ON THE VOCATION OF THE EDUCATOR IN THIS MOMENT

Edited by
JENNIFER S. MANEY
Edited by
MELISSA M. SHEW

DESCRIPTION

This book captures a specific moment in time as educators across the country and around the world were called to rethink their pedagogical strategies and vocations. We were, and still are, caught in at least three crises: a global pandemic that upended education as we know it, heightened awareness about racial injustices that motivated people to take to the streets in protest, and crises in higher education that have been building for some time but have now erupted. This moment, of course, started in the spring of 2020 and still reverberates today.

In the early winter of 2021, dozens of educators of all kinds across Marquette University's campus accepted an invitation from the Center for Teaching and Learning to reflect on this moment from their own perspectives, expertise, and experiences. This book is the result of their work in the spring of 2021. Here, educators in diverse departments and from distinct vantage points write in their own voices about the trinity of crises facing education. Some chapters are deeply personal; some are academic in tone; some are interrogative in nature. All are written with great heart and a desire to make some sense of this moment now.

This volume is also a call to all educators and the institutions

that house them to enter *into* this new vocational moment. Educa-tors, administrators, staff, and students are called to be still, be engaged, be transformed, be connected, and be Ignatian. As etched in these pages, being called in these ways requires great humility and heart, compassion and strength, trust and forgiveness--not so that we can return to "normal," but instead so that we can continue to carve out new meaningful paths not only with students, but also with each other.

Contributors: Noel S. Adams, Kim Jensen Bohat, Louise Cainkar, Mary Carlson, Sumana Chattopadhyay, Dinorah Cortés-Vélez, Alexandra Crampton, Scott Dale, Michael Dante, Deirdre Dempsey, Megan Heeder, Jennifer Henery, Erin Hoekstra, Thomas Kaczmarek, Marcella Kearns, Conor M. Kelly, Laurieann Klockow, Gary P. Klump, Jon Metz, Leatha Miles-Edmonson, Danielle Nussberger, Caroline Oas, Michelle A. Rodrigues, Karen Ross, Melissa Shew, Lynne Shumow, Theresa Tobin, Sarah Wadsworth, Mahmood Watkins, Marisola Xhelili.

Cover Image: Paula Otegui, Argentine, b. 1974, *El Pajaro* (The Bird), 2012, Acrylic on canvas, 47-1/4 x 35-1/2 in, 120.01 x 90.17 cm, 2015.1.1, Gift of the artist and Dean Jensen Gallery, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University

Cover and Book Design by Rose Design

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Lynne Shumow, Curator for Academic Engagement at the Haggerty Museum of Art, and Susan Longhenry, Director of the Haggerty, collaborated with us to augment the book's prose with artwork from our campus museum. Both fully embraced the opportunity to match artwork with emotions and ideas in the book. Lynne curated pieces for us to consider using as the book unfolded, making this book as beautiful as it is. She and other staff at the Haggerty also facilitated communication with artists and copyright permission.

Michael Dante, Director of the Faber Center, created the reflections and questions at the end of the book, connecting the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola with the realities of being educators in this moment. These reflections provide timely but lasting opportunities for faculty to grow in their own teaching practices and lives.

Fr. Greg Boyle, S.J., spoke virtually to faculty at Marquette in January 2021. As the founder of Homeboy Industries and a Jesuit, he spoke passionately about the importance of being with others in loving and poetic ways. That talk launched this book. He is an inspiration to us all by living out the "exquisite mutuality" he finds so important.

Finally, the contributors of this book, who wrote through a pandemic to share their thoughts, experiences, and emotions within and beyond our campus, remind all of us that even in times of great crisis, we can realize our vocations as educators. Collaborating on this book with faculty across campus during a time of global pandemic, civil unrest, and a spotlight on growing health, economic, and racial inequities has really been a highlight in this challenging year.

Thus, to our contributors directly: We dedicate this book to you. You are what makes Marquette University the place to prepare students to go out into the world. You are, in the words of Fr. Boyle, the reason our graduates say they do not go *to* Marquette University but go *from* Marquette University in the spirit of kinship and compassion to light the world on fire. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for saying yes.

Jennifer Maney, Director, Center for Teaching and Learning

Melissa Shew, Senior Faculty Fellow, Center for Teaching and Learning & Faculty, Department of Philosophy

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In my lifetime I have experienced several of what one might call life-altering experiences. Getting married. The deaths of both parents. Earning my doctorate. Each was a first, each was either good or bad. Leading Marquette University's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) during a global pandemic, along with a new focus on racial inequities, was certainly a first. And with it came both good and bad.

The bad? People were hurting. People got sick. Mental health and anxiety issues among faculty and students went through the roof. The good? It helped us begin to pull down walls across academic disciplines in order to build an authentic culture of teaching and learning. It brought strangers together minimally as colleagues, and in many cases, as new friends. As the leader of Marquette's faculty support hub, it reinforced for me the incredible importance of leading with empathy.

This book is an opportunity for our faculty and instructors to reflect meaningfully on this historic moment. What faculty did to provide continuity for learning and safe spaces for students in the face of enormous odds and burdens, both professional and personal, is nothing short of miraculous. It became incumbent then on our

center to provide a place where support could be offered with a focus on instructor self-care that was present and part of our lived mission.

In January of 2021, the CTL invited Father Greg Boyle of the Society of Jesus and the founder of Homeboy Industries, to both thank our faculty for what they were doing and to kick off the writing of this reflection book. He asked, "How do we arrive at exquisite mutuality where there is no us and them, where we obliterate the illusion that we are separate?" He was talking about serving the margins, based on Catholic teachings of solidarity and serving the poor. But he could have also been talking about our collective experience during this time. He went on to say, "If we don't welcome our own wounds, we may well be tempted to despise the wounded. Oh, nobly born, remember who you really are and in the exquisite mutuality, we all inhabit together our own dignity and our own nobility, our own Buddha nature, that says every single one of us is unshakably good and none of us are well until all of us are well."

This book will be around for a long time after it is written and bound. It will be around long after I am no longer the director of Marquette's Center for Teaching and Learning, but I can look at 2020-2021 and say that I am proud of leading with kinship and compassion. That we put the self-care and wellness of those standing in front of frightened students as being as important as the instruction taking place. That we responded to a crisis with exquisite mutuality.

As a Catholic, Jesuit university, we offer these contributions, grounded in deep Jesuit reflection, from across our faculty, across disciplines, and across themes of how they experienced this time. We hope you enjoy and that it sheds even a little light on the enormity of this moment in the service of the vocation of educators.

Jennifer S. Maney
Center for Teaching and Learning

INTRODUCTION

Occasionally, we find ourselves suspended in moments that take us outside of ordinary time. These moments have ways of burrowing into our individual and collective psyches. We need to let them live there for a while so that we can be inside them, to twist our heads to see what's around us, to see what's there. If we don't, we can too easily let the often beautiful but mundane rhythm of ordinary life, with its routine but important ordinary concerns, sweep us away until we look back and wonder, "Wait—what was that?" And at that point, it is too late, or nearly so, to catch a glimpse of a moment as it wafts away into the distance, like skeleton smoke after fireworks.

This book of essays is an attempt to capture a moment, both as it happened and continues to unfold, as well as to reflect on the power of this moment understood in various discrete but overlapping ways. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, or from the aspect of eternity, "this moment" is likely nothing special: A blip on the cosmic radar, eighteen short months in a sea of infinity. Lacking that infinite perspective, however, we mortals have had our sense of time, and likely our sense of meaning, upended during that minor cosmic blip. Knowing little of eternity but plenty about the cadence of mortality, with each of us

marking time in our own corners of the world, we have been called to make sense of this moment, to fit it into our habits of meaning-making, and to still get on with ordinary life while grappling with what the "new normal" presents to us.

The authors of this book have responded to the call of meaning-making amidst the chaos of this time with all its peculiarities and tragedies, and with all the ways that "this time" is meant. They have done so with gusto and great heart, marking this time by taking time to reflect and write about what this time means to them, or at least one of the ways that this time has meant to them. To be sure, the global pandemic of COVID-19 is the most obvious way that most people will remember this moment, which is written about abundantly in this book. There are few lives untouched by this virus's tentacles. As of this writing, over 600,000 people in the U.S. alone have died from this disease, and globally, approximately four million people have lost their lives. We have all been asked to grieve and adapt, to take precautions and take heart, to protect our communities, and to love one another. We have spent often torturous amounts of time away from family and friends, unable to be with people, including our students, as we would like and need. This book marks that moment, demonstrating the very real frustration and great courage of faculty and students to be together through this pandemic, knowing that we are people first and then have our roles as educators and students, partners and caregivers, coworkers and employees.

As we know, this moment is not short on crises, however. A second permutation of this moment takes the shape of racial injustice and violence against people of color as historical and contemporary inequities have been laid bare on our national stage in the past year and a half. Unlike the novel Coronavirus, which is not first in terms of being a disease that kills massive amounts of people but is atypical in terms of its global scope, racial injustice runs deep in this country. It has been exposed nationally thanks in large part to technology, which has helped democratize narratives of power by placing it literally in people's hands through cell phones and the Internet.

Protests against police brutality, violence against people of color, and ongoing systemic racism swept the nation in the summer of 2020 in ways unexperienced since the 1960s. This second pandemic, or recognition of a national "endemic" as some have called it, is also taken up in this book. Some authors explicitly reflect on this racial pandemic, understanding their vocation as educators through the importance of being with students of color in this moment (and as racialized themselves in some cases), and working toward positive social change in and beyond their classes.

Finally, some contributors in this volume recognize a third crisis of this moment: a crisis in higher education including in Catholic, Jesuit universities around the country, many of which are experiencing drops in student enrollment, cuts in the liberal arts, and changes that challenge mission-oriented schools like Marquette to "be the difference" and become "men and women with and for others." Cuts to the humanities and the arts in particular are articulated in this volume, calling for visionary ways to maintain and adapt core values of Catholic, Jesuit education during our tumultuous times. Indeed, many contributors reflect on the specific use of the arts *in* their classes, even if their topic is not the crisis of higher education or the liberal arts. Perhaps that is because this volume is driven in large part by a firm belief in the value of the liberal arts in students' learning, a core tenet of Catholic, Jesuit education. Even if contributors themselves are not specifically humanities or liberal arts faculty, many of them draw on the language of critical reflection and engagement central to our shared humanity.

These three crises—a global pandemic, racial consciousness, and newer woes in higher education—are articulated with clarity and vision in this book. What is striking and perhaps unusual about the essays in this book, however, is that they fail to collapse *only* into a negative critique or complaint. Rather, each chapter is written with great spirit and a desire to live out the mission not only of Marquette, but perhaps from what can be seen from the aspect of eternity—i.e., effort and good-heartedness that goes beyond this moment, because it was already there, available to all of us by virtue

of our humanity, taken up individually by contributors in their worlds and given full articulation in this volume. It is thus a volume filled with radical courage in rejecting the status quo of education and thinking that education in a post-pandemic world should simply return to "business as usual."

I often think of the early days of the pandemic in March 2020 as they were filled with so much unknown and so much understandable fear. The unknowns were huge then, and people rightfully panicked while people died all around us. No one knew who would be next, like in Albert Camus's novel *The Plague*, or where the bodies would be found. As in the novel, in our world, people were and still are driven to drunkenness, solitude, religion, journalism, science, and other outlets to cope. Mental illness has skyrocketed. Augmented by the other two crises, it all seemed really too much to bear.

But. Those early days, difficult as they were, bore beautiful fruit as well. Lyrical singing in Italy, the 7 p.m. New York "clap" for frontline workers, chalk art in every community, creative projects and sudden time spent with human creatures usually lovingly tucked away in school—these are some of the upshots of this moment, articulated in a different way, in response to crisis. These moments, too, will be remembered.

The authors of this volume contribute to that creative impulse to mark this time with the hopes of generating new time. I recently read that according to the general population, the "least essential workers" right now are artists, with only 12% of people thinking that artists are important at all right now. If we really think about the work that artists do and how they help us suspend a moment as journalists do, but with a freer though no-less-accurate interpretation, then we must consider them essential. After all, we see traces of them everywhere—in murals marking the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, in riffs on famous works of art made from stuff in people's houses, in a resurgence of reading, in crafting and baking, in making music as people have done as long as there have been injustices and human desires to right the ship.

Of course, this book comprises mainly academics—faculty, no

less—and not artists, strictly speaking. The creative impulse is the same, though. Sections in this book also come to life through art curated from the Haggerty Museum of Art on Marquette's campus. Each section title in this book is followed by a work of art from the Haggerty's permanent collection, with each section and each work of art corresponding to a different manifestation of what it is to be an educator in this moment. Moreover, each section title is a command to be still, be engaged, be transformed, and be connected, all essential ways of understanding the vocation of the educator, especially in this moment. What follows is a radically insufficient snapshot of those sections to provide a glimpse of the book's trajectory and themes.

In **Section I: Be Still**, a theme of personal, individual discernment gathers chapters together. In this section, contributors write of and from a place in their interior selves, distilling complex ideas to their essential characteristics and sincerest intentions. Dinorah Cortés-Vélez's ideas about "radical vulnerability" as a pedagogical stance connect to Conor Kelly's chapter on "prodigal pedagogy" to show the ways that educators can be called to *be* with their students. Sarah Wadsworth's chapter on reading over pandemic time and Gary Klump's chapter on the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) highlight the importance of stillness for students as well, especially in chaotic times. Caroline Oas's chapter suspends us in a specific moment of working with international students on campus, localizing the global pandemic at Marquette. Mary Carlson's essay about her own personal experiences with COVID-19 takes us to the heart of that stillness through individual contemplation as she reckons with herself and her vocation as an educator.

In **Section II: Be Engaged**, contributions move from the stillness of the interior self back into the world. It is a dynamic engagement as the world moves into a person, and that person moves into the world. Kimberly Jensen Bohat's chapter traces the ways that the Office of Service Learning adapted to keep work with community partners in Milwaukee alive, engaging all in the process. Deirdre Dempsey's chapter, along with the chapter by Alexandra Crampton, Lynne Shumow, and me, illustrate ways of intentionally reaching out

to students to keep them engaged in their classes and demonstrate care for them. This care extends to Michelle Rodrigues's chapter about compassionate pedagogy, which draws on feminist pedagogy. Noel Adams's chapter engages broad concerns about crises in Catholic, Jesuit higher education, with Marcella Kearns's chapter noting a similar crisis in the arts—and what we need to do to keep them alive in this time.

In **Section III: Be Transformed**, contributors show the power of reinvigorating their pedagogy now and how they hope to continue their vocations as educators. Sumana Chattopadhyay and Alexandra Crampton illustrate how pandemic teaching showed them new ways of being with students. Jon Metz and Thomas Kaczmarek illustrate from very different disciplines and backgrounds how adapting to the pandemic required quick thinking. In their chapter, Erin Hoekstra and Laurieann Klockow show in real time the changing landscape and importance of information literacy through a new course they developed on COVID-19, and Megan Heeder envisions her future vocation as one transformed by her inaugural teaching in a pandemic.

In **Section IV: Be Connected**, chapters synthesize the ways that our lives are all entangled, dovetailing with the three previous sections of the book but emphasizing different aspects of them. Theresa Tobin, Mahmood Watkins, and Marisola Xhelili's chapter brings together their three different perspectives in one classroom that bridges Marquette students with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated students, using Fr. Boyle's language of "radical kinship" to show how we are all connected. This connectedness continues through Jennifer Henery and Karen Ross's chapter, which returns us to the importance of Ignatian Pedagogy to reflect on that connected- ness and deepen our understanding of each other. That under- standing is not without its challenges, though, as Louise Cainkar and Scott Dale make clear in their chapters. They provide us ways, through the sociological imagination and art respectively, to be drawn closer to each other. Leatha Miles-Edmonson's essay takes this same point but directs us to the centrality of a university library to connect all students, especially international and first-generation

students.. Finally, Danielle Nussberger's essay shows the global scope of human spiritual reality and love and the ways that we are not only connected to each other, but also quite possibly beyond each other as well. *Sub specie aeternitatis.*

It will likely be obvious how chapters within each section overlap to address the themes in this moment beyond where they appear. There is clearly a stillness in being connected, and a connectedness in being still, and one cannot be transformed without being engaged. And so on. Michael Dante's series of reflections compose the Appendix of this book, which leaves us with one final reminder: Be Ignatian. Our hope is that readers can use these reflections in themselves but also consider them as lenses through which to engage various chapters and sections of this book as well.

Finally, I do want to make a few notes about the title of this volume, *On the Vocation of the Educator in This Moment*. The word "vocation" comes from the Latin word *vocāre*, which means "to be called," or "to have been called." This word resonates in many ways, including obvious spiritual and religious connotations. We might also think of it in part along with philosopher Paulo Freire by understanding our "ontological vocation," that is, the "calling of our being," as to become more fully human with and through others. Doing so takes work, however, though we may be comforted in knowing that none of us is self-sufficient, but each is in need of much. After all, we are radically incomplete, and none of us goes it completely alone. Additionally, the idea of a vocation sometimes overlaps but often contrasts with a job. I often picture a triangle of passion, talent, and need when it comes to understanding a vocation from a Jesuit perspective. Where a person's passions and talents meet a need of the world—well, therein lies at least one vocation.

The word "educator" likewise derives from Latin. *Educere* most nearly means "to lead out," thus making education a process of leading and being led. This concept contrasts with education as the idea of instruction (from *instructionis*, meaning "to place into"—literally, to "instruct"), wherein a student passively takes in information and spits it back to the instructor. Education in this volume and also as such shows how it is dialogical at its core. Education names a

process of the teacher and student together, sometimes leading, and sometimes being led, in a shared ontological vocation.

The word "moment" has already been articulated in multiple ways in this Introduction. The title has in mind two distinct senses, drawn from two different Greek words for moment (or time): *chronos* and *kairos*. *Chronos* is our typical rhythm of time and denotes this moment here, or that moment there, as it exists in and as time. Chronological time allows us to meet deadlines, make plans, and see memories on social media. *Kairos* marks a different sense of time. From a theological perspective, it is often understood as "God's time," or a time outside of time. Either way, *kairos* takes us beyond chronological time so that when we enter back into it, we can make sense of it again, seeing from a different vantage point. It too is a moment, but in a thick sense, like a heavy rest at the end of a concerto. It is that silence, that pause, that gives us new time.

There is a word missing, perhaps, from this title, though it is implied. That word is "crisis," so that the full title would be, *On the Vocation of the Educator in This Moment of Crisis*. This moment, though, *is* a moment of crisis, making its pronouncement redundant. From the Greek *krinein*, the word means "to break," or "to decide." A moment of break and decision: this moment marks a point from which there is no turning back. It is a permanent break that demands a response, *our* response, which is written in this book from various vantage points and perspectives. We must decide who and how to be in these moments.

When we ask about the vocation of the educator in this moment of crisis, then, we are asking not about tools, techniques, and tricks-of-the-trade—those will come in due time—but about the ways that we are called to lead and be led with our students and colleagues, both in and after this moment of crisis and decision. If we adopt an ongoing and enduring contemplative stance, we will see that who we are in this moment—how we see ourselves and each other in this time of crisis, the ways that we are vulnerable and opened up, the values and principles that we hold to be most essential right here and now—can directly inform our relationship to ourselves as educators and ought not be seen as merely a moment to get past or through.

We are determined and declare ourselves in these moments, so we ought to pay attention to them, perhaps starting now.

Melissa M. Shew
Center for Teaching and Learning &
Department of Philosophy

SECTION I

BE STILL

Unknown Artist, Book of Hours *(Horae B.V.M.), (detail), ca. 1460–1480, Ink, tempera, and gold leaf on parchment, 4⅝ x 3⅛ x 1 in, 11.8 x 7.9 x 3.8 cm, 85.19, Gift of Mr. Eliot G. Fitch, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University*

PRODIGAL PEDAGOGY

TEACHING WITH GOSPEL-INSPIRED GENEROSITY

Conor M. Kelly
Department of Theology

P rodigal is a peculiar word. As a cradle Catholic, I heard the word regularly because I seemed to encounter the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15.11-32) on at least an annual basis. (The parable tells the story of a young man who asks his rich father to liquidate half his estate so that the son can enjoy a lavish lifestyle. After quickly wasting his inheritance, the son returns to beg his father to take him back so that he can at least eat a decent meal. It appeared regularly during my childhood in part because the imagery lends itself to classroom activities, like a coloring page with the emaciated son tending pigs or a dramatic reenactment of the whole fable.) Despite this familiarity, I never took the time to understand the word. In fact, given that I associated the term exclusively with the Gospel tale, I am not sure it ever occurred to me that "prodigal" could have its own independent meaning. On some level, I intuited that it referred to the younger son's wild ways, but the best description I could conjure was some generic sense of bad morals.

As it turns out, I was not entirely wrong, but I was not entirely

right either. Now that I am a theologian, I have had the opportunity both to revisit the parable and to read others' interpretations of it, and I have finally learned two things about the notion of prodigality. First, prodigality is all about extravagance—the son is prodigal because he spends his inheritance with such reckless abandon. Second, prodigality is just as applicable to the father in the story as it is to the younger son (Keller xix). While both lessons have been helpful (can you imagine trying to teach a class about the parable of the prodigal son without a good working definition of the word "prodigal"?!), it is the second that has been truly transformative, shaping my understanding not just of the Gospel story but also of my personal theological outlook and my sense of vocation. Prodigality, I have come to realize, is the key to God, and so it must also therefore be the key to my work as an educator, most especially, though not exclusively, at this time and in this Jesuit place.

Called to Generosity

The explanation that most helped me realize the importance of prodigality was an interpretation of the parable of the prodigal son composed by Michael Himes, a priest and theologian teaching at Boston College. Seeking to make a larger point about the nature of God, Himes argues that this parable is routinely misinterpreted. "Often," Himes notes, "we turn it into a story about repentance, when in fact the parable is at pains to exclude any element of repentance" (11). The crux of the story, he insists, is not about the son at all, but about the father's prodigality. As the second-born child in a society governed by the norms of primogeniture, the younger son not only has no right to ask for his inheritance while his father is still living, but he also has no right to an inheritance at all (11–12). We therefore witness the father's prodigality early in the story, when he dismisses all sense of decorum and voluntarily gives his "impertinent son" (11) far more than he merits. Later, when the wayward son tries to tug on his father's heartstrings in the hope of securing a job that will finally pay for his meals, the father's prodigality is underscored again, as he cuts off his son's request and welcomes him back with open arms.

Although those who are familiar with the story often miss the

subtext, the truth is that both these reactions are preposterous. The son does not deserve any money from his father, and he has no basis being embraced with a party when he reappears. For Himes, however, such absurdity is the point of the story. The father, who represents God, is prodigal with his love in a manner that seems just as reckless as the son's thriftlessness. The stark difference, though, is that the son is profligate with a finite good, whereas the father truly gives of his very self. The first kind of prodigality leads to bankruptcy, but the latter changes the narrative completely, restoring broken relationships and opening new opportunities to pursue a brighter future together.

For me, this vision of divine generosity lies at the center of what it means to be an educator during a global pandemic. The message at the heart of the parable is that prodigality is the defining feature of God's response to those hard times when we find ourselves staring down our shortcomings. This concept has been informative, as these past three semesters have been defined by hard times. From the abrupt shift to virtual learning in Spring 2020 to the confusion of socially-distanced discussion sections, hybrid classes, and constant social distancing in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021, our students have been pushed to their limits in ways they never imagined. At the same time, I came face to face with their challenges to a degree I never anticipated, because the line between "academic life" and "home life" disappears when a student reports that it is hard to finish the reading now that she must provide full-time childcare to her younger siblings so her parents can get to work. When these and other extenuating circumstances collided with the conventional norms of a standard semester, I found myself asking new questions including how much latitude I should give for late assignments, or how I should enforce an attendance policy. As I tried to navigate these situations, I felt conflicting impulses. On one hand, I wanted to be as compassionate as possible, because my students clearly had to deal with extraordinary stressors. On the other hand, I still felt beholden to the official policies and questioned how much license I really had the leeway to provide.

Somewhere in this tension, I returned to the prodigal son, and I

remembered the priority the Jesuits put on *cura personalis*. God's preference for prodigality became my rationale for ever greater compassion toward my students. In those moments when I wondered whether I could make an exception that seemed to contradict the standards of justice embedded in the rules and regulations of the syllabus, I recalled Himes's account of the insights about God contained in the parable. "If you start with the conviction that our primary relationship to God is one of justice," he summarizes, "then, Jesus seems to insist, you will certainly misunderstand God" (14). With this perspective in mind, my old qualms about fidelity to the letter of the law quickly became replaced with a much more pertinent question: Who am I to be stricter than God? I finally felt the freedom to be the caring and understanding professor that my students needed, and, in the process, I rediscovered that this was the person I longed to be. If theologian Frederick Buechner is right and our vocation is found in "the place where [our] deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet" (119), then there could not be a clearer calling for an educator in this moment than the call to prodigality I felt, for I was deeply gladdened to be there for my students in this way, and they desperately need that kind of accompaniment and compassion.

The most important revelation from this shift toward prodigality, however, had nothing to do with the last three semesters. As I lived out a new form of generosity toward my students and gave them greater flexibility, I eventually realized that I was not adapting to the unique problems of COVID-19; I was responding to the perennial challenges of being a student. Obviously, their struggles were more acute as a result of the pandemic raging around them, but this shift reflected a difference of degree more than kind when compared to a typical semester. Even under "normal" circumstances, our students' real lives repeatedly smash into our course expectations. COVID-19 did not change that reality. It merely raised my awareness of it because I became a first-hand witness at the scene of the crash much more often than I had been before. The question I have had to answer is how I will operate going forward, now that I have seen the truth of what it takes to be a student today. Eventually, I arrived at a

firm resolution. I am called to generosity. In order to live up to that calling, I have embraced a prodigal pedagogy that leaves the door open as wide as possible in the hopes that every last one of my students will make it to the (metaphorical) banquet at the end of the semester, no matter where they started—or where they diverted—along the way. Obviously, this new teaching philosophy has been greatly influenced by my understanding of the parable of the prodigal son, but in order to explain what this prodigal pedagogy means in practice, I need to turn to another parable that seldom gets associated with prodigality at all.

