific American* recently reported on a study by social psychologists Emanuele Castano and David Kidd which suggests readers’ efforts “to imagine characters’ introspective dialogues” result in a greater capacity for empathy among readers of literary fiction (Chiaet).

Thus, coming from different times, different countries, different disciplines, different faith traditions, and different philosophical perspectives, thinkers as diverse as Henry James, Mark Edmundson, Harold Bloom, and even social psychologists, find common cause with Catherine McAuley in valuing ways to connect the individual with the Other, me with my neighbor.

Using literature to foster such connections is, in a very limited fashion, a way of walking in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley on a journey that started many years ago.

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Institutional Support for Mission Leadership in a Climate of Systemic Change: A Mission Focused Leadership Development Model and Its Impact on Teaching and Learning

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INTRODUCTION

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

A significant strength of Mercy education, of which higher education is no exception, is to identify threats/weaknesses and turn them into opportunities for growth and change. In the last several years, Gwynedd Mercy University has been impacted by seemingly overwhelming challenges from multiple forces, both external and internal.

In the paper entitled “Mercy Higher Educational Ministry: Culture and Characteristics,” Maryanne Stevens, RSM, President of College of Saint Mary in Omaha, Nebraska, articulates four hallmarks of Mercy Higher Education. These four indicators are the following: regard for the dignity of the human person; academic excellence and lifelong learning; education of the whole person; and promotion of compassion and justice towards those with less, especially women and children.¹ Charting courses of action to ensure the positive outcome of these challenges/opportunities has required the university to focus on the four hallmarks of a Mercy Education in order to respect the mission of the university.

The challenges the university experienced presented from accrediting agencies, institutional reorganization including university status, a new academic building, changes in some areas of administrative leadership, and financial constraints. Each of the challenges brought the opportunity to modernize the interpretation and application of how the university manifested itself in light of the four hallmarks of Mercy Higher Educational Ministry.

While task forces, committees, departments, schools, and consultants examined each challenge/opportunity and operationalized a course to move Gwynedd to a new university image, the Office of Mission and Planning owned the responsibility of honoring the hallmarks in the face of the new initiatives. The mission focused on the singular strength identified by Catherine McAuley in her initial efforts—the power of the individual as the agent of change.

¹ Stevens, M. RSM, “Mercy Higher Education Ministry: Culture and Characteristics,” (Chicago: Conference for Mercy Higher Education, 2005).

OPPORTUNITIES

Deciding to play upon the opportunities to build on Gwynedd's strength as a Mercy-focused institution, the need to look to the future and to continue to develop strong Mercy leaders who will move us forward, Sister Catherine (Kati) McMahon RSM, assistant to the president for mission and planning, initiated the creation of a Mission Leadership Academy. This concept grew out of an initiative developed by the Mercy Conference on Higher Education's Mission Development Program.

The idea behind Gwynedd Mercy's Mission Leadership Academy (MLA) was to focus on the sustainability of the Mercy mission. As the numbers of sisters on the campus decrease, there is a greater need to build a strong lay leadership focused on keeping the Mercy mission alive and prospering on Gwynedd's campus. There is great support for the mission of the university, but there needed to be some concentrated effort to formalize a program whereby both present and future faculty and staff would recognize their own place in the ministry that is Gwynedd Mercy University. Developing strong leaders who have a true vision of the Mercy mission and who are willing to help sustain and promote that vision is the driving force behind the Mission Leadership Academy at Gwynedd Mercy University.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MISSION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

There have been a variety of programs/activities on campus, over the years, which invited faculty and staff to participate, actively, in learning Catherine's story and sharing their own spirituality. These included, but were not limited to, Chats with Catherine, book discussions sponsored by campus ministry, brown bag faith discussions during Lent and Advent, as well as various liturgies and prayer services on campus. These were well attended; however, as many programs are, they were not sustained over time. The development of the Mission Leadership Academy allowed for interested faculty and staff to make a commitment to a course of study and discussion, on a regular basis, in order to create a sustainable program.