Prodigal Pedagogy

Unlike the parable of the prodigal son, which appears only once in the four canonical Gospels, the parable of the sower has three slight variations across Matthew (13.1-9), Mark (4.1-9), and Luke (8.4-8). The differences are textual, rather than substantive, as all three versions recount the same basic story: a farmer heads off to sow seeds one day and scatters the seeds across four different types of soil producing four different yields. The seeds that land on the path do not get buried deep enough to grow; instead, they are eaten almost immediately by birds and therefore bear no fruit. The seeds that fall among the thorns eventually arrive at the same fate, though not because they are eaten but because "the thorns grew up and choked them" (*The Bible*, Matt. 13.7). The seeds that fall on rocky ground fare slightly better, succeeding in sprouting before ultimately withering in the sun "since they had no root" (Matt. 13.6) and could not draw enough moisture from their environment. Only the seeds that fall on "good soil" (Matt. 13.9) survive to bear fruit, and they do so with abundance.

The allegorical significance of the parable quickly becomes apparent in the Gospels as Matthew, Mark, and Luke all use the parable of the sower to delve into the question of why Jesus would teach in cryptic stories. After giving a quick defense of the practice, Jesus then proceeds to explain the parallels between the seeds sown on different soil types and the different reactions of those who hear his parables. Some never ask the questions they need to understand and therefore have their potential insights taken from them before

their comprehension can emerge, just as the birds eat the seeds on the path before they can grow. Others like what they hear but eventually find that "the cares of the world and the lure of wealth" (Matt. 13.22) surround and strangle their budding fruit like thorns. Those who mirror the rocky soil, meanwhile, are the ones who hear Jesus's teachings with excitement but do not do the reflection necessary to develop deep roots in their new faith. Consequently, "when trouble or persecution arises…that person immediately falls away" (Matt. 13.21). Finally, those who receive the teachings like the good soil are, of course, the ones who hear and internalize the message so that it can transform their lives and bear much fruit.

Although it may seem strange, this parable has been just as influential in my sense of the educator's call to generosity as the parable of the prodigal son. As I mentioned, the parable of the sower is not usually linked to prodigality, mainly because the parable has an explicit exegesis built into the Gospel. Jesus' explanation calls our attention to the different kinds of soil and primes us to analyze the story from the perspective of the people who hear the stories Jesus is telling. We walk away asking ourselves which type of listeners we are. Do I listen and cultivate deep roots, or am I the kind who is easily distracted by the trappings of wealth or other deceptive goods? Is my faith going to survive a drought? These are good questions, and they can provide an essential form of self-knowledge, but if we focus on this line of thinking alone, we miss the pedagogical insights latent in the parable of the sower.

To be clear, the parable is full of pedagogical resources. As Jesus' explanation underscores, the parable is all about education and the relationship between the teacher and the student. We must, however, resist the temptation to read the parable as a morality play about student preparation. The pedagogical point of the parable, I would like to propose, is not that our students need to take responsibility for the "soil" they bring to our lessons. That may be an important part of their learning, but that interpretation shifts the onus of responsibility too far away from our vocation as educators. Instead, we must look at the parable from the sower's perspective because that

is the side of the story that speaks directly to the work of instruction. Prodigal pedagogy comes into play here.

Once I reread the parable with a focus on the sower, I arrived at a startling discovery. This person is one crazy farmer! Who tries to plant crops along a path, or among thorns, or amidst a bunch of rocks? Surely a proficient farmer would know not to waste precious resources on terrible places where they have no chance to grow, and yet this is the person Jesus uses to explain his own role as an educator. His fuller exegesis of the parable (Matt. 13.18-23) makes it clear that he is the sower sowing the seeds of lessons about the kingdom of God. Bizarrely, he seems to be telling us a story about a terrible agriculturalist to make that point.

Once we get to this place of puzzlement about the parable of the sower, though, we can finally make some headway in our interpretation of its pedagogical promise. As James Martin, the Jesuit priest and popular writer elucidates, parables often use incongruous juxtapositions to convey their core message (Martin 206): the mustard seed, the tiniest of all seeds, grows into the biggest bush (Matt. 13.31-32); a vineyard owner pays everyone, even those who only worked for a few hours, a full day's wages (Matt. 20.1-16); a father sells half his estate to give an excessive inheritance to an ungrateful son. Parables are meant to have an unexpected twist, an element that upends convention, because that is the way they become lodged in our minds long enough for us to ruminate on them and "tease" out their meaning (207). The apparent inconsistencies thus prompt us to reexamine our assumptions so that true insights can emerge after we have finally abandoned the simplest explanations.

Such is undoubtedly the case with the parable of the sower. The facile answer would be that Jesus is telling us a story about the world's worst farmer, but that then is quickly dismissed by Jesus' later self-identification with the sower. A slightly more plausible interpretation is that the sower just dropped the seeds by accident. To defend this reading, one might point to the fact that the seeds "fall" on the poor soil in all three Gospel accounts. They are not "sown" or "planted" there with any intentionality. This reading falls apart too, however, because the same verb is used for the seeds that

land on the good soil and go on to bear much fruit. If the path, thorns, and rocks were an accident, then the good soil was a mistake as well. This interpretation only leads us back to the untenable assumption that the farmer is an incompetent fool. The sole explanation that makes any real sense is the most complicated one, namely that this sower is not just teaching us a lesson about how to listen, but also about how to teach. The reason the sower scatters seeds on so many kinds of soil, I would argue, is that the sower wants to give every patch of land an equal chance to bear its fruit. This sower— who, again, is being held up as a paradigmatic example—must know that the seeds on the path are unlikely to make it, but the sower still tosses seeds onto the path anyway. The sower is more than generous with the seeds. The sower is truly prodigal, and it is only because of that prodigality that any lessons get conveyed. After all, if the sower only planted in good soil, we would not have had much to learn about different ways of listening.

I have taken heart from this vision and tried to make a similar type of prodigality the hallmark of my teaching. Much like the sower, I have begun to pitch my lessons more expansively, so that they land on all kinds of soil. Students still come to my courses with varying degrees of investment in the material and varying amounts of preparation for a given session, but I have stopped trying to ascertain in advance which ones are going to cultivate deep roots and which ones are going to get distracted by the thorns. Instead, I have worked to be a prodigal pedagogue, providing every student an equal opportunity to decide that this is the day they are going to put in the effort to grow real fruit. This strategy is fairly easy on the first day of the semester, when I have no knowledge of the preparations my students are bringing to the course. It is much harder on the last day, when my students' previous participation and engagement have given me a pretty good idea of who has done the work to show up with receptive soil and who is sitting on a pile of rocks. In these moments, I channel the sower, and remember the prodigal choice to cast seeds on ground that looked to every reasonable observer like an inhospitable path. The only way I can make sense of that decision is with the conviction that the sower believed the path could become

the loam, even though all the previous evidence pointed to the contrary. Ninety-nine times out of one hundred, that mass of evidence is probably right, and the seed will die, but the sower spreads the seed nonetheless, preferring to wait and see. I now try to do the same, so that each of my students can have the freedom to decide how they would like to cultivate their soil, regardless of what they have done up to that point. Ninety-nine times out of one hundred, the seed still dies, but that still leaves one student to bear good fruit. If it is worth it for the sower, it should be worth it for me.

My Vocation as an Educator in This Moment

The links between the parable of the sower and my own teaching (and the links back to the parable of the prodigal son that helped me make sense of the sower's peculiar behavior in the first place) have been foundational for my efforts to come to some understanding of what it means to have a vocation as an educator in this moment. The challenges of this past year have taught me that I have no business trying to guess who that one student holding rich soil on an apparent path will be. I have seen too clearly that I do not know enough—I cannot know enough—about my student's lives beyond the classroom to make this determination. I can only cast my teaching wide and give all of them the freedom to decide how they will engage each time we meet. Moreover, I *need* to do this, not just so that everyone has a chance to learn, but so that I have a chance to be the teacher, and the person, I am genuinely called to be. My last task, then, is to figure out how to let this lesson in prodigal pedagogy burrow deep roots, because the next semester is coming, and I am still worried that I am unwittingly on the dusty path.

Works Cited

The Bible. New Revised Standard Version, Catholic ed., Oxford University Press, 1999.

Buechner, Frederick. *Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC*. Harper-SanFrancisco, 1993.

Himes, Michael J. *Doing the Truth in Love: Conversations about*

God, Relationships, and Service. With Don McNeill, Andrea Smith Shappell, Jan Pilarski, Stacy Hennesy, Katie Bergin, and Sarah Keyes. Paulist Press, 1995.

Keller, Timothy. *The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith*. Riverhead Books, 2008.

Martin, James. *Jesus: A Pilgrimage*. HarperOne, 2014.

THE VOCATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATOR IN THIS MOMENT

Caroline Oas
Office of International Education

"Stay Well." As I reflect on this past year, I am struck by all the marked moments that happened as our lives were completely upended at the beginning of this pandemic. There were so many everyday moments that were signaling what was happening whether we wanted to recognize them or even had the ability to do so. On March 12, 2020, one of those marked moments came as I was working from my new home office, formerly known as my dining room. Final decisions had just been made regarding the university's emergency decision to cancel in-person instruction, to send the university community home, and to shift to online teaching. Later that day, I received an email from a colleague, Charonda Oliphant, regarding the cancellation of a First-Generation event that was planned for later that month. Many similar emails came in that day to no surprise, but it was her chosen words for her sign-off that made the chaos stop for a moment and forced me to really listen and process. Her sign-off simply said "Stay Well."

I cannot quite explain the effect of those two words, but they

forced my mind and body to react. I just stopped, sat back, caught my breath, and felt the trauma, fear, and kindness of the moment. The simplicity of two words created an unexpected and complex reaction. They were so mindful and kind yet distinctly marked with a newfound fear. "Stay Well" was such a manifestation of where we all were. Those words were made even more powerful and perhaps easier to acknowledge due to what my students had already been preparing me for.

I have been English as a Second Language faculty in the Office of International Education (OIE) since 2014 and Coordinator of the English as a Second Language Program (ESLP) since 2016. The purpose of OIE is demonstrated within our department's mission statement: "OIE, as a catalyst for comprehensive internationalization, educates the greater Marquette community to become interculturally competent women and men for others through mutually beneficial collaborations in teaching, research, and service" ("OIE Mission Statement"). The ESLP lives out the mission by supporting our students who speak English as an additional language through their academic and cultural transition to American university life. We provide English language support courses typically during their first year at Marquette as well as an ESL section of the foundation level course ENGL 1001. The ESLP continues to be a resource for our students throughout their years at Marquette and beyond.

OIE is also responsible for recruiting and advising international students and scholars as well as managing our Education Abroad program. We are deeply committed to the advancement of diversity and internationalization on campus. Being a department focused on our international students and scholars as well as students studying abroad, we felt a heightened level of concern regarding COVID-19 early on. For example, some of my early marked events happened back in the middle of February and early March. I specifically remember leaving campus on Friday, March 6, for what was the start of Spring Break, realizing there was a very strong chance I would not be back in my office for a while. Not much was being said on campus at that time to indicate that point unless one had a direct connection to international education.

I have over twenty-five years of teaching experience, most spent with international and immigrant students. In all those years, I have learned the advantage of listening to the emotions, experiences, and perspectives of my students. Their much-needed viewpoints often provide insights and reveal issues long before faculty, administration, and domestic students might be able to do so. The situation on March 6 was no different. Many of my students had been fearfully watching social media and anxiously communicating with their families knowing the new virus was already spreading and affecting so many people in their home countries. I could physically feel the stress and tension of one of my students in February as he did everything he could to convince me to buy masks. In my very American way, I told him we did not need to wear masks right now, and that it was more important that our medical staff was properly equipped with those protections. After all, I was following the CDC recommendations at the time, and I clearly did not understand the magnitude of what was coming. I could see the frustration on my student's face as he pleaded his case. Some of my international students at Marquette have worn masks to class over the years, generally if they were not feeling well or if there was a bad flu outbreak on campus, so I knew this was culturally common and comfortable for them. As I mentioned, I certainly heard their concern and stress, but I had not really listened to them. Hearing is a basic physical act, but listening, I am learning, is more sophisticated. To listen, we need to stop, take in, and process what we are hearing. Most often, we go through our busy days hearing rather than listening. Sometimes we just need the sounds to get louder or manifest themselves in some different or more dramatic fashion before we take it to the next step and listen. Friday, March 6, was when I listened.

A small group of my students was waiting in the lobby area of the Office of International Education waiting to see their International Advisors. Due to their notable looks of stress and worry, I asked if they were okay. One immediately said, "We are scared and don't know what to do. We want to go home." I invited them into my office to talk and hopefully help them calm down while they were waiting for their appointments. As I listened, I real-

ized that that was a naïve and somewhat ignorant thought because they were far more informed, understanding, and afraid of our global health crisis than I was. I was still coming from an isolated narrow perspective of "Not here. That won't happen here."

They expressed their angst of not knowing what to do. They desperately wanted to go home where they felt safe and secure, yet they did not want to leave campus not knowing when or if they would be able to continue their studies that semester. No decisions about studying online had been officially made at that time, so they had no way of knowing if they were just walking away from their academic commitments. They, and their families, had made so many sacrifices to study abroad at Marquette, but as one of my students said, "I don't want to die here alone." I remember being so struck by the tone of that sentence. There was true fear in that voice, and I could not deny listening anymore.

By listening to my international students on March 6, my students provided me with a new perspective that took me out of my isolated box. They provided me with a brief snapshot of what it was like for them, to empathize with what they were going through, and to begin to understand this new virus from a different point of view. When I invited my students to talk, it was with a somewhat arrogant belief that I understood more than they did and could "help." In my attempts to reassure them that OIE and the university would be there to support them through this situation, they in turn provided me with insight. This situation led to a very empowering opportunity. I could choose not to listen and to continue to presume to know better, or I could choose to listen, assess, and act. I later told the other ESL faculty to prepare for the reality that we may be all working from home for a while. How I looked at our current situation completely changed that day. Even though I knew what the Education Abroad side had been responding to and preparing for regarding our students who were abroad, it took my own students to help me see that the pandemic would be just as real here. Of course, we now know that it already was. The ability to take in and learn from someone who has a different culture, speaks a different language, or simply perceives

differently is critical in a globalized world where we all need to interact to thrive.

A globalized world is a world that is open and available to explore. It is also a world where we have become increasingly interdependent on one another. With that freedom to explore, however, comes responsibility, a responsibility to be interculturally aware of one another and building toward a higher level of collaboration through intercultural competence. A collection within *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence* written by Mitchell R. Hammer from American University defines intercultural competence:

> Intercultural competence involves (a) the cultivation of deep cultural self-awareness and understanding (i.e., how one's own beliefs, values, perceptions, interpretations, judgements, and behaviors are influenced by one's cultural community or communities) and (b) increased cultural other-understanding (i.e., comprehension of the different ways people from other cultural groups make sense of and respond to the presence of cultural differences). (*SAGE* 483)

The concept of globalization has been reinforced and fully experienced by living through a globalized pandemic. The ability to understand and learn about and from others is crucial if we are to survive and prosper in such a world.

Our country has experienced political and social movements that have fostered anti-globalization and nationalistic ways of thinking to ostracize the "other." We listened to a former American president call this virus names like "Chinese virus" and "Kung Flu." This level of disturbing rhetoric was not new. The country had already been exposed to offensive and prejudiced comments made by the former president including those he made about African nations, immigrants from Mexico, and building walls. We have seen an increase in Asian American Pacific Islander and Black Indigenous People of

Color hate crimes that is undoubtedly connected to such hateful xenophobic rhetoric. Many have allowed fear of the unknown or the other to take over, especially during a time when we seem to be confronted with new fears and unknowns daily. It has created prime opportunities for some to capitalize on such fears.

As an educational institution, however, we know how to respond to such a situation: we collaborate, investigate, and innovate. That collaboration is not only within a single department, university, state, or country, though. It is worldwide. We seek the expertise of international faculty and scholars to expand our own research and knowledge. We have faculty who go abroad to share and increase their own scholarly expertise. We encourage our domestic students to experience the advantages of living and studying in other cultures and countries. We welcome our international students, knowing the diverse benefits they bring to the Marquette community. It is a reciprocal process leading to new ideas and solutions with global and local ramifications. Consequently, the urgency for intercultural competence has never been greater.

Welcoming international students and scholars to the Marquette community and providing opportunities for domestic students to study abroad is one of the best methods for Marquette University to increase its intercultural competence. If we want to produce students who will be of service to others, then they must have authentic opportunities to experience and interact with others on campus and abroad. If we want our graduates to be "problem-solvers and agents of change in a complex world" (Marquette University Vision Statement), then they must be open to and understanding of the complexities of our world. Providing our students with opportunities to have authentic intercultural communication is an essential tool in gaining intercultural competence. John Condon from the University of Mexico defines intercultural communication as "… the *process* through which shared meanings are *co-created* through engagement." He then elaborates, "These shared meanings are also directly affected by *subjective culture* – cultural assumptions, expectations, and behaviors so deeply learned that they are easily imagined to be human nature. Individuals may even assume that culturally

influenced ways of thinking, which have been learned from and shared with their communities of origin, are a matter of *common sense*" (Condon 451).

We are often unaware that our "common sense" can be so intricately tied to our cultural views and norms. It is through subjective culture that we can subconsciously judge another. Authentic opportunities to interact with students from other cultures allow Marquette students, faculty, and staff to expand their perspectives and to gain from such diversity.

Diversity is a word on which educational, political, and social institutions focus heavily. We often discuss the importance of diversity and set goals to increase diversity, but I often wonder how often we ask ourselves why we want to be diverse. What is the end goal? From my perspective, the ultimate end goal of true diversity is diverse thought. It is through diverse thought that we learn, understand, appreciate, and progress as a society. Diverse thought is what creates effective vaccines in record time and solves global crises. Real innovation, progress, and solutions do not happen when we stay inside our familiar standardized boxes. We need to have the ability to see the realm of possibilities. Diverse thought is the means of getting us out of that box.

The contributions of international students within higher education extend beyond creating a more diverse and interculturally competent campus. The effects are felt on a global scale. The Office of Academic Exchange Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State coordinates the Fulbright program. "The Fulbright Program offers grants to study, teach and conduct research for U.S. citizens to go abroad and for non-U.S. citizens to come to the United States" ("About Fulbright"). The global achievements made by this program highlight the importance of globalized education:

Fulbright alumni have achieved distinction in government, science, the arts, business, philanthropy, education, and athletics. 39 Fulbright alumni have served as heads of state or

government. 60 Fulbright alumni from 14 countries have been awarded the Nobel Prize. 75 Fulbright alumni are MacArthur Foundation Fellows. 88 Fulbright alumni have received Pulitzer Prizes. ("Notable Fulbrighters")

This information undoubtedly supports the need to understand, appreciate, and exchange knowledge with other cultures. This past year has shown us that we are not in this alone. The pandemic has brought our attention to *others*. We wear a mask to protect *others*. We stay six feet away to protect *others*. We do not visit friends and family who can be compromised to protect *others*. We need to rely on and trust *others* to follow and respect the same guidelines to protect ourselves in return. While we may have had to become much more physically isolated due to this global pandemic, we cannot deny the only way we can survive and prosper is with and through *others*.

This pandemic directly challenged my profession and commitment to international education. I had plenty of days early on that made me question and doubt my professional future. It is in those times of challenge when we must decide who we are. I am an international educator dedicated to the process of growth and advancement by understanding my cultural self better through learning about the culture of others. It is through my long career that I have come to better understand who I am and have become a better version of myself. Through my students, I have come to know and deeply appreciate my own immigrant parents in ways I otherwise could not have. I have come to appreciate and respect the beautiful traditions of other world languages, cultures, and religions. The rewards are more than I can list because they are also ongoing. My students continue to expand my perspectives and challenge me professionally and personally by taking me out of my box. Just when I think I have figured out who I am, one of my students shows me there is more to learn. That is truly the beauty and reciprocity of it all: through the process and exploration of getting to know others,

we simultaneously have the opportunity of getting to know and develop ourselves.

The students who sat in my office on March 6 filled with fear and uncertainty went home to complete their semester. It was a challenging journey. Simply getting a flight home proved to be very difficult. Once they got home, they had to quarantine in places that did not provide the best, if any, Internet connection to continue their studies, and being in very different time zones often resulted in students participating in courses in the middle of the night. Some of my students even contracted COVID-19 as a result. Fortunately, they recovered. A small group of my students remained on campus, which came with its own struggles of isolation and virtual learning. However, as always, they leave me in a state of awe and respect. Against many difficulties, they completed their semester.

Initially the challenges of this past year may have signaled a bleak future for international education; however, according to a recent article published by *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, "College campuses are among the most globalized of American institutions, placing great value on the diversity of experience" ("Today's Global Campus"). We place great value on the diversity of experience because it helps us attain diversity of thought. We often do not know how strong an enterprise, or a principle, or a person is until pressure is applied. This pandemic has certainly put an enormous amount of pressure on international education. Consequently, what may have seemed bleak a year ago is now a promising opportunity to strengthen our commitment to a globalized world and prepare our students to be successful stewards of that world. I am grateful to be an international educator in this moment.

<div align="center">Works Cited</div>

"About Fulbright." *Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.* eca.state.gov/fulbright/about-fulbright. Accessed 11 May 2021.
Condon, John. "Intercultural Communication, Definition of." *The SAGE Encyclopedia of*
  Intercultural Competence, edited by Janet M Bennett, SAGE

Publications, 2015, pp. 450-

453. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, 0-ebookcentral-proquest-com.
libus.csd.mu.edu/lib/marquette/detail.action?docID=4093028.
Accessed 3 May 2021.

Hammer, Mitchell R. "Intercultural Competence Development."
The SAGE Encyclopedia of

Intercultural Competence, edited by Janet M Bennett, SAGE
Publications, 2015, pp. 483-

486. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
0-ebookcentral-proquest-com.libus.csd.mu.edu/lib/marquette/
detail.action?docID=4093028. Accessed 3 May 2021.

"Marquette University Vision Statement." *Marquette University*.
www.marquette.edu/about/mission.php. Accessed 28 Feb. 2021.

"Notable Fullbrighers". *Bureau of Educational and Cultural
Affairs.*
eca.state.gov/fulbright/fulbright-alumni/notable-fulbrighters.
Accessed 3 May 2021.

Oliphant, Charonda. "Re: Cancelled First Gen Connect
Reminder." Received by Caroline Oas, 12 Mar. 2020.

"Today's Global Campus". *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
connect.chronicle.com/CHE-CI-WC-2021-GlobalCampus-Inside-
Look-CambridgeEnglish_LP-CHE.html. Accessed 10 May 2021.

READING OVER PANDEMIC TIME

Sarah Wadsworth
Department of English

I n Henry James's short story "The Private Life" (1892)—a surprise hit with my English capstone students in the fall of 2020—the narrator, vacationing in the Alps, discovers an oddity concerning one of his fellow tourists. Clare Vawdrey, a renowned writer, appears unexpectedly vacuous in the company of others, "having neither moods nor sensibilities nor preferences" (193). Peering into Vawdrey's rooms moments after observing the writer engaged in conversation on the terrace, the narrator is puzzled to find Vawdrey himself writing steadily in the darkened room, oblivious to the intrusion. The "great novelist" (193), the narrator surmises, has two selves, enabling him to lead a double life. While one self mingles in society, "gossip[ing] and din[ing] by deputy" (229), the other toils away in isolation to meet the demands of an expectant public. As the story unfolds, we learn that another guest at the inn has the "opposite complaint" (214). Lord Mellifont is charmingly animated in the presence of others. When left alone,

however, he seems to vanish like "a candle blown out" (222): "He was all public and had no corresponding private life, just as Clare Vawdrey was all private and had no corresponding public" (215). The story is a fascinating foray into fiction of a speculative cast by a writer renowned for his realism. This text also became a touchstone in my year of pandemic teaching although for reasons other than those I had anticipated.[1]

I begin with "The Private Life" in part because it raises questions that took on new significance during the pandemic, when routine social interactions, including those among students and teachers, changed abruptly and drastically. James's story invites readers to examine the relationship between our public and private selves and consider how our identities as both social beings and unique individuals might (or might not) nourish and sustain one another. The long months of remote teaching and learning, social distancing, and various forms, degrees, and interpretations of quarantine and lockdown complicated and intensified the tensions the story explores. When my class discussed this and other readings, we gathered remotely, a phrase that would have seemed an oxymoron prior to March 2020, each of us alone, sealed off, if only by headphones or earbuds, from people around us and yet joined together in the virtual classroom represented by so many squares on so many screens. Not only did the distinction between being alone and being with others dissolve, but the glimpses of dorm rooms and student apartments, campus workstations carefully spaced per CDC guidelines, childhood bedrooms, and the occasional porch, patio, or car, like the semiweekly view students had of my home office, blurred the boundaries between public and private, work and relaxation, as we welcomed one another into these shared virtual spaces. "The Private Life" is a text I had read multiple times previously, and I had incorporated it into the capstone because it played on themes of language, lives, and afterlives that were central to the course. Rereading it amidst this global catastrophe, however, I understood it somewhat differently. Broadly speaking, the pandemic forced a change of perspective, and reading differently can be both an indicator of that change and an instigator of action. Nine months later,

with vaccination occurring unevenly, and infection and death rates declining in correlation with vaccine availability, I return to "The Private Life" to frame a set of practices for rereading and reflection that I adopted during the pandemic but will continue to employ: practices that, like James's tale, ask us to think about how our various selves—public, private, past, present, and future—move through time and space, and what it means to be fully present and responsive to ourselves, others, and the world around us.

In this essay, I explore "reading over time" as a highly adaptable pedagogical practice that is especially effective in times of great change. In adopting this phrase, I allude to a special "Theories and Methodologies" section by that title published in *PMLA* (*Publications of the Modern Language Association*) in May 2018. In this cluster of essays, five literary scholars working with a wide array of primary texts and critical approaches theorize the act of reading the same text at different stages of life. Introducing these essays, Faye Halpern and Peter J. Rabinowitz point out that "*reading over time* names something important that we all do as literary critics, pleasure readers, and teachers. Yet it is something we rarely have the chance to reflect on" (631). They ask, "might there be a late—or, for that matter, an early—style in reading and interpretation? What differences are likely to emerge with age and experience? How might political and cultural developments, shifts in aesthetic fashion, emerging critical perspectives, or the vicissitudes of personal history contribute to changes in how we perceive a text over time? And how do the changing perceptions of reading over time affect our scholarly efforts and pedagogical engagements?" (631). All but the last of these questions are as relevant for students as they are for other readers; and while the contributors to this feature consider reading over time as both a scholarly practice and a perennial aspect of teaching preparation, my focus here is on student learning. Accordingly, I describe a sequence of activities and assignments that ask students to take another look, adopt fresh perspectives, and reread both primary texts they have read earlier in life and their own writing from previous years.

The forum "Reading over Time," published at precisely the time

I was beginning to develop the capstone I taught in Fall 2020, became one of the guiding texts for that course, which I titled "The Afterlives of Texts." Students in this course studied revisions, reworkings, and remixes of novels and short stories to explore how literary texts reflect on and respond to earlier texts. In the first half of the course, they read an array of James's short fiction paired with Gregory Blake Smith's *The Maze at Windermere* (2018). In the second half, I paired Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and selected short fiction with Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* (1999). Studying these texts in sequence equipped students to understand how the later texts in each cluster re-envision elements of the earlier ones. Additional readings provided sufficient context for students to recognize how Woolf, who was personally acquainted with James, responded with her own writing to the previous generation of male novelists. Considering how the later texts revise and sometimes subvert elements of the earlier ones also helped students understand the effect of cataclysmic events and major cultural shifts on the literary imagination—the way *Mrs. Dalloway* responds to the Great War and, more subtly, to the influenza pandemic (as Elizabeth Outka has shown), along with Modernism, and the way *The Hours* responds to AIDS as well as postmodernism.

Before the pandemic, a course on "afterlives" seemed well suited to a capstone course that included, among its goals, helping students "articulate how the learning outcomes for their major transfer to other courses and vocations they pursue after graduating." The theme of "afterlives" would facilitate intersecting literary-historical and cultural-studies approaches while inviting an exploration of temporality both on the page and in our lives. By introducing creative approaches to time and its passing, I hoped to foster a sense of expansiveness and possibility in thinking about the transition from college to lives beyond the university. Six months into the pandemic, when time itself seemed alternately to stand still and to slip away, the topic of temporality seemed unusually timely. A pedagogy grounded in reading over time, that is, one that asks students to reread significant works from their past and, potentially, their own previous work from the past, critically but not judgmentally, offered

ways to think about the passage of time that are both academically rigorous and personally meaningful. As students discover for themselves, aspects of texts forgotten or misremembered, reinterpreted, or reappraised reveal individual change, growth, and openness to possibility within a broad range of social contexts, from the familial to the global. The instructor's role in this process is to provide abundant opportunities to practice observation, contemplation, memory, and metacognitive reflection along the way.

The pandemic altered the way we experience time. From the beginning, "pandemic time" signaled the loss of familiar routines and the establishment of strange new regimens, like washing groceries, quarantining mail, and picking up purchases curbside. It also conjures the blurring together of days, weeks, and months as halfhearted attempts at summer staycation ended and "Septober" slid into a trick-or-treatless Halloween before hopscotching on to a trimmed-down Thanksgiving restricted to one's "pod." In a work-at-home and study-at-home world, pandemic time eroded the boundaries between work time and off time, school time and play time. With such time-honored compartments suddenly unavailable, the pre-pandemic "Before Times" quickly became infused with nostalgia for the most quotidian activities: shopping in a store, getting a haircut from a professional, meeting a friend for coffee. Even traditional pedagogy became imbued with the consciousness of our new relationship to time. Classes were defined not only as "remote" or "face to face" but as synchronous or asynchronous. Teaching remote courses synchronously over three semesters, after commuting across a short hallway from kitchen to improvised virtual classroom and makeshift video-recording studio, emphasized my own altered relationship to time. As we all adjusted, reading fiction deeply invested in its own sense of temporality—from James's experimentation with representations of consciousness, to Woolf's and Cunningham's stream-of-consciousness techniques, to Smith's intricate layering of five intersecting plotlines set in the same place at different moments in history—offered much-needed moments in which to slow down and reflect.

Noting a proliferation of *Mrs. Dalloway* memes in the spring of

2020, literary critic Evan Kindley remarked: "It's oddly fitting that so many people are reaching for Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs. Dalloway' in the midst of this particular crisis, not least because the novel's opening pages are probably the most ecstatic representation of running errands in the Western canon. […] At a time when our most ordinary acts [. . .] have come to seem momentous, a matter of life or death, Clarissa's vision of everyday shopping as a high-stakes adventure resonates in a peculiar way" (Kindley). To explore how Woolf moves us through London as we move through her text, I sent students out on their own "Mrs. Dalloway Walks," asking that they chart a course, real or imagined, through their own environs, observing their surroundings and noticing (from a safe social distance, of course) other people who might be out driving by, mowing the lawn, delivering mail, walking the dog, exercising in the open air. I asked them to imagine their surroundings as though seen for the first time, invoking James's advice to aspiring writers, to "[t]ry to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!" ("The Art of Fiction," 581). Their next task was to write up their observations in a stream-of-consciousness mode, experimenting with style and shifting points of view. Through this sequence of walking, observing, reflecting, and writing, which I encouraged them to treat as an exercise in mindfulness and empathy, students could better understand both the import and the challenge of James's famous injunction with its implicit linking of reading one's surroundings perceptively and representing interiority with insight and precision.

After many months of teaching, learning, shopping, and socializing online, venturing out into the world to attend to others' points of view seemed especially important. In the following semester, in a course on Children's Literature, I introduced a virtual activity, similarly designed to promote observation, attentiveness, and contemplation, courtesy of London's National Gallery. First, students watched a five-minute video that invites viewers "to look mindfully at one painting," J. M. W. Turner's *Rain, Steam, and Speed* (1844). After a brief introduction, the narrator prompts one to imagine oneself "in the world of this painting" and feel the sensations suggested by the imagery: "the rain lashing down…the wind snatching your

breath...smelling the coal and engine smells with the grit of soot in your eyes." The narrator then invites one to "tak[e] [one's] whole body into the painting, exploring places to be...." Afterwards, I asked students to write for five minutes about what they experienced: what they noticed, how they felt, the movement of their thoughts as they listened and looked. Like the Mrs. Dalloway Walk, this exercise in what the narrator terms "slow looking" cultivates the faculties of observation and imagination. At the same time, it creates a sense of motion within Turner's static representation and, paradoxically, a sense of stillness within our own world of motion. As the narrator concludes, "Slow looking, whether at paintings or at the views and objects around you, is always available as an anchor and haven no matter where we are or whatever life throws at us" ("Turner's 'Rain, Steam, and Speed'"). In their written responses, students expressed calmness, contentment, peace, and absorption. In taking part in this activity, they were also sharpening their focus, engaging the imagination, and activating their senses. "Slow looking" is thus excellent preparation for an immersive, sensitive, and thoughtful encounter with literature.

In her essay "Practice Makes Reception: The Role of Contemplative Ritual in Approaching Art," Joanna E. Ziegler describes an assignment in which students viewed a single painting weekly for thirteen weeks and then described what they saw in thirteen *different* weekly papers. The activity resembles the National Gallery's "Slow Look at Art" but emphasizes change over time, specifically, the gradual change in the viewers' perspectives as their capacities to see, interpret, describe, and make meaning expands in response to the semester's learning. It also informs the culminating assignment of the undergraduate classes I taught in the 2020-2021 academic year: a "rereading" essay, in which students were asked to reread a book that had been important to them at an earlier stage of life and write an essay about it from their current vantage point. For models, I drew on Anne Fadiman's *Rereadings*, an anthology of essays in which "a distinguished writer chose a book (or a story or a poem or even, in one case, an album cover) that had made an indelible impression on him or her before the age of twenty-five and reread it at thirty or

fifty or seventy" (Fadiman xiii). For my capstone students, I selected Allegra Goodman's "Pemberley Previsited," in which Goodman reflects on reading *Pride and Prejudice* at the age of nine, then in high school, again in college, and, finally, later in life, and Vijay Seshadri's "Whitman's Triumph," in which Seshadri recounts his experience teaching Whitman's *Song of Myself*, a poem he had taught numerous times, to first-year college students just days after 9/11. For my students of Children's Literature, I assigned Katherine Ashenburg's "The Doctors' Daughters," which relates Ashenburg's rereading of the *Sue Barton* books, a juvenile series about a nurse, following her father's hospitalization, and Barbara Sjoholm's "The Ice Palace," in which Sjohom, lodged in a hotel in the Arctic Circle constructed of blocks of ice, rereads Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen," a tale that had captivated her as a little girl in Southern California. With a temporal frame much wider than thirteen weeks, each of these essays beautifully models how the author's reception of a single text changed over time in response to multiple factors, including age, memory, physical location, emotional and intellectual growth, personal crises, and historical events. Respecting the latter, I did not require students to reference COVID-19 or write explicitly about its influence on them, though some did. In most instances, the connections were indirect. The pandemic did not need to be named or addressed overtly as a topic unto itself. We were all living it, and every day was replete with reminders and jarring new evidence that the effects and ramifications of "pandemic time" far exceed physical illness.

In rereading a familiar text with deep personal significance, enmeshed in and inseparable from a web of memories and associations, students do far more than encounter their chosen texts as objects of analysis. As they reread, remember, and formulate their thoughts, their once-familiar text becomes a lens through which they can see themselves at two or more points in time. When the familiar text is one the student authored, this exercise can be even more powerful. Turning an analytical lens on their own compositions, my capstone students revisited their work from previous years in college. Introduced in the early weeks of the semester, with milestones for

completing various stages at strategic intervals, but due only at the end, this assignment required that students select five papers from previous courses to read critically and reflect on. Each student then wrote a brief introduction to frame each past paper along with a preface to the entire sequence in which the student traced a trajectory from the earliest paper to their culminating piece: the "rereading" essay they wrote that semester. This curated portfolio became a sustained exercise in metacognition as students delved back into past coursework, reread what they wrote, selected pieces to include based on their own interests, priorities, and other criteria, and composed the preface in which they explained their rationale and extrapolated a narrative arc from the evidence of their own evolving work. The value of this semester-long project lay not only, or even primarily, in the evidence of progressively advanced work as students assembled meaningful artifacts from their academic journeys. Rather, the greatest product lay in students' own recognitions of that transformation as they came face to face with traces and facets of their earlier selves and crafted their own stories to contextualize and connect them. Culminating in the present moment, a studied, deliberate approach to rereading their own work over time—and, especially, over pandemic time—enabled them to see how they had changed, learned, and grown as writers, thinkers, and whole human beings.

Even as *PMLA*'s "Reading over Time" became a core text in my capstone course, it has been a guiding document for me as an educator in this moment. Between March 2020 and May 2021, I reread many texts I had taught frequently and, consequently, changed the way I teach them. For a scholar of nineteenth-century literature, the step from pandemic reading to reading pandemics is not large, and on rereading Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868-69), James's *Daisy Miller* (1878), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), and Louise Erdrich's *The Birchbark House* (1999), all of which contain plot elements involving epidemics, I determined to explore with students how earlier representations of disease illuminate responses to illness in our own historical moment. These works of fiction opened the way to much-needed discussions on topics ranging from the links between structural inequities and disparities

in the social, economic, and physical effects of disease to the consequences of biased rhetoric in the discourse of public health. Even texts that are not, on the surface, "pandemic texts" may yield fresh insights when we reread them over pandemic time. In its depictions of complementary selves, "The Private Life" offers a compelling image to anyone who has ever wished or needed to be two places at once: a fantasy that may have been unusually alluring at a time when many of us felt pulled in opposite directions as directives to shelter in place conflicted with the desire to unite with distant loved ones or simply carry on with our ordinary lives. For students living in a world where they did not get to choose between going out with friends or staying in to study, James's tale may have struck a slightly different chord. Both a measure and an instrument of new perspectives, connections, and understanding, reading over pandemic time reveals our enduring capacity to see things differently, in this moment and all along.

Works Cited

Fadiman, Anne, ed. *Rereadings,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Halpern, Faye, and Peter J. Rabinowitz. "Introduction to 'Reading over Time.'" *PMLA* 133 (May 2018): 631-66.

James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." *Major Stories and Essays.* Library of America, 1999.

---. "The Private Life." *The Figure in the Carpet and Other Stories.* Penguin, 1986.

Kindley, Evan. "Why Anxious Readers under Quarantine Turn to *Mrs. Dalloway.*" *The New Yorker*. 10 April 2020. Online. www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/why-anxious-readers-under-quarantine-turn-to-virginia-woolfs-mrs-dalloway

Outka, Elizabeth. *Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature.* Columbia UP, 2020.

"Turner's 'Rain, Steam, and Speed': A Slow Look at Turner's Painting of the Great Western Railway." The National Gallery. www.nationalgallery.org.uk/stories/5-minute-meditation-turners-rain-steam-and-speed

Ziegler, Joanna E. "Practice Makes Reception: The Role of Contemplative Ritual in Approaching Art." *Becoming Beholders: Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms*. Ed. Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy. Liturgical P, 2014.

TEACHING RACE WHILE BEING A RACIALIZED SUBJECT

RADICAL VULNERABILITY AND DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS, A PEDAGOGY FOR CRITICAL TIMES

Dinorah Cortés-Vélez

Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

In my teaching practice, I have adopted what I call conscious vulnerability as a founding pedagogical principle. Vulnerability has been a necessity for me as someone with my own racialized perspective as a Puerto Rican woman teaching in North American academia. As an approach to instruction, vulnerability must in my experience be enacted as a radical choice. By "radical," I mean a choice originating at the root of an understanding about what makes us human. Radical vulnerability as a classroom methodology entails a practice of horizontal engagement with the feelings of students from a place of humility, mentorship, and healthy boundaries. Radical vulnerability is a transformative pedagogical threshold that allows for difficult and crucial classroom conversations on race and other sensitive topics. It makes the classroom a safe space for those conversations.

At first sight, such an approach to teaching a subject matter as complex as race and ethnicity might seem counterintuitive. It might generate fears of "crossing a line" or offending. In my teaching prac-

tice, however, I have found quite the opposite to be true. To begin with, students, and especially students of color, need to know that the classroom is a safe space. Students of all cultural backgrounds can greatly benefit from seeing the potential in themselves to become antiracist transformative agents, as they learn about their own racial socialization. According to Ibram X. Kendi: "Once we lose hope, we are guaranteed to lose. But if we ignore the odds and fight to create an antiracist world, then we give humanity a chance to one day survive, a chance to live in communion, a chance to be forever free" (238). This perspective is the great hope that ignites my work as a teacher, that the classroom can become a laboratory in which students can undertake a practice of radical honesty and vulnerability as they engage in difficult and crucial societal conversations. In the current global climate of intolerance toward minorities, optimism of this kind that dares to dream of a more humane world grounded on antiracist principles is not only daring but countercultural. As the United States continues to witness racial strife, even as it reckons with the combined legacies of slavery and anti-immigrant sentiment, radical vulnerability is a powerful classroom strategy suited to moments like these. It deeply fosters conversations on race and ethnicity.

Against this backdrop, the university can play a crucial role by turning away from an academicism that amounts to false erudition. It can instead embrace shared inquiry in a spirit of intellectual hunger, interrogating bravely and honestly the manners in which the conditions of our own privilege become the condition of impossibility for other human beings to fully exist. One individual at a time, we must inspect ourselves for bias about race and ethnicity against the backdrop of our racial socialization, and we must do so daily and uncompromisingly. Then we can pinpoint the roots of racial discrimination that might be consciously or unconsciously poisoning our souls. No one is exempt from this moral imperative, not even people of color, since we all internalize prejudices and inhabit different levels of privilege, which are based on intersectional factors involving skin tone, social class, gender identity, and so on. From this place of a humility anchored in our bodies as sites of an

enfleshed awareness, we can make a choice to embrace the yearning for a transcendence enabled precisely by our ephemeral, fragile, and mortal condition.

Teaching within the heritage student track in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Marquette University has revolutionized my thinking about teaching. It has offered me a new way of looking at my role as a college educator of color teaching in a North American university whose student body is predominantly white, but in which there is a steady growth of the Latinx student population. I pose my experience of personal and pedagogical engagement with this student constituency as an example of radical vulnerability's crucial role for students facing issues related to educational equity. The first important point to understand is that these students are breaking new ground, as they map new paths of intellectual hope within their own familial histories.

They bring to the classroom beautiful and heart-wrenching stories of inspiration and struggle, along with the inevitable challenges. Many of them are first-generation college students trying to navigate the complexities of succeeding in college while having more than one job. Most of their families have no familiarity with what it is like to be a college student. Another pressing challenge faced by this student population has to do with overcoming a sense of linguistic "worthlessness" and of a lack of "historical viability," due to their dual cultural identification. For many of these students, reading the work of a border-crossing thinker like Gloria Anzaldúa constitutes more than "learning." It entails acquiring a tool that allows for hope and survival. Anzaldúa's chapter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," from her book *Borderlands/ La Frontera* has proven to be particularly groundbreaking for Latinx learners. I have seen many a student shudder when they read this powerful declaration of being rooted in the experience of language by Anzaldúa: "So, if you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language" (81). I have been shaken to my core when reading the letters that I have them address to Anzaldúa after discussion of this chapter. For many of them, Anzaldúa's coinage of "linguistic terrorism" becomes a passage

to recognition of an open wound in need of dressing. I have seen the pride in their eyes when we read passages in Spanglish from Anzaldúa's incantatory book out loud in the classroom. With these lessons, they are learning first and foremost about their existential, historic, and linguistic viability. They are learning to love themselves and their language as well as the rich history of pain and beauty that comes along with it.

This type of teaching to be truly effective must be, as I see it, primarily grounded in the body. We must open spaces for experiencing the full spectrum of emotions elicited by a writer such as Anzaldúa. For instance, students can be encouraged to produce creative responses in the form of letters or poems. Anzaldúa's lessons underscore the need for a radical engagement with learners grappling with the complexities of issues such as race and racism, ethnicity, intersectionality, among others. There is one assignment that I particularly enjoy from my Introduction to Literary Analysis in Spanish for Heritage and Native Speakers course. It consists of having students write a culinary memory of their ancestors. Students are encouraged to reminisce in a piece of creative nonfiction about their most beloved familial dishes with special reference to the way they experience those dishes in a sensorial manner. In this way, they are able to learn about self in relation through the senses and in connection with remembrance and with their familial histories. This type of intellectual engagement draws upon both mind and body. It underscores the importance of sensations, remembrances and emotions in the learning process as much as the importance of thoughts. Learning in this manner can be freeing and an exercise in decoloniality.

Teaching from within the body, with our emotions as well as with our minds, entails a bold move toward embodying an antiracist, decolonial pedagogy. This type of engagement knits the stories of Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) learning communities into the larger history of resistance that has produced and shared knowledge painfully, heroically and under duress. These learning communities of BIPOC learners have something to teach to the university at large as an institution of European origins tradition-

ally grounded in privilege. One of the main fruits of this type of intellectual engagement is intellectual humility. Learning becomes a shared experience between the teacher as facilitator and the students as active participants. The educator must conceive of herself as a learner along with the students who also have valuable lessons to offer.

Radical vulnerability opens unexpected paths of radical engagement with students of all ethnic backgrounds. It facilitates the conditions so that students of different walks of life can create bridges of intellectual dialogue in its truest form and essence, of the kind that recognizes in difference a unique opportunity for intellectual growth from a ground of intellectual curiosity and humility. Conversations about the connections between colonialism and racism in a course such as Peoples and Cultures of Latin America emerge as rare and beautiful as a filigree, young people of all ethnic backgrounds delicately and powerfully entwining their minds and hearts in vigorous, honest and at times uncomfortable dialogue. These conversations do not shy away from recognizing the social pain of others. They are an opening and an invitation for students to become transformative social agents. These conversations give me hope for a better future of freedom, a multiracial democracy. Time and again, I have been heartened by the passionate commitment of a great majority of millennial and Gen Z students to be agents of change in that direction. They are not afraid to ask the hard questions. They are not afraid to allow hard-learned certainties to break down in pursuit of what Mexican poet Rosario Castellanos calls, in her beautiful poem "Meditación en el umbral" ["Meditation at the Threshold"], "Otro modo de ser humano y libre. / Otro modo de ser" ["Another way of being human and free. / Another way of being" (translation mine).

Vulnerability is a choice entailing the courage and humility to make of our inner fragility a place of recognition and connection with others. It demands an inner exertion that unveils our most inmost humanity. The paradox of vulnerability is that it makes us stronger by our decision to consciously make ourselves softer in our interactions with the unknowns of existence, with our own pains

and with the pains of others. The type of strength that a radical choice for vulnerability bears is grounded on the honesty to accept our transient nature as a species, the fact of our mortality, and from that place of illuminated woundedness, to embrace human imperfection and fragility as a place of the possible in terms of hope, equity, and social justice.

Choosing vulnerability involves putting our very selves on the line for the sake of truer, freer, and more meaningful connections with others. According to African American writer Audre Lorde, "that visibility which makes us most vulnerable is that which also is the source of our greatest strength" (42). Lorde speaks from her position as a Black lesbian poet who elevates her voice in an impassioned and powerful defense of those who have been traditionally silenced. For a writer like Lorde, the visibility of vulnerability is akin to breaking away from censorship and silence.

In my own experience as a teacher, this visibility was especially meaningful during the fall semester of 2017 when Hurricane Maria had just devastated my homeland of Puerto Rico. This category 5 monster hurricane decimated crops, knocked down the power and communications grids of the island, and killed many Puerto Ricans. A study from George Washington University puts the death toll at 2,975 (Florido). Puerto Rico has an estimated population of 5.8 million Puerto Ricans in the United States and an estimated 3.3 million Puerto Ricans in the archipelago. Hurricane Maria laid bare our social pain as a colonized people defined by a massive exilic displacement into the U.S. mainland. Communication between the two groups was extremely difficult during the hurricane itself. For twelve days, I was not able to communicate with my mother who lives in the island. Many of us Puerto Ricans in the diaspora were in the same situation of not knowing whether our loved ones had survived the hurricane. These were days of agony and tears. My students at Marquette showed great care and concern by asking me about my relatives in the island and about how I was doing. I chose to be radically vulnerable and to share truthfully with them about my anguish and the profound distress that made going on with my life here difficult. I also talked with my classes about the colonial

woes of my people that had been made blatantly obvious by the destruction brought about by the hurricane. Students were caring, understanding and very desirous to learn about ways in which they could help the people of Puerto Rico at that time of tragedy and social disarray. The emotional reality of my social pain had to be part of my instruction during those dark days if I was going to be fully present to my students, and students in turn responded with a generosity that was a saving grace for me personally.

As a conscious mode of being-in-the-world, vulnerability commands a certain type of attention, a delicate understanding of our ingrained interconnectedness as human beings. From that place of fragility, we can choose to build each other up with the tender tenacity of the weaver's hands that knit a beautiful fabric. Our existences are tightly woven together like the threads on a loom. Accepting the fact of this essential interdependence entails the vulnerability to embrace our shared fragility. Embracing this type of fragility is the condition of possibility for inhabiting our human condition with an honesty that opens us to the founding wound of our incarnational reality. But vulnerability does much more than rendering us susceptible to be wounded, as the etymology of the word suggests (from the Latin noun *vulnus*, "wound"). A conscious practice of vulnerability is a gesture toward more fully assuming our shared humanity by being more compassionate to one another.

My hope has been to demonstrate the efficacy of a pedagogy rooted on the notion that "when I'm vulnerable, I'm stronger," especially when teaching sensitive topics such as race and ethnicity. This paradox is, to be sure, fraught with emotional challenges for the instructor, but also with great rewards, perhaps the most potent being classroom dynamics rooted in understanding.[1]

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/ La Frontera*. Second Edition. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999.

Castellanos, Rosario. "Meditación en el umbral." *Ciudad Seva*. Web. Accessed 14 May 2021.

Florido, Adrian. "Hurricane Maria Caused 2,975 Deaths in Puerto Rico, Independent Study Estimates." National Public Radio (NPR). August 28, 2018. Web. 15 May 2021

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. New York: One World, 2019.

Lorde, Audre. "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action." *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007.

INCARNATIONAL TEACHING

Gary P. Klump
Department of Theology

"The entire educational process must be carried out with love… and the most effective educational method is not the word of instruction but the living example without which all words remain useless." – Saint Edith Stein (Stein 6)

"Contemporary man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, or if he listens to teachers, he does so because they are witnesses." - Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii nuntiandi* (par. 41)

Higher education was hard hit by the ramifications of the 2020 global pandemic, which brought to a head previous issues that had been bubbling below the surface. Of these many worthy issues, I would like to spend some time reflecting on the vocation of a university instructor, particularly here at Marquette University, by connecting what we do with what God has done and continues to do. The Divine Pedagogy, God's campaign of self-revelation through words and deeds, culminates in the person of Jesus Christ, according to the Second Vatican Council's document *Dei Verbum* (par. 2). Through the Incarnation, Jesus makes God manifest for the purpose

of inviting others into God's own blessed life. Incarnational teachers are called to do the same: to make manifest their own values, those of their institution, and those of their discipline, offering an encounter that invites students to evaluate and live out their own values. My reflection on incarnational teaching will be organized around the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (Context, Experience, Reflection, Action), which is based on Saint Ignatius's Examen, the linchpin of his Spiritual Exercises.

Context

God's own pedagogy is contextual. God became a human man at a particular point in time, in a particular place. God entered a specific human and historical context. God chose to inhabit a context in order to illustrate a subtext: God's eternal love. Much has been said about our current context. The term "unprecedented" or the phrase "new normal" have by now become cliché. The separate but related elements of a global pandemic, civil rights struggles, social upheaval regarding race, significant political tension, ecological crisis, and resultant economic difficulties have all fueled the dumpster fire of our time. I would like, however, to take a moment and a deep breath, to step back and question what has become more of an assumption than a conclusion: the notion that our time is unique.

To be sure, all times are unique. They are in that way not unique. All times are a combination of unrepeatable elements which produce their own difficulties. Alarmist and sensationalist media profits by maintaining our attention. Regardless of political ideology, each talking head appears as Chicken Little in disguise. Recent works—perhaps most famously "The Social Dilemma" on Netflix—have exposed the role social media has played in radicalizing unwitting users, all for the pursuit of clicks. It is easy to fall prey to "doomscrolling" and "outrage porn." The habit of mind which allows one to be taken in by the histrionics leads to what I would like to call "historical narcissism," the belief that one's own time has little analogy in other times.