Sister Kati McMahon began the process by creating a steering committee of six faculty and staff members and introducing the concept of the Mission Leadership Academy. The committee agreed that this needed to be an ongoing, sustainable program and that there would be multiple levels of involvement for those interested. The committee began by defining the expectations/outcomes of the program. The goal would be to develop a cadre of people whose commitment to Gwynedd Mercy University and its mission would continue into the future. This group would be responsible for helping to sustain and spread the mission to future colleagues. As will be noted in the description of the levels, participants in the MLA would help orient new faculty and staff in future years.

THREE LEVELS/PHASES

The steering committee agreed that a series of levels would be created. Participants could move through each level and gain a depth of knowledge of Mercy, Catholic Social Teaching, and their own spirituality. The committee identified a group of clergy, religious, and lay people whose own expertise in these areas would be shared with those making the MLA journey. Membership would be by self-nomination or recommendation from faculty and staff. Each level would be developmental and would also have a defined list of qualifications and requirements. The goal was to assist participants in putting their learning into action at each level of the academy. The three levels as defined by the steering committee are: Members, Scholars, and Fellows. To date, the MLA has implemented two of the three levels with the third level being developed for the coming year. Participants are not required to move through each of the three levels. Each person makes a choice as to the levels in which s/he will be engaged. For each level, there is an application process and one must complete the levels in sequence.

LEVELS DEFINED

The first level is that of Member. The inaugural group of Members was inducted at university assembly in January 2012 and a second group of Members was inducted in January 2013. Members were nominated by the steering committee or were invited to self-nominate. Information was published on the university portal, and applications were submitted to Sister Kati McMahon. Applicants were asked to identify the ways that they had supported the mission of the university, i.e., service on committees, retreats, receipt of the Lindback Award and Tender Courage Award, etc. It is expected that Members will:

1. attend new employee orientation;
2. attend one mission integration offering throughout the academic year;
3. submit an assessment form for each program; and
4. present at orientation sessions for new employees and/or students, support the Mission and Values committee, and/or invite other Members into the MLA.

The second level is that of Scholar. The Scholar level is the Mission Development Program (MDP). The purpose of this level is to provide an immersion into the areas of Mercy, Catholic Social Teaching, and spirituality. It is in this level that mission truly comes alive. To this date, there has been one Scholars' class, and 16 Scholars were formally inducted on May 16, 2013. To apply to the Scholar level, individuals must be Members and complete an application process. The initial Scholars-elect began their journey in October 2011 and participated in an 18-month intensive program of study. Twice each semester, on a Friday evening, the group gathered for dinner, instruction, readings, discussion, prayer, and meditation. There was also a full-day program in

June 2012. Throughout this journey, Scholars-elect were immersed in Mercy, Catholic Social Teaching, and spirituality. A variety of speakers offered their expertise and insights on these various topics. Each session also allowed for the processing of the information through prayer, discussion, meditation, and role play. This offered a true immersion experience for all of the Scholars-elect. These gatherings also allowed for the development of a close community among the participants. There was broad-based representation from across the campus including administrators, faculty, staff, and adjunct faculty members. There was a great spirit of Mercy alive in each and every gathering. In addition to attendance at these sessions, Scholars-elect were required to design and submit an integration project. These projects were to be the culmination of the experience and a reflection of what had been gained through the process. These projects were presented both to the small group as well as to the university community at a Common Hour in April, 2013. The descriptions and authors of the various integration projects can be found at the end of this article. The topics are many and varied and the possible impact of these projects is great. In addition to these projects, those inducted as Scholars will be mentors to those at the Member level. This will develop a true spirit of Mercy connection and collegiality among the various members of the university community. It is expected that Scholars will:

1. successfully complete the GMC Mission Development Program;
2. submit an integration paper/project;
3. present about the MLA to other members of the university community; and
4. mentor Members.

On May 16, 2013, in the context of a prayer service, and witnessed by many faculty and staff, the first group of Scholars was inducted into the Mission Leadership Academy. Gwynedd Mercy University President Kathleen Owens presented each new Scholar with a certificate of completion.