Global pandemics are not new, and COVID-19 is not even close to being the worst. The modern ability to travel has exacerbated the issue and allowed for world-wide spread, but the Bubonic Plague,

also known as the Black Death, is estimated to have killed 30% to 60% of Europe's population. The overdue recognition (by some) of racial inequity and social agitation resulting from a kind of widespread (I hope) racial "awakening" continues the work from the civil rights movement in the United States and similar movements elsewhere. Hopefully, this will extend to the Uyghur population in China. While chattel slavery based solely on race was perhaps unique in the African slave trade, globally slavery has been more the rule than the exception. The Mediterranean world was regularly conquering, enslaving, revolting and re-conquering. The *Pax Romana* was only peaceful from the perspective of the Romans—the same goes for the Babylonians, Neo-Assyrians, Egyptians, and Greeks. While our ability to modify our own habitat, for good or for ill, keeps pace with technological advancement, ecological devastation has increased with our ability to measure and communicate.

This is not to deny, as many scientists claim, that such events are increasing in magnitude and prevalence, but it may be difficult to convince the former inhabitants of Pompei that the wildfires of California and Colorado are wholly unique. Our ability to label the current circumstances "unprecedented" arises from a position of our own global privilege, from our previous ability to avoid historically common hardship. Perhaps ironically, historical narcissism, the belief in the uniqueness of the one's own time, is probably not unique to this age. The opposite fallacies of primitivism (the belief that yesteryear was a golden age from which the modern era has devolved) and the myth of progress (the conviction that progress—variously conceived—is necessary and inevitable) could both contribute to this phenomenon. Regardless, I would caution against any historical perspective that dehumanizes those from another time or place, thereby delegitimizing their experiences, especially the traumatic ones. The events of the past can feel less important because we did not experience them, while those of our own time are more real because we can witness them in real time. This is not to discount the very real and serious human suffering that many are currently experiencing, but to recognize a kinship that extends to our predecessors.

In the current context, as in all contexts, educators are called to

be a people of hope. As Pope Benedict said during his address to Catholic educators: "To all of you I say: bear witness to hope. Nourish your witness with prayer. Account for the hope that characterizes your lives by living the truth which you propose to your students." This hope is not a pie-in-the-sky dream built upon superstition and fantasy, but a hope founded on truth, on the God of Love, who reveals and invites. Hope is the future tense of faith, the second pillar of Marquette's mission.

Even without the eyes of faith, we must admit that now, the present, is an amazing time to be alive. Scientific advances have allowed humans to deter and treat COVID-19 in a way that would have been impossible at any other time. Technology has allowed us to stay connected in ways that would have been impossible even ten or twenty years ago. That same technology has facilitated a social dialogue about racial oppression and privilege, allowing a message from the margins to reach the previously insulated. There is a collective will to address the complex issues of racial inequity and inequality, in addition to the history of oppression that has produced them. With regard to racial justice, the present situation is quite possibly the best it has ever been, even if a budding cultural awareness makes it seem like a "new" problem. In this context of real progress, there can be hope. The work is not finished, but without hope, it cannot otherwise be done. It is the role of the incarnational teacher to reject false historical narratives and bear witness to hope in both word and deed.

Experience

In 1975, Pope Paul VI used the phrase "new evangelization" in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and the phrase was later popularized by Pope Saint John Paul II. The tradition has been continued by Pope Francis, who describes the new evangelization in *Evangelii Gaudium* as primarily an attempt to "inflame the hearts of the faithful" and only secondarily as an attempt to reach those who do not identify as Catholic Christians (par. 14). The New Evangelization is a response to the tepid condition of the church, where even those who attend church may only do so out of a sense a of obligation, to the mass of Catholic Christians who may have never

had a religious or transcendental experience, who never encountered Jesus and his invitation: "Follow me" (*New American Bible, Revised Edition*, Matt. 4.19). As I never tire of quipping, the New Evangelization is not the New Catechesis. The New Evangelization is about life-changing experiences, not about marshalling data. It is about cultivating a desire for education by starting with the "why."

Similar to the sacramental system of the Catholic Church, it is easy for students to participate in the educational system without any intrinsic motivation, without ever understanding why they do what they do, without ever taking control of their roles in the process, but simply by plodding along out of a sense of duty or because it is what they have been told to do. I propose, then, a kind of New Educational Evangelization, rooted in experiences which demonstrate the value of our own disciplinary lenses. It is easy as experts to presume that the intrinsic value of our fields and our own work is obvious, but as with stained glass, the beauty is most evident from within. Therefore, incarnational educators stand on the threshold of their disciplines, inviting those without to come experience that which is within.

Invitation requires accommodation. This basic presupposition underpins the divine pedagogy and the logic of the Incarnation. In order for God to invite humans into relationship, God had to meet humans where they were, and by doing that, draw them closer. With students, we may have to dispense with some of the arbitrary trappings of academic rigor in order to facilitate the kinds of experiences that are foundational for a transformative education. I am sure I am not alone in having had the experience of attending some presentation on an interesting pedagogical strategy or insight where the presentation failed to incorporate basic pedagogical principles. Furthermore, academic conferences, at least in my field, adhere to a paradigm that is at least 800 years old: a literate person who wrote an academic paper in a written academic register reads that paper out loud to a crowd (well, maybe not a "crowd") of literate people. Only the most keenly interested (and acutely caffeinated) manage to stay tuned in until the end.

Instead of being allowed simply to perpetuate the pedagogical

models into which we had been socialized—I deliberately avoid the term "trained" here, as many of us have little to no formal education in being an educator—we were forced to set out into uncharted waters by the switch to virtual or hybrid learning necessitated by the pandemic. I applaud my colleagues who took advantage of the various resources available in order to make online learning as effective as possible. By using evidenced-based teaching techniques and High Impact Teaching Strategies, Marquette faculty members were able to deliver the quality education that students rightly expect.

Christians believe that Jesus Christ fully reveals who God is, that the incarnation made God present in the world in a particular way. Jesus was an event, an experience. Jesus both was God, but also pointed beyond himself to the transcendent Father. Likewise, Joseph Campbell writes of religious traditions being "transparent to transcendence," that is, facilitating an experience of the transcendent (17). However, when traditions no longer point beyond themselves to the unfathomable transcendent ground of being, they become opaque. Opaque religious metaphors and images become idols, and those who encounter opaque idols no longer look beyond them to what they represent. Educators are also at risk of becoming idols, of failing to point beyond themselves and the material they teach. They can center themselves, becoming the "sage on the stage" instead of the "guide on the side." The call of an incarnational teacher is to be a sign and to facilitate experiences that point beyond themselves, to be witnesses to a Truth that transcends them.

Reflection

Although experience may be foundational for a transformative education, that transformation is impossible without the meaning-making step of reflection. From the Christian perspective, the Old Testament contains various kinds of theological reflection that contextualize and prepare for God's becoming human in the Incarnation. The New Testament does not simply recount that event, but also contains some theological reflection on the meaning of that event. Nevertheless, individual reflection is still necessary for appropriating that meaning.

Similarly, as scholar-practitioners, we have been reflecting on our

own discipline in a way that (hopefully) continues to give our work a life-giving character. While it is possible to complete a dissertation or research project on a topic we find irrelevant, my experience is that most scholars find their own subject matter and area of interest fascinating and important. However, our own meaning is not easily communicated to or appropriated by our students.

Recent research within the field of educational psychology has illustrated the importance of allowing time and space for students to reflect, so that they can make connections between the material and their own lives. Because of this, Flower Darby and James M. Lang suggest making time for students to reflect and make connections (191-193). Connection born of reflection not only increases motivation, but it also enhances the retention of material. Content is easily forgotten; meaning endures. But if meaning is built upon content, the content is also retained.

As incarnational teachers, it is vital to the success of our own goals to allow students the time to reflect. In that spirit, I have created an "Education Examen," based off of Saint Ignatius's own Examen from the Spiritual Exercises, so that we might take some time to reflect on our own pedagogy.

Educational Examen

1. **Ask for light** (Preparation) – in the Examen, we are asking to see our days and our lives through God's eyes, to move beyond our own perspective. When we look at our own materials, we need to evaluate them through the eyes of the student experience, the best practices of our discipline, and the resources allowed to us by our context.

2. **Give thanks** (Context) – having an attitude of gratitude can be transformative. It can help move beyond our anxieties. It may be worth reminding ourselves of the joys of our employment and vocations, even when it is easier to focus on the stressors. Our work is such a blessing, and it is our everyday privilege to walk with students on their own personal journeys.

3. **Review** (Experience) – presuming this is a course you have already taught, how did it go? It is difficult to evaluate our own work, but students are regularly providing feedback. To access it, we must be humble and honest. This is an opportunity to adopt Walt Whitman's dictum: "Be curious, not judgmental."

4. **Seek forgiveness and healing** (Reflection) – an important part of the Examen is to recognize where we have fallen short of God's invitation, to acknowledge these shortcomings, to seek forgiveness where necessary, and to move on. Not everything works, but champions adapt. This step can be a kind of personal mortification: removing elements that we may like for the sake of the student experience. The process is an exercise in Ignatian indifference, where whatever does not help us achieve our goal is expunged. If we take this opportunity to recognize our own shortcomings, we may be more readily capable of relating to those of our students.

5. **Pray about the next day** (Action) – the next step is all about looking forward. What have we learned? It might be time to overhaul a syllabus, or maybe we just need to make a few tweaks. In either case, how can we do it better next time?

By performing the Educational Examen, we can work toward another one of Marquette's pillars: Excellence. Scholar-teachers at Marquette and elsewhere are called to pursue excellence excellently, for excellence is much less a destination than it is a mindset. Incarnational teachers demonstrate the pursuit of excellence in a way that invites students along, instead of building an unassailable wall of "excellence" to mask insecurity, which—if students accept—make one seem unapproachable or—if they do not accept—hypocritical.

Action

The exhortation "Be the difference" is equally applicable to instructors as students. The invitation is ontological; it is about being, not doing. Ignatian vocational discernment sees vocation is

not primarily about "what" but about "who." Vocation is about answering the universal call to holiness, regardless of circumstance. It is about being the person—and the best version of that person—God is calling us to be. Nevertheless, there is a unity between being and doing. According to *Dei Verbum*, God's own "plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them" (par. 2). In the Divine Pedagogy, words and deeds are mutually illuminative, as they are in good human pedagogy. Just as God reveals God's "being" through "doing," through words and deeds, so we reveal our being in time through doing, through action.

Saint Paul attempted to become "all things to all [people]" (1 Cor. 9.22). This is not our calling. A more applicable Pauline model is the "body of Christ," a metaphor he employs throughout his letter to the Ephesians. Saint Paul uses the image of a body, with distinct members all working together, as an analogy for the Church. His point is that everybody does not have to do or be everything. We must only be ourselves by answering God's call and leave the rest to others. Each person sees in Christ the answer to her heart's desires. One sees a captain, while another a teacher. One sees a shepherd, and another, a friend. No aspect is truer than another, but each facet illustrates an excellence united and perfected in God. Similarly, the incarnational teacher need only to offer one aspect from which the God of Love may be glimpsed.

Action is not without risk. Action requires vulnerability. The incarnation demonstrates God's willingness to enter a world of human sin and suffering. In so doing, God became vulnerable to rejection, abuse, and crucifixion (see Phil. 2.1-11). Action makes one vulnerable to criticism, because action is visible. To be sure, action requires prior discernment, but as Saint James writes, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2.15-17).

Saint James recalls the fundamental unity in the Divine Pedagogy between words and deeds.

The invitation for instructors is, to put it colloquially, to put our money where our mouth is, thereby becoming witnesses to the truth we espouse by living in accordance with it. This will almost certainly not be done (at least by me) perfectly. Action requires a humility that acknowledges that we are all in process and a humility to acknowledge our own imperfections (though those around us are probably already aware). With humility comes freedom, the freedom to be who and what we are without the burden of shame concerning who and what we are not. Freed from shame by humility, incarnational teachers are living witnesses who point beyond themselves and invite students along the way, like Jesus in the Incarnation.

In our educational context, incarnational teaching is about embodying our own values, in addition to those of the University and our disciplines, in so far as we are able. It is about modeling those values and making them accessible to students. It is about being a witness through "words and deeds having an inner unity" (*Dei Verbum*, par. 2). It is about intentionally and humbly pursuing excellence in our roles as scholar-teachers, in addition to the rest of our lives. God provided a model through the Divine Pedagogy and the Incarnation, and incarnational teachers invite students to imitate them as they imitate that model (see 1 Cor. 11.1).

Works Cited

Campbell, Joseph. *Pathways to Bliss: Mythology and Personal Transformation*. New World Library, 2004.

Darby, Flower with James A. Lang. *Small Teaching Online: Applying Learning Science in Online Classes*. Jossey-Bass, 2019.

Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation – Dei Verbum. English Edition, The Vatican, 21 Nov. 1965, www.vatican.va/ archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat- ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html. Accessed 16 April 2021.

Pope Benedict XVI. "Address to Catholic educators April 17 at The Catholic University of America in Washington." www.archbalt.

org/text-of-pope-benedict-xvis-address-to-catholic-educators/. Accessed 16 April 2021.

Pope Francis. *Apostolic Exhortation "Evangelii Gaudium" of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World.* English Edition, The Vatican, 24 Nov. 2013, www.vatican.va/ content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Accessed 16 April 2021.

Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi.* English Edition, The Vatican, 8 Dec. 1975, www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/ apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html. Accessed 16 April 2021.

Stein, Edith. *Essays on Women.* The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Discalced Carmelite, edited by Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, translated by Freda Mary Oben, second edition, revised, vol. 2, ICS Publications, 1996.

The Social Dilemma. Directed by Jeff Orlowski. Netflix, 2020.

WHAT I LEARNED ON MY COVID-19 VACATION

Mary Carlson
College of Education

The fall semester of 2020 was a particular low point in my college teaching career. I knew from our spring quarantine that students would have a more-than-usual number of questions about their academic work and many additional mental health challenges that would negatively affect their schooling. I would again have less time than usual to devote to them individually in their time of greater need. Also, it would be the first semester that none of my students would have a field placement, which I consider essential experience-based learning for teachers, therapists and all school professionals. How can we apply our learning with no one to practice on and learn from? Additionally, I teach far less effectively online than in person. Part of that is because I am not especially comfortable with, nor conversant in, sophisticated technology. My students will not only verify this, but would call it an understatement. Another part is that I am a one-time theatre major who loves to work the room, light students up, and harness their energy. This new mode was not the way I liked to teach, or wanted to teach, or was

good at teaching. Figuratively, I felt as if I had lost my teaching voice.

And then I lost my voice, literally. I got COVID.

Thus began my enforced rest, my "COVID Vacation." I got very sick and had to be home for two weeks. I was indeed fortunate to be able to stay at home, but for that time, in isolation and with no voice, I lost most of my ability to communicate with anyone. There were five days when I couldn't get out of bed except to half walk, half crawl to the bathroom, and I had one long, dark night of the soul when I realized that if I got even one tiny bit sicker, I would have had to go to the hospital. I had experienced a life-threatening illness a few years ago, and this time felt very much like then. I wrote my family a letter to say what I needed to say in case they could never hear my voice again.

So, how did I use this time? Through a long career of teaching, most of the time when I missed more than a day of school, it would be for some sort of conference, and there would be a form to fill out regarding the reason that I was out and what I had learned to improve my teaching. What did I learn on my "COVID vacation?" Nothing, I fear. Nada. Zilch, zip, zero. Not a damn thing. The evidence of this is that I tried to fix things, or to take the best advantage of the time, or to make something of it (lemonade out of lemons), or to keep close to my normal teaching schedule. You know, to be responsible to my students, to give them what they needed. I don't have a savior complex, but what I do have instead is an inappropriate sense of responsibility.

I suspect that God has been trying to teach me for most of my life now that I cannot be responsible for other people's happiness or success or well-being. I grew up in a wonderfully loving family, but one in which depression spread its tenacious tentacles far, wide, and deep. I tried very hard to make the people I loved happy, but I was often unsuccessful. I took this failure on my tiny shoulders. I was too young to understand the lesson then, but I think God tried to teach me the lesson during my first year of teaching.

In 1978, I was assigned to a middle school special ed classroom, which was, I'm pretty sure, one of Dante's circles of hell. A number

of children would be returning from the previous year, and normally that would give me an advantage in that there would be specific information on the students. The previous teacher, however, had left under somewhat mysterious and chaotic circumstances, and most of the students' records sadly were missing. That should have been a hint as to what kind of a year it would be, but I was undaunted. I was well trained, I was committed, I had high expectations, and I knew how to love students.

That love was tested in the first ten minutes. The first students I met were two 7th-grade girls who informed me that they had a deal with the previous teacher in which they would "be good" for three days of the week, and that he would then buy them pizza on Fridays. When I told them that that must have been nice, but that we wouldn't be doing it, they immediately, in unison, as if choreographed, put hands on their hips, turned on their heels and said, "Bitch!" This verbal assault occurred daily until almost Thanksgiving, albeit in the hallway since I wouldn't allow it in our classroom. The next student who entered was the singularly most hyperactive child I have ever met. In the first five minutes after he came running in, he knocked over furniture and books and threw all the name cards on the floor as he skipped around the room. He kept up an unbroken string of speech, including repeated requests to use a stapler while warning me that he had stapled both himself and other people in the past. Special ed teachers are trained to be like ninjas, to be one step ahead of whomever we are facing. If one strategy doesn't work, we go to our tool belts and try another until we find one that works. I used everything I had on the kid before 10 a.m., and it all failed. By the end of the day, I was throwing candy towards his assigned seat like puppy treats, trying in vain to get him at least to hover in one area. (If I told you that he had been banned from every grocery store in that city because he aggressively smelled the produce, or that when he ate too much beta-carotene his skin turned orange and that he delighted in the fact that he shocked people because he looked like an "Oompa Lumpa," you probably wouldn't believe me, but it's true.)

I had another student whose religion precluded her from

learning about holidays. What I didn't realize was that this student felt that she could not even hear the name of a holiday without it violating her religious code. So, fairly often during the first semester, a student would ask me a question about when we would do something, and I would answer that it would be after Thanksgiving, or before Christmas break. At that point, the student would jump up out of her seat, put her hands over her ears, and run screaming into the hall, "Mrs. Carlson said a bad word! Mrs. Carlson said a bad word!" I also had a student who, in retrospect, had a form of autism that we didn't understand in 1978. He had highly unusual academic and emotional challenges which made learning and friendships with other children difficult. He had a passion for magic, and on some days he could not be dissuaded from performing tricks, on the spot, at inappropriate times. I sent up special prayers on the days when he came in wearing his cape and top hat, as I knew that I would need extra help to protect myself from fake flowers or colored powders being blown into my face as I attempted to teach. My class also comprised the following students: a boy who was a selective mute and severely dyslexic, who sat in the back of the room and drew pictures of trucks in every unsupervised moment; another sweet, sensitive boy who had the most severe stutter I have encountered before or since, whose utterances required me to block out the chaos of the other students for precious minutes so that I could try to understand what he needed; a boy who was gifted in violating any rule, yet technically remaining with the letter of the law, and whose unusual talents included carrying pencils in his rolled up eyelids and passing gas that was so lethal that other students would seek refuge in the furthest corners of the room; and a girl who so effectively faked symptoms of a type of schizophrenia that she fooled me into asking for a psych eval. That was only half of my class.

As one might imagine, their academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs were enormous. Every day I was reminded of my failure to meet their needs, despite my best efforts including three hours a night on weekdays after the eight or nine hours at school, as well as Saturday mornings and Sunday afternoons. I had fallen in love with them. I felt responsible for their happiness and success. At

the end of the school year, and the end of my first year of marriage too, I believe God spoke through my loving husband who informed me that not only could I never meet all the needs of my students, but that *no one* could. If I continued to sacrifice not only my own time, but his as well, he probably would not be around at the end of the second year. Okay, I told him, "I've got it." And, to God, whom I had been storming with prayers for help, I said, "I've got it." I can't be responsible for others' happiness, or health or success. I can only be responsible for my own actions, not the results. I've got it.

But, I didn't have it. It has recurred over the years. A prime example of this phenomenon occurred when my youngest child was dangerously ill with an as-yet undiagnosed malady. In the frenzy of activity, as the medical personnel were doing a blood draw, my husband unexpectedly had a code-blue occurrence. He lay unconscious on the floor of the Children's Hospital emergency room. I tried to be a responsible grown up. I thought to myself, *It's okay, I know CPR, I know CPR, I can do CPR*. I laugh now when I remember how I looked around the room and thought, *You idiot, they ALL know CPR and can do it better than you ever could*. While simultaneously dealing with my 7-year-old who was not fully conscious and moaning in agony, they called a crash cart to take my husband to a different hospital. When they picked him up, I saw that he had thrown up a little on the floor. One of the nurses later asked me if I remembered what I said, which I didn't. She said that I told her not to worry about it, that I would clean up the floor later. Such is the scope of my assumed responsibility. I received a great gift, however, just a moment later. Without knowing what had happened to my husband, or what was happening with my little boy, I had to decide whether to go with my husband or stay with my baby. Which one might I never see again? And then I just prayed. "Dear God, Okay, I get it, I can't control this or fix it. Please just give me the wisdom to know which one I should be with, and I promise I will leave the rest in your loving hands." I had a moment of perfect peace within the chaos. I had temporarily learned, again, that I am not responsible for everything. Mercifully, they are both okay.

During the pandemic, it has been difficult for me to teach remotely or hybrid-ly knowing that it is not my best or most effective work. I have felt guilty and bereft knowing that my current students are not getting what my students normally get. Compounding these feelings is the lack of many supports typically available to faculty that might help sustain us through difficult times. For instance, the silent retreat weekend, offered each fall by Marquette's Faber Center, has become the spiritual center of the liturgical year for a number of us. I found myself aching for it. I raged against reality and decided to make my own silent retreat. I booked a room at a retreat center where I could be silent and away from everyone, take walks, and do a stack of spiritual reading. Regrettably, it was booked for the week I got COVID-19. Okay, I thought, I will *still* have my silent retreat. I will use this opportunity during isolation to do spiritual reading and also get caught up on some of the online demands of my classes, which are never-ending. Then, to quote Julia Sweeney, God said "HA!" I was so sick that I could barely even meet my own physical needs, much less those professional or spiritual. The feeling of failing to meet the needs of my students, and the feeling of failure to carve out time to try to hear the voice of God overwhelmed me. I would try to pray, and I would fall asleep. And so, I slept. And then I would crawl to my computer to try to give a little feedback to students. And then I slept.

When I returned, I apologized profusely to my students, and I think God spoke through them, who were so incredibly full of grace. I had recorded some PowerPoints during the spring semester, which I posted for them to listen to during class times while I was out. Many said they missed me and had prayed for me. Moreover, while I was focused on having failed at my responsibilities, more than one shared the same message—that they missed me, but that it was okay as long as they could *hear my voice.* In their final papers, they mourned the loss of a regular semester and felt cheated out of school placements (for which I, of course, felt responsible), yet they mentioned how much it meant to them that I seemed happy to see them, whether in person or listening on Microsoft Teams. To see my

eyes crinkle as I smiled beneath my mask, or to hear my voice, or to feel kindness as I tried to be flexible about due dates turned out to be touchstones for many of them. I am not bell hooks or Paulo Freire or Maxine Greene or any of the other teachers I most admire, alas, but I do share one practice with hooks. She states, "In my classrooms, I do not expect students to take any risks that I would not take, to share in any way what I would not share…It is often productive if professors take the first risks, linking confessional narratives to academic discussions so as to show how experience can illuminate and enhance our understanding of academic material" (hooks 21).

Even on recorded PowerPoints, I confess teaching mistakes that I have made, and I share stories, joyful and horribly traumatic, from my life and the lives of my former students. I am known to laugh and cry in class and on recordings. The traumatic stuff is painful, but there isn't a semester that goes by that I don't hear from a student who feels emboldened to discuss an experience, either in class or privately, that they hadn't felt they could talk about before. One of the times I invariably cry is when I share the picture of an 8-year-old boy with whom one of my MU students worked in a class for children who live with hearing loss. His teacher wouldn't allow him to answer in sign language, and he was not able to speak intelligibly. For reasons unknown to us, my student was the only person in his life who was fluent in signing, so her visits were the only time he was really heard. As the semester went on, my student would often find the little boy with his head down on the desk, unengaged with the class, and sometimes crying. She did a case study of this little guy and asked him to draw a picture of himself. When he finished, as the protocol required, she asked if he had drawn all the parts. He nodded yes. Here is that picture.

I noticed several details. He signed with his left hand, which is totally missing in the portrait. He also has no mouth; what we see is his nose. I cannot imagine a more piercing rendition of what it feels like to have no voice. Not only is it important that our voices are heard by our students, but that we are willing to give them space to hear their voices in return.

My dean had asked me, earlier in the semester, how I had adapted my particular brand of teaching to online. I told him that I had been sending out a lot of messages in bottles. Aside from coursework, each Friday I tried to send students book or movie suggestions or funny or poignant YouTube clips in a desperate attempt to reach out to those who felt isolated or sad or overwhelmed. I knew that the online delivery wasn't optimal for most of them, and I figured that I would never know if the bottles were opened and the messages read. I had labeled the emails "optional read," but I did hear from a few who confessed that they needed it. What I gave them wasn't my best, but it wasn't nothing either.

I am not sure if I have really internalized that I am not responsible for others' happiness or health or success. I have "learned" this lesson many times before, and it didn't stick. Hope springs eternal. Much like the way in which we are already mourning what K-12

students have lost through learning remotely, I mourn what my students have missed due to COVID. In this moment though, I realize that I am not and we are not responsible for their losses. As Mother Theresa said, "God does not demand that we succeed, only that we try." I can't control the pandemic; I can only control my own behavior. As we all try to use the best curriculum and instruction and technology that we can manage right now, and we *are* responsible for being present to our students in the best way that we can, we are not responsible for all of their needs, or all of their losses.

What we give, even though not our best, still has value. It is *something*. We are only responsible for being here for them, of course through our academic expertise, but now, more importantly than ever, through our voices, our smiles, or our kindness. I hope I have learned that much, but we'll see. I haven't yet changed the sign-off on my emails, a quote from St. Francis of Assisi: "We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way." Maybe I should just say that we have been called to try.

Works Cited

hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 1994.

SECTION II

BE ENGAGED

Stephen Shames, American, b. 1947, Bobby Seale Speaks at a Free Huey Rally in DeFremery Park, Oakland, California*, 1968, Gelatin silver print, 8 x 12 in, 20.32 x 30.48 cm, 2010.16.1, Museum purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Pagel, Sr. by exchange, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University*

REFLECTING ON OUR HUMANITY

COMPASSIONATE PEDAGOGY DURING (AND AFTER) COVID-19

Michelle A. Rodrigues
Department of Social and Cultural Sciences

In anthropology, a central question is "What does it mean to be human?" Introductory anthropology courses encourage students to consider how an anthropological perspective broadens their perspectives on humanity. In my first semester teaching on the tenure track at Marquette during the COVID-19 pandemic, I redesigned my Introduction to Biological Anthropology course to incorporate a modified "Ungrading" approach that was flexible to disruptions in students' lives. This approach, which has its roots in feminist pedagogy and dovetails with Ignatian pedagogy, allows students to focus on learning for its own sake, synthesizing course material with their other courses, and applying it to their own lives. Using an ungrading approach, assessment was based on qualitative student self-assessments and a final creative project, an "UnEssay," in which students answered the central question of "What does it mean to be human from a biological perspective?" Students were encouraged to use both course material and their own lives to answer this question. Additionally, students learned from each other through the

online community-building of the discussion board. Weekly questions here were reflective, and the structure of the course allowed flexibility to deal with disruptions due to the pandemic and other events. Overall, the ungrading approach encouraged students to develop their own personal learning goals, while reflecting on how the course material intersected with other courses, current events, and their future goals.

While I am pleased with student feedback on how this redesign worked, and will continue using this format, I only felt empowered to try a new pedagogical experiment due to my tenure-track position. Integrating such approaches may be too risky for contingent faculty, and tenure-track faculty still face risks if we employ teaching methods that prioritize student learning over grades and student evaluations. As a Jesuit institution, we should reflect upon how both institutional structures and the casualization of academic labor limits instructors from engaging in new, creative approaches to pedagogy.

Introduction

> To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred; who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (hooks 13)

In Fall 2020, my first semester teaching at Marquette as an assistant professor, I departed from my typical pedagogical approach. I heard about colleagues incorporating "Ungrading," and given the uncertainty of teaching students during a pandemic, implemented a

modified version of Ungrading in my Introduction to Biological Anthropology course. My goal was to encourage students to take an active part in framing what they wanted to learn and to scaffold how to achieve those learning goals. This pedagogical approach counters the "gamification" of learning, where students' focus on grades leads them to take the easiest path to their desired grade, often at the cost of circumventing deep learning (Blum 13-14). By removing grades as the focal point of the course, we encourage students to shift to a growth mindset and begin to appreciate learning for its own sake, rather than the carrot or stick of the grades.

Because doing away entirely with grades was intimidating, I softened my approach with a *modified* version of Ungrading. There were still points for each assignment, quiz, and discussion postings. There was still the standard A-F grading scheme (without pluses and minuses), but the relationship between the points and letter grades was based on student self-assessment, allowing students to take the reins in critically assessing their own engagement with course material (Stommel 28). This approach draws from feminist (hooks 12) and Ignatian pedagogy (Mountin and Nowacek 129). The course bridges the sciences and humanities. Teaching students to answer the question "What does it mean to be human?" requires recognizing and caring for students as individuals and encouraging them to bring their full selves to the (virtual) classroom environment. From feminist pedagogy, the traditional hierarchies of classroom education were upended (hooks 39), creating a virtual community where students brought their experiences and knowledge to the course material (Katopodis and Davidson 108). This scenario allowed students to be active participants in structuring their learning experiences and to achieve goals beyond the criteria that I, or the university, set for them (Gibbs 96). Mirroring Ignatian pedagogy, the course prioritized student reflection to deepen students' knowledge and growth (Mountin and Nowacek 136-137). As a first-year professor at a Jesuit institution, and after an educational and teaching history primarily in public institutions, engaging in Jesuit pedagogy was largely new to me, but some aspects did seem familiar. The earliest forms of Francis Xavier's Jesuit pedagogy arose with the

colonization of my ancestors (Kalapura 91), and aspects of those Jesuit values were transmitted in my Indian Catholic upbringing. The concept of *cura personalis* was already an underlying value in my teaching and mentoring.

(Modified) Ungrading in Practice

My approach incorporates quantitative points, but it ultimately rests on qualitative self-assessments. Self-assessments empower students to critically reflect on their learning (Stommel 28). The assessments are set up within the first assignment, "Student Success Plan," which explains the Ungrading philosophy and lays out the self-assessment template. Each quiz, lab, and weekly discussion post was worth ten points, but served only to track students' progress. Quizzes could be taken multiple times and provided feedback on correct answers with further explanation. After each lab was due, I posted an answer key so students could grade their own work and learn from their mistakes. Students received full points for each discussion post. In the self-assessment at the end of each unit, students filled out a table with their points from the gradebook.

In the initial "Student Success Plan," students customized the set Marquette Core Curriculum (MCC) learning goals by adding 2-5 of their personal learning goals. Their questions focused on finding connections between the class and their major and future career goals, or in engaging with the class content in the media or discussions with friends and family. After a set of self-assessment questions, they developed a personalized self-assessment question to assess their own learning goals. At the end of the Student Success Plan, they answered a set of questions about their study plan, and any obstacles that might interfere with their ability to fully engage in the course work.

After reading the Student Success Plan, I provided feedback, including suggested revisions for the personal learning outcomes and self-assessment questions. In some cases, students still wanted to focus on extrinsic goals (i.e., to get an A in the class), or process goals (to turn in assignments on time), and if so, I encouraged them to develop goals that reflected what they wanted to learn. The most common feedback was in adjusting their personalized self-

assessment goals in a way that allowed them to critically assess whether they were progressing in achieving those goals. For each self-assessment, they filled out the Unit Participation Table, provided quantitative rankings on a scale of 1-5 of how well they have achieved their learning goals for the unit, and then answered the self-assessment questions. In most cases, I agreed with their self-assessment. If there was any disagreement, I met with them to discuss any mismatches in expectations or misunderstandings of the process.

Self-assessments allow students to take agency in critically reflecting on their learning process (Stommel 28). They encourage deeper reflection of their learning process and create interconnections between the course and their growth as a person within their university education. Such reflections mirror the process of Jesuit *examen* (Mountin and Nowacek 135). Discussion questions focused on reflecting on their past learning and experiences and how that intersected with new ideas from the class. The result was a class that required continued critical thinking and re-evaluation of what they knew, allowing for meta-reflection and meta-cognition on the learning process (Sorenson-Unruh 145).

This process of meta-reflection included considering how the course format shaped their learning process. I am reproducing with permission some student reflections in what follows. For instance, as one student explained in their self-assessment, it deepened their meta-cognition of the course material:

> I feel that overall, the course set up has really helped me succeed in learning the material. When I say this, what I mean is the course has been set up where I do not need to worry about only facts and information that I would hold until an exam and then forget about it hours later. The labs and discussions have allowed me to take in and think about the course information in a way that I do not get to think about in other courses. I feel that addressing further ideas to what we are learning helps us better retain the information as

> it helps us reflect on the information in a real-world scenario
> rather than just in the classroom alone.

Students varied in the depth of their self-assessments. Some wrote only perfunctory responses to the self-assessment questions; others wrote beautiful, introspective responses synthesizing their work in the course with other courses and bringing together their entire university and personal experiences. Coaching students on the process of meta-reflection beyond glib responses can be a challenge (Mountin and Nowacek 138). My key challenge was drawing out more reflective responses for the perfunctory students, while encouraging the most reflective students not to be overly harsh in their own self-critique. Mountin and Nowacek suggest that teaching students the process of meta-reflection may be more effectively achieved through a community of instructors working together (138). I hope that over time, I can build community with other Marquette professors to refine these pedagogical approaches.

As a key theme in anthropology is understanding how individuals are shaped by relationships, communities, and culture, both self-reflections and the final project address the wider questions of what it means to be human within a community and cultural context. The final project was a creative UnEssay that addressed the question "What does it mean to be human from a biological perspective?" This project could take a variety of creative formats, and I provided them with examples from other instructors (Kissel). I also completed my own UnEssay answering this question to share with the students. Accompanying the creative project was a paragraph description where they explained the project and how it addresses this core question. Additionally, they completed a short set of final self-assessment questions.

Throughout the course, students had opportunities to bring their personal experiences and histories into the course. Incorporating these as relevant knowledge allowed students to make connections between the course material and their lived experiences. Recognizing students' experiences as valid ways of knowing creates more inclusive

spaces, where the diversity of students' backgrounds and cultures is recognized and appreciated. Such pedagogical approaches can be transformative and liberatory (hooks 39).

One of the benefits of the self-assessments is that they provided feedback about the students' experiences with the course material, including what they enjoyed and what they struggled with. They were affirming to read, as they provided insight into the students' intellectual growth. Many students reflected on how the course influenced their study skills and learning process. As one student explained in their final self-assessment:

> This course has taught and enhanced many of my personal skills, such as time management, self- discipline, participation/engagement, consistency and responsibility. I feel that these skills are essential to being a successful student, and overall person. I plan to bring many of these skills into future coursework and my life in general in order to live in the best version of myself.

Students also engaged in meta-reflection with the key course question. As one student reflected in their final self-assessment:

> I have never taken a class like this one before and it is probably one of the most beneficial courses I've taken while at Marquette. Every week, no matter the topic, I would learn more about our past as humans and, thus, what it really means to be human. Before my perspective of what it means to be human rested on more of a philosophical level – a physical being, a knower, a thinker, a person in relation to other persons, to society, to the end. This understand[ing] is by no means wrong, but this Anthropology class has allowed me to expand this definition. It made me recognize how closely we are related to chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans, and,

although they are not humans, they possess so many human-like qualities. Thus, deducing what it means to be human from a biological perspective rests on observing other life. Our humanity will become more apparent as we explore other life.

Compassionate Pedagogy during a Global Pandemic

This approach was flexible to the disruptions students dealt with due to COVID-19. The pandemic brought changes to many students' lives, from increased mental health challenges, changing social configurations, conflicts living with parents, and greater financial strains, to severe illness and death among loved ones. Removing late penalties and allowing submission of late work allowed for flexibility; the knowledge that making up work required just submitting the work, rather than feeling pressure to do it *well,* made it easier on students who were overwhelmed with catching up. When I met with students who fell behind, they demonstrated enthusiasm for their learning and engagement with the material. When they submitted their materials, they were reflective about how and why they fell behind. One student succinctly explained why this approach worked in their self-assessment:

> I love the way that this class is set up because it allows me to not feel so overwhelmed because I have a lot of other things going on. It also motivates me to get everything done. You are by far the most understanding professor I have EVER had and I appreciate you so much! During these unprecedented times, I am beyond grateful for how your class is set up.

Ultimately, what worked well was that critical self-assessment fed into the goals of the class: understanding what it means to be human. This central question requires reflection and meaning-making. Creative, nontraditional pedagogy opened the door for

students to think expansively in answering this question. Particularly at a time when all our lives were upended by circumstances requiring us to find new ways to connect to one another, affirming our shared humanity was central to surviving the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic.

Additionally, doing my own UnEssay answering the central questions forced me to reflect more deeply on the course material and how I bring my full identity and core values to the course. After teaching this course, in multiple formats at multiple universities for years, this pedagogical shift encouraged me to engage more critically with the course topic. I decided to create a short, multimedia video that incorporated my own artwork with a spoken word reflection of what it means to be human. Sharing a creative project that I felt was imperfect put me in a place of vulnerability, just as it did for students who shared deeply personal projects.

Pedagogical Risk-Taking

Making large pedagogical shifts requires taking risks (Blum "Conclusion: Not Simple but Essential" 220). In my years as contingent faculty, I did not have as much room to redesign curricula to suit my pedagogical preferences. Even in positions where I had more freedom, taking risks, even those that were encouraged, increased risks of negative student evaluations. As an assistant professor starting during the pandemic, I felt empowered to take a risk. Fear of making mistakes in academia limits our ability to recreate our classrooms as inclusive spaces (hooks 21). Our current institutions allow little space for students or instructors to take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. These restrictive structures hinder our ability to learn, and our ability to teach processes of genuine learning.

While I am pleased with how this experiment turned out, I struggle in justifying these methods. One issue that was raised was concern over grade inflation. With courses with higher-than-average grade distributions, comparatively high student evaluations may be discounted. I am not certain how to address this. As A. Kohn explains: "The trouble isn't that too many students are getting As but that too many students have been led to believe the primary

purpose of school is to get As" (xxii). Furthermore, we know there are biases in student teaching evaluations (Reid 145). I recently worked with a committee of my professional organization on a statement urging departments not to use them as benchmarks for hiring, tenure, or promotion (Kauffman et al.). Trying to negotiate these contradictions as a woman of color on the tenure track makes me keenly feel the double bind marginalized faculty experience in integrating inclusive pedagogy. Any transformative practice we use to make our classrooms inclusive may threaten existing institutional norms. Our institutions are built on white supremacist structures. As I tell my students, the ranking of individuals based on numbers is rooted in a history of science and mathematics that ranked European men on the top of hierarchies of intelligence (Gould), and our reliance on standardized tests and GPA enforce those hierarchies.

Mountin and Nowacek note that "In its fully religious dimensions, [Ignatian pedagogy] invites instructors to reflect on the consolations and desolations of teaching and to see God in all people, all places--including the most inscrutable or frustrating students" (140). While my personal and pedagogical beliefs require recognizing and valuing a multiplicity of spiritual beliefs, this passage encompasses my worldview that anthropology helps us value and recognize the fullness of humanity in each of us. I bring this perspective to my teaching, and one of the most fulfilling outcomes of this pedagogical approach is that students brought more of who they are into our course. Especially with students who have struggled in keeping up with the coursework, I learned more about why they struggled and reaffirmed the value of learning through challenges.

Works Cited

Blum, Susan D. "Conclusion: Not Simple but Essential." *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead).*, edited by Susan D. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. 219–28.

---. "Why Ungrade? Why Grade." *Ungrading: Why Rating*

Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)., edited by Susan D. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. 1–22.

Gibbs, Laura. "Let's Talk About Grading." *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead).*, 2020, pp. 91–104.

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man.* 2nd edition, Norton, 1996.

Hooks, Bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* Routledge, 1994.

Kalapura, Jose. "The Legacy of Francis Xavier: Jesuit Education in India, 16th-18th Centuries." *St. Francis Xavier and the Jesuit Missionary Enterprise: Assimilation between Cultures*, Servicio de Publicaciones de La Universidad de Navarra, 2012, pp. 91–111.

Katopodis, Christina, and Cathy N. Davidson. "Contract Grading and Peer Review." *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead).*, edited by Susan D. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. 105–22.

Kauffman, Laurie, et al. "Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) Summary and Background." *AAPA COD Committee Report*, April, 2019, physanth.org/documents/201/AAPA_SET_Report_2019.pdf.

Kissel, Marc. "The Unessay." *Marc Kissel's Website*, 2018, https://marckissel.netlify.app/post/on-the-unessay/.

Kohn, A. "Foreword." *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead).*, edited by Susan S. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. xiii–xx.

Mountin, Susan, and Rebecca Nowacek. "Reflection in Action: A Signature Ignatian Pedagogy for the 21st Century." *Exploring More Signature Pedagogies: Approaches to Teaching Disciplinary Habits of Mind*, edited by Nancy L. Chick et al., Stylus Publishing, 2012, pp. 129–42.

Reid, Landon D. "The Role of Perceived Race and Gender in the Evaluation of College Teaching on RateMyProfessors.Com." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2010, pp. 137–52, doi:10.1037/a0019865.

Sorenson-Unruh, Clarissa. "A STEM Ungrading Case Study: A Reflection on First-Time Implementation in Organic Chemistry II."

Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)., edited by Susan D. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. 140–60.

Stommel, J. "How to Ungrade." *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead).*, edited by Susan D. Blum, West Virginia Press, 2020, pp. 25–41.

PIVOTS AND PORTALS

REFLECTIONS ON SERVICE LEARNING DURING TWO PANDEMICS

Kim Jensen Bohat

Service Learning Program, Center for Teaching and Learning

"Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it."

   – Arundhati Roy, author of *The God of Small Things*

O n March 12, 2020, I made the unprecedented and difficult decision to pull all of the almost 1000 service-learning students out of their community placements throughout the city. COVID-19 had reared its ugly head in Milwaukee. Marquette University was suspending face-to-face classes and moving all courses

online. Cancellations started, and I vividly remember wondering why folks were calling off professional conferences that were six months away. Surely this pandemic could not last that long. As Director of the Service Learning Program at Marquette, I now had to help faculty who use service learning in their classes rethink their service learning assignments and reassure students that we would be offering grace. I was also trying to help the Center for Teaching and Learning support faculty who have never taught online before or who had never used Microsoft Teams, when quite honestly, I had not either. Anxiety and worry crept in as we adopted new daily vocabulary: social distancing, asynchronous and synchronous teaching, Teams channels, flattening the curve, mitigating risk, de-densify, and pivot. In this reflective essay, I look back at the last year of working through two pandemics, COVID-19 and racism, to share some of the challenges and opportunities my colleagues and I encountered as we pivoted our way to provide our students, faculty, and community partners with a meaningful experience.

Responding to Pandemic #1 through Service Learning

Service learning is considered a High Impact Practice (HIP) as defined by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (Kuh). Faculty integrate service learning, which is experiential, into their courses by guiding students through meaningful, course-related service experiences in the community. Combined with critical reflections on social justice, service learning as a pedagogy offers students a chance to learn more holistically about course content and about their own personal values while providing nonprofit agencies and schools with a valuable volunteer force. Each semester, the Marquette Service Learning Program partners with roughly 100-110 local community partners, 50-60 faculty, and 1000-1300 service learning students. Students work in a variety of placements, from nursing homes and schools to shelters, hospitals, and programs for immigrants. The Program has been fully institutionalized at Marquette since 1994, and our constituents have come to depend on this Program as a hallmark of Jesuit education.

Pulling students out of their work midway through the semester was not a decision we took lightly. We knew that the virus would

have a disproportionate effect on the oftentimes marginalized communities in which we focus our work and that the needs of our partner agencies would only increase. In many cases our partners rely on our students to be able to offer their programming. Our partners had already invested a great deal by onboarding and training our students, only to have very little time with them. To comply with social distancing and guard against our students spreading or being exposed to the virus, however, we knew we would need to make significant changes for the following semesters. We wanted to be able to respond to our community's expressed needs and to provide our students with this valuable learning experience, but we needed to find ways to do this safely.

As we worked to plan for summer and fall 2020, we first identified agencies that we could still assist through virtual platforms. Our staff worked to contact each of our partners to see who was able and wanted to accept students virtually or in person in a way that would allow for us to meet CDC and university guidelines. Of the 100-110 partners who work with us each semester, we lost about 40 who were not able to take our students for a variety of reasons: capacity issues, programs being shut down, volunteer directors being furloughed, or outside visitors being limited. Of the 60 remaining, about half of those wanted to shift their service opportunities to virtual or even teleconferencing.

These accommodations can and have worked well for many educational purposes, but it was a special challenge when trying to provide essential needs with and for others in Milwaukee. Shelters and meal programs still needed to meet the immediate needs of their guests, but providing shelter and food in a pandemic became even more complicated. Schools still needed to find ways to educate their students even with horrific technology gaps. We asked our partners what they needed, and we did our best to match those needs with services we could provide. We decided to forge ahead because true partners would not just abandon their counterparts in the time of greatest need. We needed to find a way to make this all come together, despite the obstacles caused by COVID-19.

Most of our faculty wanted to continue to use service learning in

their courses, especially in large core curriculum classes. In many cases, service learning was written into their curriculum and syllabus as a mandatory component of the class. In those classes, service learning is what makes the class content come alive and become a transformational learning experience. Our students also desperately needed the mental relief that these experiences bring through maintaining connections, doing what they "normally" would, and working to find meaning in a world that had become rather lonely.

My staff and I felt this urgency. As an office, we needed to find enough placements for hundreds of students to complete this requirement. We also had to take into consideration that many of the students would be taking courses as distance learning and were not even living in Milwaukee. There were some classes where service learning placements would not be possible. For example, in my own course, "Practical Cases in Medicine," students typically serve in medical settings. Medical clinics and hospitals could not have extra people in their facilities in the midst of a viral pandemic, however, so instead we pivoted those types of classes into more project-based work. My students participated in the Minority Health Film Festival put on by MKE Film. The students were charged with watching multiple films, participating in some of the community dialogues about them, and then journaling about their learning.

Understandably, some faculty chose not to do service learning in the fall of 2020 or the spring 2021 because of the uncertainty of how we would be able to pull this off safely for everyone and because of the concern over what would happen if our lockdown became even more severe. Transportation was also going to be a significant hurdle for students to do any in-person work in the city, as our students are mostly reliant on the city bus. The buses were limiting capacity to no more than ten passengers. We certainly did not want a service learning student to take a seat away from a person trying to get to a job on city transportation. Would we be able to pull meaningful experiences off if students could not physically get to the community and if the community could not digitally join the students?

Technology gaps became extremely evident as well, a social

justice issue that was heightened and highlighted by the COVID-induced move to virtual learning. Some of our K-12 school partners had no issues with having their students switch to virtual learning. Some schools already provided their students with laptops or chrome books and used virtual platforms, but for the majority of our schools, their students did not have access to technology or broadband Internet at home. Teachers in many schools had not used online learning platforms before and required quick training. Parents were left scrambling to find ways to try to salvage their children's educations, while the community also experienced layoffs, financial issues, and childcare crises. Another technology gap that was highlighted involved our work with older adults. As we watched COVID-related fatalities grow in the older adult population, nursing homes and senior living residences were put on lockdown, and the residents faced severe isolation. While most of us turned to technology to help keep us connected under lockdown, many seniors did not have the technology or did not know how to use that technology.

Beyond what we could salvage of our usual placements, after speaking with our partners, we identified two large community needs regarding the technology gap to which we could respond: helping students with online learning and helping to make senior citizens feel a little less isolated. Because schools were already dealing with so much, we decided that it would be best if we could figure out ways to assist them that would not put any additional stress or work on teachers and school staff. Working with Marquette's Center for Community Service, we decided to establish the Marquette Tutoring Hub. The Hub would work to train student tutors in online digital tutoring strategies and then help to facilitate onboarding and placement with schools that were interested in having our students assist, both as digital classroom assistants and as one-on-one tutors. The Hub would also bring together the tutors at various times in the semester for critical reflection on their work and strategy sharing. Over the course of the fall and spring semesters, 73 students served as virtual tutors. Our partners were very pleased to have this assistance as the tutors helped to engage students who were

struggling with the new virtual learning. Our education courses were relieved that the students still had meaningful opportunities to engage with youth and apply the course concepts.

Working with a senior apartment complex for low-income senior citizens and three nursing homes, we found ways to engage seniors who were isolated by the virus. Many were locked down into their rooms or their apartments with no visitors allowed and very little opportunity for socialization. Jefferson Court Senior Apartments had received about twenty tablets as a donation for the seniors to check out of their library. The issue they had though was that most of the seniors did not know how to use the tablets, nor did they know how to use applications like FaceTime, Skype or Zoom. Our program set up training sessions wherein Marquette students would be available by phone to help talk seniors through the technology. They then recorded some brief training videos for the seniors. We also set up a program where the service learning students created presentations into which the residents could either call on their phones or attend in zoom if they were able. The students presented on a host of topics including health, current events, sports, and even trivia. For our nursing homes we set up friendly visitor phone calls, where the service learning students each received a list of older adults who indicated they wanted phone calls. Then the students called their senior partners for conversations and relationship building. We were even able to partner with the Veterans Home in Union Grove, which is typically beyond the boundaries of where we send students physically.

Responding to Pandemic #2 through Service Learning

Just as we were beginning to settle into our new COVID-induced "normal," on May 25, 2020, the nation witnessed the heinous death of George Floyd, a Black man, at the hands of white police officer Derek Chauvin. Then once again, on August 23, 2020, Jacob Blake, another Black man, was shot and critically injured by Rusten Sheskey, another white police officer, just forty miles south of Milwaukee in my hometown of Kenosha, Wisconsin. The outrage, hurt, and anger about white supremacy and racial inequity justifiably boiled over at points, and the chants for equity and justice for Black

and brown lives became louder, even on Marquette's campus. Both the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) and the Service Learning Program recognized the urgency and necessity of providing our faculty and students with opportunities to grapple with these huge, seemingly insurmountable social justice issues.

Spurred on by the protests, the obvious need to address racism as a national crisis, and calls from the Black Student Union on Marquette's campus to increase our training around racism, we decided to focus our service learning student reflection sessions heavily on race. During the spring 2021 semester, we specifically created new curricula for the reflections on antiracism. All the sessions were held virtually and focused on social identity, whiteness and white supremacy, systemic oppression, and social action. Over three hundred students attended these sessions. We recorded podcasts for faculty development that looked at how service learning can be a tool for antiracist education. We held a book club with our student staff where we read Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How to be an Antiracist*, and we discussed how it could inform our actions. We pivoted our staff meetings to allow our staff the opportunity to ask real, authentic, and personal questions about race and racism in a safe and supporting environment. I wrote a new set of commitments for the mission and vision of the Service Learning Program that will hold us accountable for working toward antiracism. My team and I participated in over a dozen professional development opportunities around diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We also engaged in creative thinking and action with other departments and units across campus to take up issues related to equity and inclusion. For instance, in cooperation with the Burke Scholars Program, the Center for Urban Research, Teaching, and Outreach (CURTO), and the Center for Community Service, we also started what we named the Milwaukee Roots Conversation Series as a way to better orient our students to their city. Many of our students come into Marquette from other cities and have very negative stereotypes about our city and the people who live here. The goal of this program was to give students a better context and understanding as they participated in community engagement and service.