The third and final level is that of Fellow. While still in the planning stages, this level will provide an even deeper immersion into Mercy, Catholic Social Teaching, and spirituality. It will also afford participants an opportunity to explore these areas much more deeply, focusing specifically on their own lives as well as their interactions with other members of the university community. In order to apply for the Fellow level, one must have been inducted as a Member and have completed the Mission Development Program as a Scholar. The application process is much the same as for the two previous levels. While the timeline has not yet been determined, this level will allow for ongoing opportunity to develop those areas mentioned above. As with the Scholar level, the Fellows will be expected to

1. complete Scholars level; complete a rigorous application process and commitment;
2. participate in two additional Mercy-related activities;

3. serve/d on the Mission and Values Committee;
4. attend a CMHE or mission immersion/effectiveness experience as defined by the Office of Mission and Planning;
5. participate in an Alternative Spring Break (ASB) experience, or a three to seven day guided or directed retreat; and
6. mentor Scholars.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

As Gwynedd Mercy University looks to the future, the hope is that the Mission Leadership Academy will continue to develop strong, positive, Mercy leaders who will promote and live the mission of Mercy. As Mercy leaders on campus, students and colleagues will look to them as models of Mercy. The goal of Gwynedd Mercy University is to develop and produce Distinctive Mercy Graduates. As additional faculty and staff become immersed in the true spirit and charism of Mercy, the impact on students will be great. In this way, the legacy of Catherine McAuley will have a lasting impact long into the future.

PROJECTS DEVELOPED IN THE SCHOLARS LEVEL OF MISSION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Institutional Support for Mission Leadership in a Climate of Systemic Change: A Mission Focused Leadership Development Model and Its Impact on Teaching and Learning—Deborah Schadler, PhD and Mary Jo Pierantozzi, MS, Assistant Professors in Education

A description and overview of a Mission Leadership Program initiated at Gwynedd Mercy University. (Carlow Roundtable Presentation)

Reflections on Dominican Republic Mission Trip—Mary Hermann, Professor of Nursing

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study is to capture the meaning and significance of this immersion experience for 24 junior and senior Mercy nursing students. (Carlow Roundtable Presentation)

Orienting New Faculty and Staff to the Mercy Mission Using Blackboard—Wade Luquet, Associate Professor in Human Services

This project provides new employees, new mission leadership candidates, or anyone interested in the mission of Mercy a place to learn what it means to live and teach in a Mercy university. The Blackboard site is divided into five sections: The history of the Sisters of Mercy, the mission of Mercy, Teaching in Mercy, Working in Mercy, and Living in Mercy. The content draws from multiple sources and contains videos that speak to the work of Mercy institutions.

Peruvian Medical Mission—Dona Molyneaux, Associate Professor of Nursing

A mission immersion trip to Peru sponsored by one of Gwynedd Mercy University's benefactors. One nursing faculty member accompanied graduate nursing students to Peru where they were involved in a variety of activities related to health care as well as other means of service.

Orientation for Adjuncts—Mary Anne Nolan, RSM, Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies and Betsy Stone-Plummer, Adjunct Professor of Psychology

- To help adjuncts understand the context of the community in which they are teaching via an overview of the story of Mercy
- To do this in a hospitable setting in which they might make connections with other part-time and full-time faculty and staff
- To provide future opportunities for adjuncts to connect with the campus community and integrate the mission and heritage of Mercy into their work at the university

Gwynedd y Peru: Laying the Groundwork for Merciful Collaboration—Lisa McGarry, Dean of Arts and Sciences; Mary Reilly, Assistant Professor of Sociology; Marion Uba, Executive Director of Mercy Volunteer Corps; Father John Collins, Campus Chaplain; Becky Signore, Director of First Year Experience Program

To explore the possibilities for the Gwynedd Mercy University community to support the CCASA community in Peru. We connected our work in the MLA and our daily professional duties to begin to plot the details of the partnership. Father John successfully submitted a grant proposal and will be visiting Peru in the near future. Those of us who are “staying behind” tackled issues of institutional support, program administration, course integration, orientation and acclimation and, of course, assessment.

STEERING COMMITTEE – CARLOW ROUNDTABLE

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Sister Sheila Carney, RSM
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MISSION STATEMENT

Carlow University, rooted in its Catholic identity and embodying the heritage and values of the Sisters of Mercy, offers transformational educational opportunities for a diverse community of learners and empowers them to excel as compassionate, responsible, and active participants in the creation of a just and merciful world.

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