Over the summer of 2020, CURTO and the March on Milwaukee (MoM) 50th Anniversary Committee created a series of weekly webinars that examined Milwaukee's rich, but often problematic history. The pre-recorded webinars include a variety of local historians, community activists, and community experts leading important conversations about voting rights, housing, student activism, unheard voices, and the rich diversity of Milwaukee's neighborhoods. During the Roots conversations, we used these webinars as a foundation for our own meaningful and engaging dialogues about Milwaukee. We invited students from area high schools, another college, and other community members to join us for these weekly small group conversations, facilitated by Marquette alumni. The MKE Roots Conversations ran both semesters and attracted almost 200 participants.

Despite the pandemics and all they threw at us, we were able to work with 92 different course sections and 44 unique faculty members from summer 2020 through the spring 2021. A total of 1322 students were still able to participate in service learning experiences as they served at 58 different community partner sites. While those numbers were down from pre-COVID numbers, we were very proud of what we were still able to offer to our students and that we were indeed able to serve our community when they needed help the most.

Service Learning as a Gateway between Worlds and Walls

When we talk about Service Learning, we often talk about how it can take away the walls of the classroom. The community becomes the classroom, and learning becomes place-based instead of classroom-based. This past year, we physically could not always be in the community. Moving to digital service learning opportunities and imagining new ways of working in solidarity with the community was full of challenges. In normal circumstances, planning for really high-quality service learning engagement usually takes months, but we did not have that kind of time to respond when COVID cases were growing and capacity requirements were going down. We had to jump in and take some risks, and we had to break from policy. Being in community virtually also freed us in some ways, however. It

freed us from doing the status quo. It forced us to be creative. It helped us imagine new ways of doing community engagement and critical reflection.

I do think that it is more difficult to build relationships with the people whom students are serving within the community when they only see them on a screen. I heard from faculty that they could see the difference in engagement with the students who only worked virtually. Students were still able to make course connections, but some of them did not have the same amount of investment demonstrated by students who were in person. As Ignatius taught, being fully alive is to see, taste, feel, hear, and smell. Our senses are what open our hearts to God and to knowing ourselves. Screens hold us to seeing and hearing, so while digital placements allowed us to engage in new ways and allowed us to continue to serve when we could not be in person, there were still limitations.

Additionally, as the entire nation was forced to reckon with white supremacy, it became an essential moment in examining how community service can be a form of colonization and oppression. This moment called us to examine our own policies, procedures, expectations, and structures to make sure that we were not just reinforcing racist and oppressive structures because our white blinders had blurred our vision. We wanted to avoid being "the great white hope." We wanted to center the voices of people at the margins and prevent solidarity from being "cheap" or transactional instead of transformative for our community and students. We wanted our work to influence authentic transformation of people's hearts and then inspire people to work toward a more equitable world. Our Program has always had an emphasis on social justice education and offered critical reflection on systemic oppression, but this moment called us to interrogate ourselves on whether we were indeed walking in action what we were preaching to our students.

I would like to think we will come out of this pandemic stronger. These new "pivots" will stay in place to some degree. I think we will continue to offer some, but not all, of our reflection sessions virtually. I foresee that we will have some virtual service options as long as our partners want them to be options. Our

commitments to antiracism will be reviewed every semester, and we will be accountable to them in our performance review process. We will still have most of our reflection sessions focus on antiracism. The two pandemics remind us that we can strive to be better. After twenty-plus years of working for this program, I was shaken a bit by these pandemics, but they made me see my work differently and brought new ideas. I am glad to step through this portal.

Works Cited

Kublitz Moyer, Ginny. "Our Five Senses and Being Fully Alive." Ignatian Spirituality. July 2006. www.ignatianspirituality.com/five-senses-and-being-fully-alive/. Accessed 14 May 2021.

Kuh, George D. "High-Impact Educational Practices." American Association of Colleges and Universities. 2008. www.aacu.org/node/4084. Accessed 3 May 2021.

Roy, Arundhati. "The Pandemic is a Portal." Financial Times, 3 April 2020. www.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca. Accessed 3 May 2021.

TEXTURES OF DISRUPTION

TEACHING IN A STRANGE WORLD

Alexandra Crampton
Department of Social and Cultural Sciences
Melissa Shew
Department of Philosophy
Lynne Shumow
Haggerty Museum of Art

Once it became clear that the pandemic would be more than a temporary disruption, American "can-do" optimism stepped in. Across media outlets and in educational venues around the world, we were called to "pivot" and adjust to a "new normal." In this chapter, we describe how we answered this call as co-instructors of a course during Spring 2020.

Before the pandemic hit the Marquette campus, we were excited. We had never taught together before, taught the topic of this class before, or taught sixty-five students in one class at Marquette before. We spent about six months planning a creative, immersive class for juniors in the Honors Program. The Haggerty Museum of Art's exhibition, *Towards a Texture of Knowing*, was the point of the departure. We approached our course's theme, authenticity, as a

hands-on and experiential topic ripe with physical, tactile engage-ment with art, and we were fortunate to have the museum as a weekly meeting space. We designed class sessions that had students interacting with and making art in addition to approaching the course's topic through other disciplinary lenses, including philoso-phy, anthropology, and social work. The design element of the course was strong, with each of us taking turns as lead for each course section and the others playing supporting roles. We called this course, *Textures of Authenticity: Being in a Strange World*. It was going to be wonderful. It *was* wonderful—creative, fecund, smart, fresh.

The course was originally to culminate in collaborative creative student art projects to be installed in the Haggerty Museum of Art at the end of the semester. Instead, creative art was reduced, reconfig-ured, and only partially recovered via technology and screens as a result of the "pandemic pivot." In this process, like everyone else, we had to do more than expected while working with less. Here, we reflect on what was lost, learned, and reasserted as essential to authentic learning, however disrupted.

Grounding Authenticity in Art and Experiential Learning

Like most classes taking place in the Haggerty Museum of Art, our one-credit seminar was centered on object-based learning to approach the course's main theme of authenticity. The course struc-ture allowed students to be deeply but subtly immersed in Ignatian pedagogy through aesthetic experience. About the importance of the imagination in Ignatian pedagogy and how it relates to our senses, Fr. Tom Lucas, S.J., states:

> Although Ignatius Loyola (co-founder of the Society of Jesus) didn't have an artistic bone in his body, he bequeathed to the Jesuit order and its institutions a sensibility, an appreciation for the revelatory power of the imagination that was a break-through in the Western spiritual tradition. Unlike so many earlier spiritual writers who warned against fantasy or the use of images, Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises encourages

retreatants actively to use their imaginations as well as their intellects. While a few of the exercises are analytic or content-driven, the most important are exercises of the imagination: "contemplations" of the life of Jesus wherein the retreatants enter into the scene with eyes and ears and heart open. (Lucas 8)

This "revelatory power of the imagination" invites students to imagine other worlds, invigorate this world, and be authentically immersed in meaningful action and reflection. Indeed, even the heart of Ignatian *examens* call upon the senses to describe what is seen, heard, touched, felt, and tasted to help navigate and understand the experiences of life. Thus, we also asked our students to have their eyes and ears and hearts open. Students were called on to *really* look at art, learn processes behind how it is made, and think about what the work is communicating. We investigated the following questions: What makes a person or thing original or fake? How can art reveal what health science and law might obscure in engaging in human experience? How can we authentically orient ourselves in a strange, evolving, and emergent world? What is the relationship between technology and authentic experiences?

One of the works we engaged with was *Untitled (LA)* by Felix González-Torres. The installation, comprising hundreds of individually wrapped pieces of candy "spilled" on the floor, is meant to reference González-Torres's longtime partner, Ross Laycock, who died of complications from AIDS in 1991. Viewers are encouraged to take and consume a piece of candy from the pile. When the pile gets noticeably smaller, the museum replenishes the candy back to its original form. The installation, existing in flux, serves as a literal and metaphorical depiction of depletion and rejuvenation.

During our class session on this piece, some students nervously took pieces of candy while others asked whether this offering of candy was really a form of art. They were presented with an unfamiliar art object and were tempted to reject it as strange. This experience opened a space to think about what makes a thing the thing

that it is—a metaphysical question—and also about how we might memorialize and continue to love those who imprint our lives, especially in social spheres. Through all of it, though, we were able to witness an at times awkward shared aesthetic experience among students.

Students also viewed Rachel Rose's video installation *Lake Valley*. This large-scale video examines the transition from childhood to adulthood through the eyes of a weary pet, a sort-of hybrid dog/bunny creature, who ventures out of its suburban home in search of new connections. Using images from 19th- and 20th-century children's books, the video, like many children's books, deals with issues of loneliness and abandonment, topics that became particularly relevant in retrospect. The pet's hopeful adventure turns into a frightening journey where the familiar becomes unfamiliar and friends cannot be distinguished from foes. As they interacted with this video, students clearly felt another kind of awkward communion in finding common ground in strangeness. The world, as we know, is strange, even if it may not appear to be such at first. This feeling of isolation and alienation in itself can provide a way to belong together in our own strangeness, legitimizing authentic ways of being in the world beyond social norms and conventions, ideas that became all too prescient a few short weeks later when the pandemic broke.

The Class in Action

We believe that transformative student experiences spring from sound pedagogy and spark genuine student inquiry. Of course, with teaching loads and work responsibilities being as they are, it is often not possible to be wildly creative, but creativity ought to lie at the heart of education. Here we outline the ways that theory met art in our class, showing how the intention was to provide a different kind of educational experience for students to get at the heart of authenticity and strangeness.

To help build structure, the course was divided into three units with rotating instructors. Taking turns, we provided different layers within each unit, each exploring questions of authenticity through what students might find strange or what strangeness might be

hiding within a presumed familiar. Our first unit was called "Replicas and Reality." Students were asked to think philosophically about how "real" objects differ from fakes and whether this distinction matters. They were also drawn into an activity inspired by the González-Torres work. Students were taught a common health instrument used to test cognitive capacity, and they then practiced on each other. This activity led into discussion of how not only art but also medical diagnostics are creative objects requiring interpretation. Students concluded this unit by creating an "exquisite corpse" activity, which is a Surrealist drawing technique and game whereby each student creates part of a piece without knowing what the student before created. Strange, dreamlike images in the spirit of Surrealist art itself were revealed upon completion.

The second course unit was called "Screens and Shields." We asked students to take a second look at familiar social media sites, dating apps, and the potentially favorite place of Walt Disney World. How are interpersonal, romantic, and ideal experiences manufactured through technology? Are these experiences authentic or fake? What is the difference? Next, students engaged artist Sable Smith's *Coloring Book* series, from the Haggerty exhibition *Ordinary Violence*. In her art, Smith challenges notions of "normalizing" oppressive elements of legal systems. Students compared Sable's work with anthropological research that similarly reveals "ordinary violence" underlying seemingly objective court processes and forms. This unit concluded with students making their own art through silk-screening t-shirts. We pulled them out of passive learning into direct engagement, expanding from trappings of traditional learning into learning explicitly through sensory and interactive experiences.

We parted for Spring Break with a good sense of covering a lot of material and setting up students to explore and create on their own. In the final unit, "Being and Belonging," students were going to enjoy a music concert at the Gesu Church and a dance performance, which had been created specifically for the class. We did not think about how dependent our course plan was on direct access to campus resources and the ability to meet in person because we did

not need to. That part of class had seemed obvious and had never been questioned.

And then.

Disruption

The irony of the course's theme of authenticity was lost on none of us when the pandemic hit. We knew that our familiar worlds of coming together, having a predictable ordinariness that is in many ways valued in terms of cultivating trust and reliability, and the plain enjoyment of teaching together would rupture what we love about being educators, and it did. We were all kicked off campus and scattered to varying shelters of comfort and distress. A trauma-informed shift in course plan was necessary. Alexandra took a cue from disaster relief work. In the wake of natural disasters, professionals help provide structure amidst the chaos by quickly setting up schools. Our class could be a touchstone of normalcy in that regard, especially important during the early days of public panic. How to do this was not obvious though; after all, we could not rely on much of what had made teaching familiar. We previously had asked students to consider whether technology made supposedly real experiences into a fake. Now, we turned to this technology to rescue our course on authenticity and being in a strange world.

The answers were not fancy. First, we asked students to reach out to their group members, to identify ways to connect and communicate, and to reflect on the challenges of "being and belonging" as a virtual reality. They chose whatever technology worked for them and came to class virtually via D2L. We then returned to the centrality of art, asking students to complete another D2L post engaging different artistic expressions of being and belonging. Anticipating varied responses to the pandemic, we encouraged students to work with how artists were bridging social distancing during "lockdowns" and to share their remembered and enduring ways of being and belonging through music, visual art, and literature. We would no longer meet face to face, but we could nonetheless digitally share new and familiar ways of being and belonging amidst the strange, and frankly, unsettling. The biggest pandemic course-related challenge was figuring out how to

adapt the intended final art installations at the Haggerty to a virtual space. We had to devise ways to honor the textures and layers of authenticity in the class but do so in a completely virtual way.

Here's what we did. Using the "art gallery" template in Power-Point, each student group's digital art was displayed as a slide and posted on D2L. We gave students two options, both entailing the artform of photographic collage. As we reflect on that semester, the theme of collage repeatedly appeared throughout the course, both in terms of the physical nature of the art with which the students interacted, and in terms of how we designed the class. Indeed, the concept of collage, of disparate parts coming together to make a whole, seemed especially relevant at that point in time and to that phase of the class. Each group member needed to contribute to the whole, and each group needed to label their artwork as though it were in a gallery.

It was a nifty idea, but we still questioned. Was this project authentic learning? Would it be authentic art, or was this a hasty workaround? Was this just scrappy American "can do" when we ought to reckon with real and permanent loss? We did not know. Though there were obviously larger issues to contend with in terms of health, safety, and coming to understand what was happening even on a basic level, we did care for and about our students, this topic, and each other.

Discoveries

We each spent time reflecting on those important questions about authentic learning and teaching. Below are some of our individual reflections about teaching a class on authenticity and being in a strange world that was disrupted and transformed by a viral outbreak.

Lynne: Before the pandemic rift in our class, we made things, touched things, experienced things through all our senses. When we moved away from the museum to our individual retreats, our world became flat. We could no longer experience the three-dimensionality of the exhibited sculptures. The high-definition, theater-quality video was now viewable only on our tiny computer screens. The

candy of the González-Torres piece could no longer be unwrapped or tasted. We could no longer experience the sounds and movements and sheer excitement of 68 people coming together every week for a common cause. In the end, the creative possibilities for final projects had to be reduced to digital options. The projects would be on a screen devoid of depth, texture, and layering as we had expected.

The rift brought lessons and required adaptations. An unanticipated shift was our moving from facilitators of enlightenment to caregivers. We wanted to make sure our students were okay. We wanted them to know that they could reach out to us at any time. We wanted to make sure our instructions were clear and doable. We did not want to add more stress to their already stressful lives. There was a lot of asking, *are we doing the right thing?*

Alexandra: For me, continuing a course during pandemic disruption brought up familiar lessons in a strange way. Many years before, my otherwise privileged childhood had been affected by personal trauma. As a student, school then became an especially important safe space for me, offering the promise of change, structure, and escape. In coming to Marquette as a professor, I had presumed to remain removed from earlier, traumatic experience through a focus on formal education. Instead, the shift from student to teacher triggered a stressful reckoning between past distress and current responsibilities. My spiritual directors, Kathy Coffey-Guenther and Michael Dante, became important guides in how to stay engaged despite internal turmoil and thus how to be in crisis while also open to learning, creating and being in the world.

Having experienced this as a personal challenge, I was surprised by how quickly the pandemic plunged people around me into the same lesson. Of course, we were not affected all the same or to the same degree. From a social justice lens, recognizing varying levels of risk, resources, and support is important; however, a global pandemic breaks down a fake presumption that people are either okay or not okay, doing well or messed up. Classes were still in session, and yet we knew the world could never be the same.

A significant challenge was a scaling up of student distress. During "normal" times, there will be only a handful of students

whose worlds have been so disrupted that they need special attention and accommodation. I do not ultimately worry about them. Instead, I worry about the students who are too shy or ashamed to reach out. This pandemic moment brought cause to expand worry from a few students to potentially all of our students, as well as colleagues, friends, and family. In response to calls for a "pivot," I was glad to have an idea, an exercise, that required us to reach out to them, and to assign them the task of reaching out to each other. We would be okay even as our world was not okay.

I hoped that asking them to name their small groups might also help with the stress response that biological anthropologists call, "tend and befriend" (Taylor 32). My expectation seemed verified by humorous names students chose, such as, The Isoladies, the Broken Six-Pack, and the meme, "This is fine." While the pandemic wrought great damage, it also brought a new level of engagement and fulfillment in pursuit of authentic teaching, learning, and being in a strange world.

Melissa: What I did not expect from this experience was something that I have wanted personally and vocationally for a very long time: to feel like I was working with colleagues, with mutual respect, and to feel like there was an idealistic yet practical common purpose among us. As a participating non-tenure-track faculty member, certain opportunities and communities that tenure-track faculty can take for granted do not exist for me in the same ways, and I have just learned to deal with it. As one might imagine, that has been all right at some times and not at other times. I was grateful for that opportunity to collaborate formally with faculty and staff through the Honors Program, and I am thankful that I have been able to continue doing so with others this past academic year and upcoming.

When Alexandra took the reins in flexing to remote learning and Lynne worked hard to adapt the experiential elements of the class to this new situation, I felt gratitude in a deep and abiding way. I did not have to shoulder it alone; my colleagues took up the task with grace and gusto. They were beautiful, really, and I feel proud to have worked with them in that moment. As students drifted into their

new realms and we into ours, I must confess that as strong as the anxiety was for all of us, I also felt myself even more determined to help forge ways to build worlds—not just with students, but with colleagues and in my communities in truly inclusive ways. I could not be more grateful for the two women in our wild class in Spring 2020, which has left an important and intimate imprint on my vocation as an educator.

Crisis and Creation in Authentic Education

We really had to mourn the loss of thoughtfully planned lessons that could not be digitized. We all missed out on experiencing a live concert in Gesu, a live dance performance, and the excitement of working together to create and present an installation in a museum space. On the other hand, our online assignments succeeded in providing students with opportunities for connection, which they revealed was what they longed for during this time of separation. Our assignments also provided an outlet for thinking about and sharing emotions. The pandemic and its resulting consequences made students think deeply about big issues they had not necessarily thought about before. Missing friends, feeling isolated, and feeling uncertain about the future became topics to consider and work through with their final projects.

If the course had been intentionally taught online, we might have layered in more options and reflections with that purpose. The switch to virtual was not a design innovation but a necessity. Thus, we never did "pivot" as much as we entered new dimensions of teaching and learning in which crisis and creativity can coexist. Ultimately the virtual medium was not devoid of authentic learning and even of co-creating art. Our students stuck with us and stuck with the class; 64 of our 65 students saw the class through to the end and participated in the final group projects. We hope our students are proud of what they brought together while scattered from each other and our intended course design.

We leave with an example of a final project. It is a collage created by contributions from several students to form a coherent, if Surrealist, whole—as we are all in process doing these days, even now. We

are happy to have received permission from the students in this group, Michael Aiello, Sam Downes, Stephen Fugslang, Will Gately, Nathan Organ, and Adam Pink, to share the image and text from them below.

Title: *Gately Extravagant Playground*

Context: Since many of us have gone home for the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we decided to go back to our roots for our authenticity project. We chose to make an abstract collage of playgrounds which were either located at or near our respective houses.

Description: Playgrounds shaped many of our childhoods, which shaped us into the individuals we are today. The moments we spent as children on playgrounds—or living carefree lives in general —were authentic moments that captured who we truly are. This collage represents the carefree, imaginative mindset of a child who hasn't yet been forced to "grow up" by societal pressure. During the pandemic and subsequent quarantine in most states, most of us have traveled away from campus and back to the homes we grew up in.

The ability to spend time in our childhood homes helps us to slow down and think about our carefree, childhood selves. The time we have to relax and reconnect with our authentic selves (rather than continually bustling around, as many of us do in these final weeks) is important for our health and safety through this pandemic, but also for our near future after the pandemic ends.

Works Cited

Lucas, Tom. "The Spiritual Exercises and Art," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education,* Vol. 47, Art. 5., Spring 2015, p. 8.

Taylor, Shelley E. "Tend and Befriend Theory." *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology: Volume One,* 2011, pp. 32-49.

IN PRAISE OF DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP PROJECTS, OR:

"WHY I FEEL (SOMEWHAT) PREPARED FOR THE NEXT BIG ONE"

Deirdre Dempsey
Department of Theology

M y book club recently read David Quammen's 2012 book, *Spillover: Animal Infections and the Next Human Pandemic*. It convinced me that the NBO (Next Big One, a term used in the book), another pandemic, is perhaps not right around the corner but is nonetheless inevitable. This current pandemic caught me a bit unprepared. For example, I have been the sort of cook who shops that day for that evening's meal, and the beginning of the shutdown found me woefully ill prepared food-wise. Now I have changed that pattern, and I keep a fairly well-stocked pantry. I could whip up an edible dish and maybe even a tasty one without running out to the store. Since I was also in the habit of going into the office every day, I did not have Internet at home either. The availability of a hotspot from Marquette's IT Services kept me connected to my students when we pivoted last semester.

Pivot: A word we have all heard over and over in the last year, as in "I am working on pivoting to on-line teaching;" "I am wondering

how to pivot to remote learning;" "how is your pivot going?" In fact, I heard it so much that I began to wonder what it actually meant. Here's the etymology from Mashed Radish:

> As a verb today, *pivot* often expresses a very particular action: a swift and strategic turn on the spot.... At least since the late 1890s according to the *OED*, basketball players have been so pivoting, with one foot pivoting on the floor, the other maneuvering for the best path to the basket.

I like the image of a basketball player, turning, trying to get to the basket in the most efficient, effective way possible, and now, of course, we are hearing that we are going to "pivot back" for the Fall 2021 semester. In what follows, I explain what worked in my March 2020 pivot, what did not, and, in the face of the inevitability of the NBO, habits I have changed in my teaching to ensure that I am hopefully better prepared for the next pivot.

I was in Alexandria, Virginia, for Spring Break 2020, which started Monday, March 9, when we got the news from Marquette University about pivoting to all remote learning. In hindsight it seems reckless, but my family continued its tradition of gathering with friends for an early Saint Patrick's Day party. That party took place on Saturday, March 7. The plan was that my sister and I would drive up to Fort Washington, Pennsylvania on Monday, March 9, to visit my 95-year-old godmother in her assisted living facility. Sometime on Sunday, March 8, my sister-in-law mentioned that we should check to make sure we would still be able to visit. According to the facility's website we could, but we started to question the wisdom of visiting an *elderly person* in *an assisted care facility* right after we had been at a gathering of about fifty people. We waved off the visit, and the facility closed its doors to outside visitors on Tuesday, March 10.

Throughout that Spring Break week, I was checking *Inside*

Higher Education and *The Chronicle of Higher Education* a number of times each day, tracking which schools had decided to pivot to remote learning, which schools were asking students not to return from Spring Break, or, if a school's break had not happened yet, how that school was facilitating an orderly exit from the campus. With every announcement of a school pivoting, my sense of impending doom grew more acute. On Wednesday, March 11, the Marquette University campus community received an email stating that Thursday, March 12, would be the day when the decision would be made about what the rest of the semester would look like. On that day, we got the news that Marquette University classes would pivot to distance learning at least until Easter, which fell on April 12, when all would be reassessed. As we all know, we continued with distance learning for the rest of the semester.

And so it began, an adventure in pivoting that continued through the 2020-2021 school year. The Center for Teaching and Learning on campus did and does all sorts of heavy lifting, providing all manner of support for faculty who might not have ever done any distance teaching before and helping us figure out the most effective ways to get to the basket, to the end of the semester. I was one of the faculty members who had never done any sort of distance teaching or learning. I knew that distance teaching could be done very well, and I knew that it had certain advantages over in-person instruction, but I also had no desire to get involved in it in the twilight of my career.

In Spring 2020, I was teaching two Foundations of Theology sections. One of the classes had twenty students, the other thirty. My major project for both classes was a digital scholarship project (DSP). Students were working individually or in groups to produce video, Wordpress, Timeline JS, StoryMap JS, Adobe Spark, podcast, and Art Steps projects. I even had two students working together on a Tik Tok. My interest in the use of DSPs in my classes developed organically. For years I had been using a lot of visual art to illustrate biblical interpretation. Every visual artist who is depicting a scene from Scripture is an interpreter of the text. I realized that visual art

was a great way to talk about the Scriptures and theology, so four years ago, I finally put together a class called Theology and the Visual Arts. The visual arts are also a great, and I think fun, way to have students practice the art of noticing. For both this Theology and the Visual Arts class and my Foundations course, I initially asked the students to present a PowerPoint on a particular artist. With the help of the Digital Scholarship Lab (DSL) in the Raynor Library (more specifically, Elizabeth Gibes and Elizabeth Wawrzyniak), I quickly became more adventurous vis-à-vis the possible platforms students might use.

For the past few years, the DSP has been an important assignment in my classes. Along with a grade for the DSP itself, which constitutes 20% of the final grade, the projects are the basis for one of the questions on the students' final exam. Students upload their projects to D2L at least a week before the final exam is due, and students receive a grade on their DSP outline as well. Students also get the opportunity to write. Both the midterm and the final in my undergraduate classes are take-home essays, with the prompts given at least a week in advance, but I do not have a traditional paper. The assessment is based on the DSP, the DSP outline, two exams, and participation. When students send DSPs to me on the due date, I look them over, then send the students my assessment based on what they have sent me. If they are content with the grade I assign, that is the grade they receive. I also include comments that would result in a higher grade, should they choose to incorporate the suggestions into their final outlines and final DSPs. Most students avail themselves of these suggestions.

Pre-COVID, which obviously was the case at the start of the Spring 2020 semester, I was not in any particular rush to get started on the DSPs. In January 2020, I had students fill out a survey on the first day of classes, giving me some information about their academic interests, other classes they are taking, their extra-curricular interests, and their aspirations. Using these surveys, I emailed the students individually, suggesting possible DSP topics. For example, I had a first-year student who is a Mechanical Engineering major. In her survey, she expressed an interest in working for NASA. One of the

suggestions I gave her in my email response to her survey was a DSP that would focus on Jesuits and Astronomy. That is indeed what she ended up focusing her DSP on, using Timeline JS and creating "The History of Jesuits in Astronomy: A Timeline." In that same class, I had another first-year student who was a double major in English and German. He was in classes that semester on Irish Literature, and another seminar on Medieval Literature. I suggested to him a DSP on medieval illuminated manuscripts, perhaps with a focus on the Book of Kells. I threw in, at the end of the email, a suggestion about a DSP on the influence of the King James Version on the English language. After further conversation, this student's DSP ended up as an exploration of the German translation of the Bible, using Wordpress. A third student had expressed an interest in eventually working in London. She ended up doing a DSP on a topic I suggested, which was the history and architecture of Westminster Abbey.

I checked the emails I sent to these students. They are all dated February 2, 2020, about three weeks after the semester had started and students had filled out their in-class surveys. I had scheduled February 12 for time at the Digital Scholarship Lab to introduce them to various digital tools. Since we were still in pre-COVID mode, this introduction was in person at the Raynor Library. In the Spring 2020 semester, I had asked that the students turn their projects in after Spring Break, on March 20. The outline is not intended to be an absolute guide to what the DSP will look like, but it is intended to make sure that students are thinking about the platform, the "big idea," the purpose of the DSP, what needs to be included in the project, and in what order. Obviously, since we had pivoted to remote in mid-March, all conversations about the DSP outlines were done by email or on Microsoft Teams. I provided fairly detailed instructions for the DSP outlines on D2L along with examples of good submissions from previous semesters. I could not hold the scheduled work day in the Digital Scholarship Lab when the students, DSL specialists, and I would all be together. Typically, in those sessions, students would work on their projects, and the DSL specialists and I would be available for questions and consultations. I

had done this several times, and it seemed to work well. First, it guaranteed that students were getting time to work on their DSPs. Second, it cut down on the individual consultations that students set up with the DSL specialists.

Obviously, this in-person work day did not take place in Spring 2020, and I did not replace it with a remote version. The lack of an in-person or virtual work day resulted in many more requests for individual consultations with the DSL, and I also fielded more emails about the DSPs than usual. I also usually have the students who have put together Adobe Spark, Wordpress, Timeline JS, or StoryMap JS DSPs present for ten or fifteen minutes in class. These presentations are not graded, but they are useful for the students to get a sense of the projects, since the mandatory question on the final exam is usually a "compare and contrast the DSPs" question. The podcasts and the videos do not get previewed in class. Since I had pivoted to asynchronous remote learning, where there is no required or scheduled face time between educators and students, these presentations did not take place.

We made it through the semester, and many of the DSPs were excellent, just as good as projects in pre-COVID years. As is typically the case, almost all students opted to incorporate the suggestions for improvement. I do think that the final exams in May 2020 were not as polished as they had been in previous semesters, but I do not know if this was the result of the lack of in-class presentations or just the stresses involved with the end of that COVID-affected semester. As I prepared for Fall 2020, when I was to be teaching Foundations again, I thought about what had worked and what had not worked.

I made changes to my DSP assignment for Fall 2020, when I would be back teaching in person. Then, I hit the ground running. Almost all of us who were teaching in person expected to have to pivot to remote again sometime in the Fall 2020 semester, should university and public policy requirements call for it. Consequently, I wanted to get as far as I could with the DSP preparation before that unhappy event. As I mentioned, in Spring 2020 I spent three weeks reading through the students' surveys, completed on the first day of class, before I emailed the students with suggestions. In Fall 2020, I

got my suggestion emails out to the students within one week. In Spring 2020, we visited the DSL exactly a month after the start of the semester; in Fall 2020, Elizabeth Wawrzyniak, the DSL Humanities specialist, gave a virtual presentation on digital tools during the second week of classes, the third time we met. Students and I had, in previous semesters, enjoyed the trip to the DSL, but I have to say, the virtual introduction was just as good, I felt, as being in person. Not surprisingly, the DSL specialists are very good at virtual presentations! In Spring 2020, the DSP outline was due after Spring Break. I asked for the DSP outline a bit earlier in the Fall semester than I had in the Spring 2020 semester, but still after the midterm. To make sure the students continued to think about the DSP in the long stretch between the DSL introduction to digital tools and the due date for the DSP outline, I asked the students to send me in late September three sources they had found for their DSP. An aspect that I did not build into the schedule, since I believed we would be pivoting to distance learning in Fall 2020, were the in-class presentations of the DSPs. In retrospect, I should have built in the time. Had we pivoted, we could have done the presentations virtually. I do think that the presentations help with the final exam question on the DSPs. Frankly, setting up the presentations, in person or virtually, was just a bridge too far.

For the Spring 2021 semester, also in person, I kept the accelerated pace I set last Fall, but I did build in time for in-class presentations. In addition, Elizabeth Wawrzyniak, from the DSL, held both an introduction to digital tools early in the semester and a virtual work day for the students. I have yet to see the final exam essays at the time of writing my own essay here, but I am hopeful that the early planning and scaffolding of this major assignment will improve the final mandatory essay on the DSPs.

In anticipation of writing this chapter for this volume, and for my own personal interest, earlier this semester I emailed my fifty students from Spring 2020 and asked the following:

> If this sort of "pivot to remote/distance learning" happened again, would you be happy that in one of your Humanities classes the assignment that was going to weigh heavily in your final grade was a digital scholarship project? Or would you prefer the tried-and-true paper?

Obviously, this question is not intended to be scientific, but it does provide some anecdotal information. I heard back from ten of the fifty, which I thought was a fairly good return, and I know that I could be accused of salting the mine with my question phrasing. All ten respondents were happy to have had a DSP rather than a long paper, although one did say that more than one Humanities DSP in a semester might be too taxing. Here is an example of a student's response (all students who are quoted have given permission):

> To answer the first question, if we had to pivot to remote learning again, I would definitely be happy that an assignment worth a lot of the grade is a digital scholarship project versus a traditional long paper. While initially, at least to me, the term "digital scholarship project" seems like it will be more work than a paper, it is ultimately just a different kind of work. I think the biggest benefit of the project is the creativity that it fosters. Also, because there are so many formats, there are ways for people to write more or less depending on their preferences and what works best for their project. It was nice to be able to have a creative outlet on a topic I got to choose and was interested in amongst all the other work being turned online. … For me, the Digital Scholarship Lab was helpful when we went and talked with them because of all the examples they showed us and the multiple options and websites they provided.

Several of the respondents remarked that they enjoyed learning a new digital tool skill, describing the DSP process as fun to do. A few respondents enjoyed the challenge of working independently: "Out of necessity, I worked out many problems with the project on my own, and I think that made the experience better. I did find the digital scholarship lab very helpful on a couple occasions, and I was able to meet virtually with someone to discuss troubleshooting with my project. With this project, it was very clear what I had to do despite being remote, versus other assignments or projects that were a messy adaptation from in-person to virtual, which also made it easier." And from another student:

> If there was another pivot to remote learning, I would much rather work on a digital scholarship project than a paper. I am constantly working on essays and homework assignments, so the digital scholarship project gave me a chance to think more creatively and independently. My project provided opportunities for me to engage deeply with the class's material, and moreover, I had fun making it! It was so satisfying to see my initial ideas brought to life once my project was complete.

Going forward, I am going to continue to hit the ground running with the DSP assignment. I am also going to make sure that we have student presentations, whether in person or virtually because doing so fosters a collaborative environment. For my own preparedness, I am going to start asking some of the students to present virtually, even if we are meeting in person, because it will help their virtual presentation skills and my ability to deal with the technology in a more efficient way. I also realize that I need to track the assignments students have in other classes. If anyone is doing a DSP in another class, it would make sense to take that into consideration by suggesting a more accessible DSP digital tool for my course's assignment or suggesting that the same digital tool be used.

Another pivot, sometime, is inevitable, and when that time happens, I would like to be able to get to the basket a bit more gracefully.

Works Cited

Mashed Radish. mashedradish.com/tag/pivot. Accessed on 24 april 2021.

Quammen, David. *Spillover: Animal Infections and the next Human Pandemic*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co. 2013.

THE EDUCATION INDUSTRY, THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS, AND THE TWILIGHT OF CATHOLIC, JESUIT EDUCATION

Noel S. Adams
Department of Philosophy

Over the past century, but especially in the last several decades, there have been sweeping changes in higher education. This essay focuses on some of the changes that are particularly relevant for the Catholic, Jesuit educational model, and how they have had serious, detrimental effects on it. Significant obstacles, some put in place by Catholic, Jesuit institutions themselves, must be overcome if the Catholic, Jesuit educational model is to thrive. If the analysis provided in this essay is correct, it is likely that the Catholic, Jesuit educational model is in its twilight, unless its advocates take swift, bold, and decisive action.

One sweeping change that has taken place over the past several decades is the perceived value of higher education. At one time, its value was directly linked to the effect it had on the student as a human being. Higher education was perceived as playing an essential role in the development of a person, especially with regard to helping them cultivate their highest and most important capabilities in order to live a worthwhile life. At that time, perhaps long ago, the

conception of a worthwhile life was that it is not sufficient merely to cobble together enough resources and skills for attaining abundant food, shelter, clothing, other physical goods, and leisure time. Instead, a worthwhile life was derivative on a conception of a human being in which the spiritual and rational faculties were considered the most precious, over and above the empirical, and thus were to be carefully and meticulously cultivated so that the person could live the fullest possible life in unity with one's fellow human beings. A human being was conceived of as needing assistance to become mature in order to become free or liberated, and it was for this reason that a liberal arts education was developed. Knowledge was conceived of having an inherent unity. One piece of knowledge was related to every other piece, and the various academic disciplines related to one another in a unified way. The fullest possible life was not reducible to tangible, empirical, economic measures or outcomes, although those aspects of human life were considered significant. This conception of human nature maintained that a human being has inherent worth, not just instrumental worth. It was recognized that a human being also had instrumental worth, but to suggest that this instrumental worth composed the essential worth of a human being, let alone their primary worth, was rejected.

The Catholic, Jesuit model of education was formed in accordance with the framework described above. It is tied essentially to a conception of the human being in which there are spiritual, rational, and physical components (Rizzi 13-15). The Catholic, Jesuit model, however, adds one more key element: in addition to the importance of the individual person needing to function properly as a mature, free member of one's community, one also needs to relate properly to God by the faith that is articulated by the Catholic Church. Any attempt to dislodge the Catholic, Jesuit model of education from this framework, or to minimize or downplay the importance of any parts of it, is to do violence to it (Mesa 287-366). To be clear: those who attempt to separate or distance the Catholic, Jesuit model of education away from any parts of this framework are trying to separate it from the conditions that make its identity possible and coherent (Muoneme 12-26).

The Catholic, Jesuit educational model, and the conception of human nature to which it is essentially tied, has fallen on hard times in recent years. Whereas it conceives of a human being as needing assistance to become free and independent, thus requiring a liberal arts curriculum, the current model of education no longer sees a human being as needing to become mature or free. Or, put differently, it does not see this as a human being's utmost concern. Instead of conceiving of a human being as a spiritual and rational and empirical being, it conceives of a human being as merely rational and empirical. This transition away from the spiritual element playing a role in higher education occurred in a relatively short period of time, and is reflected in two of the U.S. Department of Education's publications. In a 1983 report the worth of higher education was linked essentially to the moral and spiritual and intellectual development of a human being, but in a 2006 report its worth is linked exclusively to empirically measurable economic benefits for both the student and the nation (Adams 110-111). According to the 2006 report, the worth of higher education can be measured exclusively in accordance with empirically verifiable outcomes that must be quantifiable. (It is no surprise that the outcomes assessment was already in high gear in 2006.) Elements of higher education that do not reduce to these empirically verifiable, quantifiable parameters, or cannot be measured by them, are now considered inessential and thus not important. It is worth pointing out that this aspect of the new model of higher education is at odds with the Catholic, Jesuit model, which considers the spiritual dimension of the human being to be neither inessential nor unimportant in the education of a human being, nor the spiritual dimension reducible to measures that are quantifiable.

This new model of education has implications for the worth of a human being as well, for it considers a human being to have no more than instrumental worth. Just as the new educational model measures by standards that are empirically quantifiable, a human being's worth is also thus measured. On the Catholic, Jesuit model, empirical aspects derive their worth ultimately from their creator, God. However, on the new educational model, God plays no role at

all, let alone an essential role, in measuring worth. Whatever gives empirical elements their worth in this new model is far from clear. At any rate, in this new educational model, a human being's worth is neither inherent nor intrinsic.

This new model of education is transactional. It conceives of higher education as an exchange of goods. The student gives money to the school, and the school gives them a credential, a commodity that serves as validation of a set of skills or resources that will help them secure a job that will hopefully enable them to attain abundant food, shelter, clothing, other physical goods, and leisure time (Shumar 11-12). The value of an education, on this new transactional model, has no essential connection to the spiritual development of the student, nor is there an essential connection to the overall intellectual development of the student in relation to their community, and it certainly has no essential connection to God. If the student does, somehow, along the way develop some appreciation for spiritual matters, or if they are given insight into the unity of knowledge (if there be such a thing), then those are mere add-ons or bonuses; they are not, however, considered essential components of what a higher education is expected to provide.

No doubt a large part of the explanation for this change in the perceived value of higher education has to do with its skyrocketing costs. Over the past several decades, the average cost of a bachelor's degree has risen astronomically and has put higher education out of reach of an ever-increasing number of people. Given that a bachelor's degree from Marquette University, according to figures accessible on its own website, will cost on average at least $179,000 in tuition alone (not including fees, books, and living expenses, which on average, over four years, add an *additional* $59,000), it is quite understandable why students and their parents would start to think of higher education as an economic investment to be measured primarily in economic terms instead of an investment in themselves that is not reducible to economic measures. Numbers like this are staggering for the average person.

One of the implications of this change in the perceived value of the worth of higher education

is that it presents Catholic, Jesuit institutions including Marquette University with our greatest existential crisis. Make no mistake: this change undermines our identity as a Catholic, Jesuit school in that it presents a temptation for us to compromise our Catholic, Jesuit identity for the sake of economic survival. This existential crisis has drawn the attention of our highest administrators, but rather than talk about it in terms corresponding to the Catholic, Jesuit educational model, they talk about it in terms corresponding to the transactional educational model.

There have been, over the past several decades, changes in the way that leaders of high profile institutions of higher education speak. Their rhetoric has slowly but surely moved *away from* a model in which higher education is conceived of primarily as an endeavor in which a human being becomes transformed and in which the common good and the divine are its primary concerns. Their rhetoric has turned *toward* a model in which higher education is conceived of primarily as a transaction in which a human being spends money to get a commodity. It is not so much that these academic administrators actively speak *against* the idea that higher education can be transformative; instead, it is that they speak about its worth in *economic* terms so much. For example, they speak of higher education as "the academic industry." To speak of higher education in this way is to see it in economic terms either exclusively or primarily. To speak of an industry is to speak of an enterprise that aims to make a product that is measured primarily economically. It is true that the word "industry" connotes intelligent work or skill, but in today's vernacular to use the phrase "the education industry" is to classify higher education as making a product that is measured most appropriately in economic terms. No doubt this is why administrators talk of how the task of universities is to "produce" knowledge. This rhetoric conceives of knowledge primarily as a product that has tangible, empirical, quantifiable, and, ultimately, economically measurable outcomes (Olssen and Peters 314-317). To the extent that a university's product cannot be measured in accordance with these standards, to that same extent a university will not be able to compete with others, and it most certainly will not be seen as

cutting-edge. In industry, if one business cannot compete with another, it eventually goes out of business. There is no question that the lack of a profit poses an existential threat to entities that are industries. In the realm of the industrial, it is crucial to gain an economic advantage.

If the economic landscape changes, an innovative response must be made. In the business world, it is important to be well tuned to what the market takes to be valuable. It is crucial for a business to be ordered in such a way that all parts of it function so as to contribute to the purpose of the business, which is, after all, to make money and grow, so as to remain in business and not wither and die. For this reason, any parts of the business that cannot demonstrate, using the relevant empirical, quantifiable, economic standards, that they are contributing to the manufacturing process of the business's product, are considered to be problematic, and thus stand in need of either serious revision or outright elimination. The highest administrators at Catholic, Jesuit universities, including Marquette, have used rhetoric indicating that we need to "compete" in the "marketplace of ideas." No doubt there is something to this rhetoric, but let's be clear on what that is. In the economic marketplace, economic value is the ultimate measure. If the market does not economically value something, that is because it is perceived as something that is not valuable. The idea here is that the market is a reflection of those who participate in it. Those who participate in the market have endeavors and activities, and the market is taken to be a framework in which those endeavors and activities are linked to their economic value. If the market does not value certain endeavors and activities, then those endeavors and activities are not worthwhile, at least not economically. It does not follow that the only way to value endeavors and activities is on an economic scale, but it does follow that the marketplace is the realm in which the value of endeavors and activities is measured economically.

Today's marketplace values the short-term over the long-term, and values pleasure over spiritual development. Over the past several years, it has become increasingly clear that facts and truth are not necessarily valued by the market. Facts and truth are only valued to

the extent to which those whose interests matter most benefit economically from facts and truth. So, if facts and truth run counter to the interests of those who matter most in the market, then instead of facts and truth being valued, fiction and falsehood are valued instead. Today's marketplace is shortsighted, impatient, and is tolerant of human degradation, violence, and injustice, so if we are to follow through on these leading administrators' suggestion and thus buy into their rhetoric of the marketplace of ideas, then we could possibly reason as follows: since the marketplace sometimes values human degradation and inequality, since it sometimes values violence and injustice, and falsehood over truth, then we should value those too if they can bring us a profit or a competitive edge. This line of reasoning is, without question, "innovative," and it is not obvious why it should be rejected on the transactional model *if* it is economically advantageous. I hope it is very clear, however, that this line of reasoning is at odds with the Catholic, Jesuit model of education and the conception of human nature it employs. To use rhetoric like this, to say that we in the "higher education industry" should "produce knowledge" so that we can "innovate" and better "compete" in "the marketplace of ideas'' is to use rhetoric that runs counter to the Catholic, Jesuit conception of education, and counter to the conception of human nature that corresponds to it. As Pope Francis indicates in *Evangelii Gaudium*, it is our responsibility to oppose and resist a market-based system that is based on exclusion and inequality, that sees human beings as no more than consumers, and that sees the interests of a deified market as the only relevant rule (Adams 118-119).

Some might respond that the criticisms levied in this essay are too harsh or greatly overstated. They might respond that administrators at Catholic, Jesuit universities such as Marquette are simply engaging in the rhetorical flair that other administrators at secular, cutting-edge institutions of higher education have been using for decades. This response suggests that I am making too much of a fuss over such rhetoric, and it suggests that using such rhetoric does not entail an abandonment of the Catholic, Jesuit educational model. However, it is important to point out that there is much more than

rhetoric at issue here. Even if administrators at Catholic, Jesuit universities stopped using all such rhetoric today, what is much more telling is that the actions and the policies these administrators have taken over the past few decades is evidence that they have in fact been taking incremental steps to *undermine, not advance,* the Catholic, Jesuit educational model. The fact can easily be illustrated by pointing out below some facts regarding actions and policy decisions taken at Marquette University. It is noteworthy that some colleagues from other Catholic, Jesuit universities have reported in conversation that such changes have happened at their schools as well, so what is described below is not unique to Marquette.

According to the Catholic, Jesuit educational model, the disciplines of philosophy and theology hold an important place. These disciplines correspond most closely to the articulation of the view that reason and faith go hand in hand in the search for truth. That the Catholic faith plays a crucial part in the search for truth is explicitly recognized and articulated in Marquette University's Mission Statement, which can be found on Marquette's website: "As a Catholic university, we are committed to the unfettered pursuit of truth under the mutually illuminating powers of human intelligence and Christian faith." The Catholic, Jesuit educational model insists that students take classes in philosophy and theology to gain an understanding of how all areas of knowledge fit into a unified, consistent whole. By taking philosophy and theology courses that are carefully crafted to show this, students can come to see how their own coursework in their own majors fits into this picture, since most students are neither philosophy nor theology majors. In 2002, Marquette University required its students in the college of arts and sciences to take four courses in philosophy and four courses in theology to earn a bachelor's degree. Today, in 2021, no student at Marquette in any college is required to take more than two philosophy courses or more than two theology courses. In less than two decades, Marquette sliced *in half* one of its most distinctive Catholic, Jesuit curricular components. Moreover, a few years ago Marquette University tasked its philosophy department, which has been a cornerstone of Jesuit education since its founding in the 1599 *Ratio*

Studiorum, to provide an analysis of its educational relevance so as to justify its future economic support at the university.

So, above and beyond concerns about the rhetoric used by administrators, the fact is that, instead of *strengthening* the educational model in which the Catholic faith and reason go hand in hand in the search for truth, Marquette is *undermining* it. Marquette assesses the worth and success of its curriculum and programs primarily on the basis of their economic relevance for the university's economic well-being. Little by little, Marquette University has become, in practice, very much like its secular counterparts. It appears that this is the price that some are willing to pay in the attempt to become classified as a Carnegie R1 research university while simultaneously climbing the rankings published by the *U.S. News and World Report*, but it is not necessary to pay this price, so long as hiring and promotion is framed in a manner consistent with our Mission Statement and our Catholic, Jesuit identity (Currie 351-352).

With some exceptions, the way that the Christian faith and reason work together in the search for truth is not explored in the classroom at Marquette University, yet the Christian faith is still officially recognized as essential in the search for truth as a portion of our Mission Statement. It is one of the "four pillars:" excellence, faith, leadership, and service. Faith typically only gets passing recognition from our administrators in speeches at the beginning and conclusion of the academic year. Faith is also typically mentioned by administrators when a horrific or tragic event occurs and a letter to the community is sent out, wherein some trite and generic statements about faith are touted as being a crucial part of the Marquette brand.

Our Mission Statement is, without doubt, a fine articulation of the Catholic, Jesuit educational model. However, as has been established, this model is being rejected by an ever-increasing number of those who come to Marquette. As a result, whenever the language of the Mission Statement is used, students—and an ever-increasing number of faculty members—find themselves having to navigate a world in which an old, outdated language is used to articulate a set

of principles that they do not respect or live by. Unfortunately, students and faculty are getting used to living in a world in which their leaders do not really mean what they say. We have seen it modeled at the highest levels by many of our political leaders for some time now that truth and principles do not matter if they do not fit the desired script, so when our own leaders at Catholic, Jesuit universities act similarly, hardly anyone even blinks. It gets noticed, and some are even appalled by it, but hardly anyone responds to it with action. Such behavior has become normalized. It is now normal for a U.S. president to say he is living out or fighting for the constitution when his actions demonstrate otherwise. It is now normal for administrators to say that they are living out or fighting for the Mission Statement when their actions demonstrate otherwise.

These are the actual conditions on the ground. No one who teaches at Catholic, Jesuit universities needs to be told this—it's all too familiar. But what can we do? What should we do? At this moment, we who fully support the Catholic, Jesuit model of education need to be bold and brave like the supporters of the Black Lives Matter movement. We need to articulate the relevance of the Christian faith, both inside and outside of the classroom, not only for social justice issues but also for the broader search for truth. We need to actively live out the *entirety* of the Mission Statement, not just *some* parts of it. We need to be seen and heard, and to call out hypocrisy and inconsistency where it exists. Perhaps this will have consequences in which we become targets of those who hold power over us; such has happened before. But we are required to trust the truth entirely and to act accordingly, "for the greater glory of God and the common benefit of the human community" as our Mission Statement proclaims.

Works Cited

Adams, Noel. "Market Pressures, Outcomes Assessment, and Catholic Education: at the
Crossroads—Again." *Engaging the Times: The Witness of Thomism*, edited by Joshua Schultz,

Catholic University of America Press, 2017, pp. 103-21.

Currie, Charles L., S.J. "Pursuing Catholic Identity and Mission at U.S. Jesuit Colleges and Universities.

Journal of Catholic Education, vol. 14, no. 3, 2011, pp. 346-57.

Marquette University. "Our Mission." www.marquette.edu/about/mission.php. Accessed 10 June 2021. Mesa, José, S.J. *Ignatian Pedagogy: Classic and Contemporary Texts on Jesuit Education from St. Ignatius to Today*. Loyola Press, 2017.

Muoneme, Maduabuchi Leo, S.J. *The Hermeneutics of Jesuit Leadership in Higher Education: The Meaning and Culture of Jesuit-Catholic Presidents*. Routledge, 2017.

Olssen, Mark, and Peters, Michael A. "Neoliberalism, Higher Education, and the Knowledge Economy: from the Free Market to Knowledge Capitalism." *Journal of Education Policy*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2005, pp. 313-45.

Rizzi, Michael. "Defining Catholic Higher Education in Positive Terms." *Journal of Catholic Education*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2019, pp. 1-25.

Shumar, Wesley. *College for Sale: A Critique of the Commodification of Higher Education*. Routledge, 1997.

BETWEEN EACH MOMENT,
INFINITE EXPANSE

Marcella Kearns
Digital Media and Performing Arts

Theatre makers by trade dance with the impossible, but the spread of COVID-19 confronted us with an existential threat by severing us from the most fundamental ingredient of our art. The theatre, a collaboration of producer, director, designers, builders, actors, and crew crafting a playwright's story in real time and space, amounts to a brand of magic when activated by its crowning element: the presence of an audience. This real-time art form builds worlds in three dimensions, walks the paths of other lives in order to better understand our own, and asks what it means to be human by gathering storytellers and story-hearers in the same room. We engage in a ritual as old as any human gathering when we assemble for this purpose. Story teaches, heals, comforts, buoys an audience. Artists, in turn, learn as much as audience members about the characters they inhabit and the meaning behind the stories they tell when they feel the presence of those witnesses to the world they have built.

With the onset of the pandemic, the theatre industry shut down. National tours canceled in the face of safer-at-home orders. The

theatres of the Great White Way went dark as New York City was hit badly by the outbreak. Artistic equals of their more famous Broadway kin, regional theatres across the nation (and the world) truncated their seasons, in many cases abruptly cutting off plays mid-run. In Wisconsin, Madison's Forward Theater ironically reached technical rehearsals of *The Amateurs*, a play about a medieval troupe of players outrunning the Black Plague, before the company made the excruciating but necessary decision to send everyone home days before an audience would have joined them in the house. Closer to home, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre finished the run of a world premiere play four days after the World Health Organization declared the swiftly moving disease a pandemic. Theatre operations everywhere rapidly transitioned to survival as the prospect of producing—and therefore earning ticket income—collapsed indefinitely and as contributed income from donors and sponsors contracted.

In the months that followed, some theatres turned to streaming live-captured productions from former seasons, writing plays for online audiences, or conducting interview-driven events via social media. Notably, conversations turned to unpacking inequities within the field, to seizing the pandemic's disruption in production to address the even deadlier and longstanding disease of systemic racism within industry structures, hiring, and material. No matter what quick shift organizations representing hundreds of thousands of jobs made, theatres with capacity to do so still sought, somehow, to reach their audiences. That symbiotic connection, a crucible for healing and connecting community, is the sacred center of our art.

What, then, do storytellers do when the alchemy of that relationship is disrupted, when there is no hope that an audience's presence will add the story's final spark, that communion that gives it life and the reason for which the art is crafted in the first place? How, moreover, do they embark upon a process with no guarantee that they or their community will last long enough in health and safety to allow them to reach a completed product? Absence of audience guaranteed and isolation via shutdown threatened were the cards dealt Marquette Theatre in fall 2020.

An adjunct instructor and Milwaukee-based theatre artist, I came aboard as a replacement director for Marquette's production of *Dead Man's Cell Phone* by Sarah Ruhl. Given Marquette University's choice to come back in person for that semester, while U.S. losses in the pandemic continued to rise and present danger hovered, those questions were the first to tackle. As my creative team and I made our way through the production process, then, my personal confrontation with daily uncertainties dropped me abruptly into a reexamination of the nature of collaboration and craft. Keeping mindful of my student artists' journeys meant anchoring myself not only in the pragmatic—what *could* we accomplish?—but also, and more so, in the intuitive, ephemeral reach for connection—trust, sense of ensemble, care for the whole person—between artists plumbing an imagined world while under duress from the real. Unintentionally appropriate for our circumstances, the play itself handled the human relationship with technology—how tech can both isolate and bring us together—and the fundamental need for authentic human connection.

The Bridge of Stage-to-Film

An answer to the question of absent audience was simple in principle and complex in execution. As other academic theatres were doing, we likewise could film the play to stream for audiences online. The pedagogical commitment of Marquette Theatre to training artists required practical application, the exercise of collaboration in a production. There was no question that the attempt would be made to rehearse and perform in some form. While artists would be working in a relative vacuum, without the crackling energy of an audience present, we had a definable finish line. We would strive to prepare an audience-ready piece as best we could. Then we would leave it at the door of the Internet.

Stephen Hudson-Mairet, Associate Professor and Chair of Digital Media and Theatre Arts, partnered with media professors to plan our capture-for-film. Kris Holodak, Assistant Professor of Digital Media and Performing Arts, would embed herself within my rehearsal process and work with me to plot out a timeline for filming and editing. I was in expert hands. Holodak brought extensive expe-

rience as a filmmaker and years' work at the Kennedy Center filming live performances.

In production meetings, Holodak took care to clarify my intent so that she could plan her own approach to capturing the piece. My bent remained that I was directing a play, not a film. That delineation meant more than I realized at first. For Holodak and for students on stage, I oriented and blocked actors—in other words, defined their movement in space—facing the empty Helfaer Theatre house. My rationale was not simply longing to have an audience in the space with us though. While that orientation was familiar to student actors trained for the stage and not necessarily for film work, the audience space would serve as the most practical placement for cameras.

My learning curve was radical, as I had to straddle the distance between theatrical work and what would read on film. With Holodak frequently in the rehearsal studio, camera in tow, the student cast and I grew accustomed to having "audience" with us— but an audience that would have a much narrower glimpse into the world than humans in seats. Holodak and I had to serve as the audience's surrogate eye. I, who had never directed for film, had to consider what slice of the story they would experience. In a theatre, an audience has freedom to take in what they will, though my task as director is to train their eyes towards what is most important. Filming, however, required that we choose for them.

Holodak planned to set up three cameras with differing angles and distances in the audience of the Helfaer when we moved from rehearsal hall to the stage for filming, so we had some liberty to imagine what would be useful to have audiences see in the final cut. Still, the act of entertaining that power over an audience's experience of story, so familiar to practitioners of the art of film, was a bridge I had never crossed. I found myself partnering with and relying on Holodak for her advice on angles, what we would need to communicate to Chester Loeffler-Bell for lighting, how Derly Vela's sound could be added in post-production editing but was not useful in rehearsals or filming, and what edit or shot would best complete a visual moment. I felt as though I was learning to direct all over

again, defining a new relationship to the audience upon which I'd previously counted. The gap between my expertise and what was now necessary to consider on the fly was immense. Moments of decision felt like launching myself into another vacuum, outer space, with an infinite, unknowable expanse ahead.

My actors likewise had to adjust to our suddenly hybrid medium. With Holodak's advice, I blocked two scenes at angles that would have been challenging for a live audience and thereby doubled back on my intent to frame the story for an invisible audience in the theatre. At those times, I observed actors, first discomfited, gradually settling in to accept and play the scene over the course of subsequent rehearsals. Their instincts to make certain they were visible to those who would never be there had to be tamped down with assurance that the camera would pick them up. Like me, student actors were learning aspects of filmmaking on their feet even while they were trying to practice their craft for the stage. All I could do, as much a neophyte as they, was to assure them that what they were doing was working and would be read by the camera.

More difficult than adjusting blocking, however—in fact, the most difficult element of this process for me to accept, because it meant a gap I could not fill—was supporting actors in one fundamental aspect of character development: building their *throughlines* in real time. Parsing out the story for film with rigorous health and safety protocols between scenes meant that they lost this crucial part of a stage actor's regular artistic process. It was a gut-punch to me as a theatre educator and director to realize, even as we were in the thick of the process, that I couldn't help them.

A throughline is an intuitive "spine" to a character. Every stage actor, no matter what they call this core element, experiences its inception. Through enough repetition and rehearsal of a play start to finish—run-throughs of the whole story, frequent in the rehearsal period prior to adding costumes and other technical and design elements—actors cement wants, needs, objectives, characteristics, associations, and actions of their characters. Gradually, with familiarity and exploration of the full story, a total picture or sense forms; an actor "finds" their character, inhabits them comfortably. A

throughline is essential. It's the connective tissue, the bridge spanning the space between actor and character. For student actors still learning how to reach across that space of the imagination, repetition of the complete play is a significant aid.

Two obstacles stood in the way of actors making this connection. First, in order to keep safe in a time when surface contamination was still an unknown factor, my stage management team and actors had to stop the action of the play after every scene in order to move their own individual chairs and props. While this chore in itself is not unusual, doing so while attempting to navigate six feet of distance from every other body moving in the room and disinfecting objects was a new obstacle. Instead of transitioning from scene to scene, which would allow actor-characters to carry the spirit of story forward even through mundane tasks and thereby support the development of their unique bonds with their characters, we halted the story constantly. As a result, actors' inner flow from one scene to the next was regularly interrupted.

Second, we operated on a compressed rehearsal timeline. We spoke of trying to "outrace Covid," so I elected to attempt to complete filming by midterms, after which we anticipated that the potential for outbreak could spike. To that end, I chose to concentrate more heavily on work within scenes to be ready for a filming plan that would capture the play multiple times per scene rather than full sequential runs of the play. While this approach may be customary for film production, not to mention filming outside a story's sequence, the stage demands that actors live a play's full story in real time. Instead of traversing the story of the play in full, my stage actors had to operate like film actors. They hovered on each scene three times before being able to move forward. Given my global responsibility to the team as we reached technical rehearsals and filming days, I had to sacrifice the one-on-one support that I would have liked to provide each actor challenged by this drastic alteration in their process. From a distance, I worried that I was leaving actors without guidance towards their throughlines. I was grateful to Maaz Ahmed, my discerning assistant director and the cast's fellow student, for taking actors not called for filming aside to

coach them. He helped them connect the dots when I could not, given my shifting priorities. I trusted Maaz to aid them and mourned that I could not.

Crossing Inner Space

My second question, how to move forward when there was no guarantee that we could finish our process, proved both excruciating and illuminating. On the surface, once again, the answer seemed simple and logical: measure out a compressed timeline in which every accustomed phase of the production process from auditions to design meetings would happen as usual; proceed as if we would reach that final filming day, post-production editing, and successful online stream; rely on health and safety measures; leave the rest to faith, optimism, hope, or luck.

I was buoyed by Hudson-Mairet's unequivocal faith and determination, but I also wanted to hedge our bets. I plotted back-up, requesting permission to cast understudies, not the usual department practice. Almost immediately, the lead actress's understudy was subjected to a two-week dorm quarantine, thereby neutralizing her as an aid during that period. (Fortunately, she could still observe by tuning in to rehearsals online.) Further into rehearsals, we lost one of our assistant stage managers to a campus dorm quarantine. Double duty fell on the shoulders of our sole remaining assistant stage manager for the rest of the rehearsal and filming schedule. Though thankfully no one in the rehearsal hall fell ill from the virus during our process, news of a dorm lockdown, a roommate exposed, a strange headache, or a household member awaiting results of a test shot through the studio so frequently that I began to joke to myself *Who would it be today?* in order to keep my own fear at bay. Concentration was difficult when news pinged on a cell phone. The title of the play, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, rang supremely ironic and terrifying in those moments.

Sitting in silence on a break, just after one question of exposure was resolved, I realized what core challenge lay beneath the surface. Our "outrace Covid" goal was not solely a race against time. Time, rather, was our stand-in for danger and fear. In the quiet just after each announcement of the latest exposure or fear, when I leapt

immediately to the inner protocol of how to adjust for changes, advise students on next steps, or simply pick up where we had left off, I felt every time a new, dully anxious energy in the room to surmount and dissolve like sun trying to burn through fog. Our race against time notwithstanding, my collaborators and I were at heart, I found, vaulting through space. There was that vacuum again, an unknowable expanse into which we were all cast, grasping for ourselves and for one another as we tumbled in uncertainty.

For a director, helming the ship, feeling palpably what was behind our moments in the room, I had one strong instinct: reach for my team. All I had, all any of us had, were the humans in the room and the present moment. Considering what could occur in a farther-flung future, even a day ahead, felt like too much, though it was my job to keep that present in my consciousness. To narrow my concentration and reach out to them in the moment I had, only that present moment, and the next, and the next, until we departed for the day: I could do that. I could ask them where they were that day. I could accept without question what they needed to say or not say. I could listen.

Centering the team as humans in the room was not an earth-shattering discovery, nor was it counter to my practice as a director. Indeed, I love theatre makers and love nothing more than to make certain they feel safe and acknowledged as they create. The difference here was that I had been focused on fear, survival, and speculation and needed simply but strictly to deepen into the space between rather than the space within. I found it easy to tuck away my own fear as I reached out to those before me. Really, this time was no different but for a heightened sense of life and its fragility. No living human has ever but had a moment-to-moment exchange with being.

Moment-to-moment work: this exercise in active, constant presence for my team paralleled and reinvigorated my sense of a technique actors use in realistic storytelling. I remember catching my breath in the darkened space of the theatre, watching Holodak direct one of her film students hired for filming shifts, as I, a professional artist and educator, reconnected viscerally to a fundamental tenet of acting. A play unfolding in real time, with multiple characters

seeking what they desire throughout the story, is built upon a tightly woven fabric of linear action and reaction. Action, reaction, action, reaction—each event, each moment of dialogue elicits an internal change in the receiver, who reaches out in return. The art itself is grounded in one being reaching out to another. No new idea, I thought, but one vital to our method.

If we never reached the finish line due to a shutdown, the silver lining, I supposed, was a cognizance and presence sharpened by danger and fear of a deadly virus, coupled with a heart and empathetic instinct heightened by the communal experience of uncertainty. Through the process, I had rediscovered the core of my craft. And I had softened.

Living Discomfort

The "Aha!" of this discovery by no means made the production cycle perfect. While I found unexpected joy in and appreciation for the artists surrounding me, while we were able to do something most professional theatres across the country had yet had the opportunity to try, I found I often struggled to forgive myself as an educator and director for my shortfalls. I had to remember to be kind to myself, as, while I wished the art to be excellent, I prioritized the human experience over the end result. I still cannot discern how well I straddled that process vs. product tug-of-war. Sometimes I made decisions to let go of drilling an aspect of the piece for the sake of an actor's capacity that day. Sometimes I hadn't capacity myself to solve a problem and would have to sleep on it, a ticking-clock stressor given our timeline. Whether the play would have benefited from another course of action is unknowable.

Other internal frustrations at myself to forgive? I encountered plenty, but most often it was Covid-era-specific workarounds that sent me tumbling into the turmoil of inner space. Our strict protocol of keeping actors six feet apart from one another onstage at all times meant that moments of the play requiring intimacy, such as moments of physical conflict or love, felt insurmountable apart from Holodak's inspired camera angles or our fight choreographer Jamie Cheatham's choice to rely upon reaction shots. Even blocking a scene without physical intimacy felt like trying to direct for the first time

all over again, as space restrictions more frequently stymied me than worked naturally into the action of the play.

Masks also required quick strategizing. We rehearsed in masks and for a time entertained the potential for actors to unmask for filming only. In consultation with one another on the production team, we agreed that the only safe and responsible avenue was to keep actors masked for the play. In short order, Connie Peterson added character-appropriate masks to the costume plot. The play would take place during the pandemic era both in reality and in the imagined world of the story.

That decision in turn altered how we could convey intimacy even from a distance. Two characters were supposed to kiss in a few scenes. We could not have and had not planned to do so, but masks made intentions and those momentous plot points even more difficult to stage. I chose to draw upon Golden Era Hollywood tricks of letting the camera do the work, such as moving away from faces to follow one pair of feet nearing another or catching a character beginning to take off a mask before fading out. I joked that we were creating a new vocabulary of intimacy for a Covid world. Would that vocabulary be clear on camera? That absent audience could never tell me, though Holodak gamely supported the attempt. Again, I had to sit in and simply *be with* my sense of encountering the unsolvable, as I had to send my choices into a ticketed online stream.

I could have denied or pushed away discomfort in the face of what I sometimes perceived as my own half-success. I tried sometimes. Ultimately, however, the pursuit of story with the collaboration of ever-changing artists in space demanded that I keep present, open, malleable. To work without hope of reaching the finish line meant, in the end, seeking the deepest moment-to-moment connection I could with every human with whom I worked. That was my objective. Once discovered, I know I did not waver on that path. I sat in discomfort. I hope that in that space of uncertainty I generated some resilience.

Through the heroic efforts of the department and production team, Marquette Theatre hefted the final cut of the play to its

streaming platform for a November 2020 run. Not quite play, not quite film, *Dead Man's Cell Phone* made it into the world for audiences to see from their own homes. I will never know how audiences experienced it; I will never know how they would have felt about the piece had they been in the theatre with us. We crafted a story for them knowing they would never be there. The grief of that loss, though we were lucky enough to be able to create a story in some completed form, will remain present for me. Navigating the vital space between myself and others, however, from my students to other collaborators—an expanse that seems infinite—has made me tender.

SECTION III

BE TRANSFORMED

Barbara Morgan, American, 1900–1992, Ethel Butler, "Leap," *1930s, Gelatin silver print, 10 x 12⅞ in, 27.3 x 32.7 cm, 97.24.40, Mr. Richard E. Riebel, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University*

ADDRESSING THE COVID-19 "INFODEMIC" THROUGH MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

Erin Hoekstra
Department of Social and Cultural Sciences
Laurieann Klockow
Department of Biomedical Sciences

W hen COVID-19 shut down the campus and much of life in general in March 2020, faculty, staff, and students alike were trying to understand what was going on in order to navigate that challenging time. We all had questions about the dangers that the novel coronavirus posed and the strategies to contain spread. At that time, an interdisciplinary group of Marquette faculty members, who had been working on the creation of the new Public Health minor, decided to address the urgency of this moment using our platform as educators. Together we created a class on the public health approach to COVID-19, working to synthesize what is known about the pandemic and to disseminate this knowledge in an accessible way to our students. We engaged our students and the

Marquette community in processing this shared crisis that was unfolding around us.

Taking an interdisciplinary approach, the course highlights the different academic disciplines that contribute to understanding a pandemic as it unfolds. We, a biomedical scientist and a social scientist, together with a public health colleague, conceptualized and developed the course, drawing not only from our own expertise but also from the wide range of expertise of the faculty members who are part of the Marquette Health Equity Community of Practice. Eighteen faculty members across three colleges generously responded to the call for contributions, recording mini-lectures on topics from testing and vaccine development to holding an election in a pandemic. The course was designed to cover scientific and epidemiological aspects of COVID-19 that underlie the public health responses to the pandemic as well as the social and political ramifications of the pandemic and its lasting effects, particularly on mental health.

As we worked to compile the course materials, we encountered something of a conundrum. Knowledge about and understanding of COVID-19 was changing rapidly. Sifting through the information about COVID and the pandemic for the course readings required us to determine 1) which information was most up to date and 2) which sources were the most reliable and accurate. From this experience of assembling the course readings and other materials, we became aware of just how much information about COVID was out there and how much of it was out of date or inaccurate. As a result, we reasoned that by equipping students with knowledge of the biomedical, epidemiological, and social perspectives of the pandemic, they would be less vulnerable to trusting misinformation about COVID-19. Many of the course assignments required students to research and seek current and accurate information about COVID-19. The challenge of selecting reliable, accurate sources revealed the importance of teaching our students how to critically analyze the news and other sources of information about COVID-19. We saw firsthand how the novel and evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic has sown uncertainty and fear, making

people more vulnerable to believing and sharing misinformation (Salvi et al.). As a result, we intentionally designed our course to address what is called the "infodemic," or the glut of information (and misinformation) surrounding the pandemic. In this way, we equipped our students with the knowledge and skills of media literacy so that they can be more responsible and critical consumers of media, identifying and challenging inaccurate information as and when they encounter it.

Addressing the COVID "Infodemic"

The COVID-19 pandemic has been accompanied by an abundance of information shared to educate the wider public about the novel coronavirus itself, public health measures for containment and mitigation, and state and national political debates around mask mandates and stay-at-home orders. Scholars and public health officials have labeled this abundance of information as an "infodemic." The sheer amount of information and the changing knowledge about the virus can be difficult to parse through at the best of times, but the infodemic is also marked by the circulation of misinformation, or even intentionally misleading disinformation, about the pandemic. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines infodemic as "too much information including false or misleading information in digital and physical environment during a disease outbreak" (World Health Organization 1). On the one hand, technology and social media have enabled the mass education of the general public in real time about the ever-evolving knowledge of COVID-19 and public health measures to keep people safe and healthy. On the other hand, the use of social media for the dissemination of information about the pandemic has also meant that misinformation, and even deliberate disinformation or "fake news," has also circulated quickly and on a massive scale. In May 2020, the WHO passed a resolution about the infodemic in which they cautioned that "managing the infodemic is a critical part of controlling the COVID-19 pandemic" (World Health Organization 1). Especially in the U.S., the infodemic diverged public debate around measures to contain and mitigate the virus and facilitated a further political polarization that divided public support for

measures like mask mandates and stay-at-home orders along partisan lines.

In scholarly studies related to the infodemic and misinformation about the pandemic, troubling statistics have emerged about the propensity of younger, college-aged adults to believe conspiracy theories about COVID. Out of a survey of 22,000 people across all 50 states, respondents under the age of 25 were more likely to believe COVID disinformation and conspiracy theories than respondents from any other age group (Baum et al.). In fact, one in four respondents under 25 believed that COVID was only a risk for people over the age of 60. Statistics such as these provided a sense of urgency for us to ensure that the COVID course also explicitly addressed the infodemic and worked to dispel some of the mis- and disinformation circulating about COVID and the vaccines. We recognized that the evolving information from reputable sources like the WHO and CDC, combined with misinformation – and even cleverly disguised and more intentionally-misleading disinformation – regarding the virus can make it difficult to know whom and what to trust.

In order to more effectively respond to this specific challenge of the current moment, we chose to use our platform as educators to develop a course that parses through this information to synthesize what is known about the pandemic and that teaches students the skills to do so for themselves. We designed the COVID course to include a central component related to student education in the knowledge and skills of media literacy.

Strengthening Media Literacy Skills to Build Capacity to Navigate Information

Media literacy involves accessing, evaluating, and analyzing information received through various forms of media, from more traditional investigative journalism articles to social media posts. It also includes fostering a sense of responsibility around not only the media that a person consumes, but also that which they create through posting and reposting on social media. Media literacy has gained popularity in our current age in which technology and social media are really driving social and political debates. Particularly now

with the pandemic, interest in media literacy is gaining momentum. While prior to the pandemic, fake news and misinformation may have seemed a remote and political concern with little direct relevance to our lives, now discerning what is accurate from what is not has consequences that could literally make the difference between life and death. In the midst of these heightened repercussions, the proliferation of new forms of media and social media platforms poses both considerable challenges and opportunities. As one of the challenges of new media, news consumption through social media means that algorithms and friend networks often expose a person only to media messages with which they agree, in a sort of "echo chamber" or what media literacy scholars term "incestuous amplification" ("Mediaocracy"). At the same time, new forms of media have democratized knowledge and, within the pandemic especially, have enabled a mass distribution of new information about the virus itself, public health measures, and vaccination efforts.

We were curious how our students consumed news and social media about the COVID-19 pandemic. In a pre-course survey, nearly twice as many students reported getting their daily news from a social media site than from a news website or app. Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter were the most common sources from which students reported getting information about COVID-19. Strikingly, a study by the 50-state COVID-19 project, which surveyed more than 21,000 individuals about their social media habits and acceptance of 11 false claims about the pandemic, found high levels of misperception about COVID-19 among social media users: 28% for Snapchat users and 23% among Instagram users (Baum et al.). A majority of our students (65%) believed that most of the information they consume about COVID-19 is accurate, although 31% also reported not feeling confident or even feeling somewhat unconfident in recognizing dubious claims about COVID-19. Thus, our students were clearly getting much of their information about the pandemic from social media and yet were not sure they knew how to critically judge the reliability of the information. This circumstance emphasized the need not only to teach our students the current state of knowledge around COVID-19, but also to equip them with the

media literacy skills to make sense of the COVID-19 news to which they were exposed outside of the course.

Within the COVID course, modules focused on building a new media literacy skill each week. From interrogating the authority and credentials of the author of an op-ed, to creating a plan for challenging a social media post circulating COVID misinformation, the course assignments encouraged students to consider how to put their media literacy knowledge and skills into action in their daily media consumption. These media literacy assignments were scaffolded to build in complexity and level of critical thinking. The first few media literacy modules focused on evaluating provided articles for currency, relevance, and accuracy using the SIFT method (Stop, Investigate the source, Find trusted coverage, and Trace to the original). Students then progressed to finding their own articles to evaluate using these criteria. Furthermore, we focused on facilitating student development of media literacy skills around what is termed the "CRAAP test," which determines currency, relevance, accuracy, authority, and purpose of a news source. The skills related to these criteria equip students with the knowledge to interrogate the news articles and social media posts that they come across in their daily life to determine if they are credible. Whereas this general knowledge is useful across a variety of topics and areas of life, for our COVID course, we focused on honing these skills for identifying reliable information about the pandemic and weeding out misinformation and "fake news" about the virus, vaccines, and public health measures.

Media literacy education focused on COVID-19 also has to take into account the partisan political motivations that have been attributed to public health measures in the U.S. and that have made compliance among the general public across the political spectrum more challenging. This politicization of the responses to the pandemic has been exacerbated by the types of news that people of different political affiliations choose to consume. Students learned about different types of political bias reflected in the media, then used this knowledge to find and discuss articles about a polarizing issue around COVID-19 from news outlets on both sides of the

political spectrum and reflected on their own bias in news consumption.

Social media has given anyone a platform to distribute information about COVID-19, and we have seen many novices or uninformed people acting like armchair experts on topics related to COVID-19 about which they have no specific expertise. Determining whether COVID-19 information is coming from a trusted authority is particularly critical. Suggestions that ingesting disinfectants can cure COVID-19 or conspiracy theories linking 5G technology to the virus' spread demonstrate how the ease with which anyone's ideas can reach the masses can have harmful and even deadly consequences. Therefore, it was important for students to learn specific strategies to investigate the authority of a source. After learning these strategies to investigate sources, the "I" in the SIFT framework, and other ways to probe the authority of a source, students applied this framework to examining the credentials and expertise of an author of an op-ed on an issue related to the pandemic.

Finally, since misinformation about COVID-19 can lead people to engage in harmful behaviors that undermine efforts to reduce the spread of disease (Romer and Jamieson), it is important to stop its spread and challenge misinformation when one encounters it online. We recognized that not only can our students inoculate themselves against misinformation with the media literacy skills, but they can also explicitly challenge and directly counter false claims. Students learned ways to respond when friends or family members share inaccurate information about COVID-19 with them, including sharing links to reputable sources with correct information and conveying facts as simply as possible without repeating the myth. As a final media literacy assignment, students were asked to find a misleading or false post about COVID-19 that someone shared with them via social media and formulate a plan on how to respond.

We incorporated media literacy education throughout our course and measured the effectiveness of our interventions. A pre-test survey initially determined students' baseline knowledge and skills

related to media literacy and their abilities to identify misinformation about COVID. This survey was readministered as a post-test to capture students' learning and changes in practice as a result of the weekly assignments and activities. In a final reflection on their learning about media literacy as a result of the course, students reported gains in their abilities and confidence to interrogate sources and to recognize fake information. For example, one student wrote, "I would say that at the beginning of this course I was not very confident in my media literacy skills, but after completing these activities, I would say I have become more confident. I have gained a lot of skills and knowledge to analyze articles and websites and will probably start to use them more often in my daily life. Social media has a lot of false information floating around that I tend to see, and I can now evaluate it better." Another student shared, "Before taking this class, I was unaware of the ways and sources that could be used in order to identify false information. Now, I hope to apply these skills when I find information that may not be reliable. Before sharing any information on social media, I am likely to check the source, learn more about the topic, and identify the author…I have realized how difficult it can be to identify false or misleading information, especially on social media." (Student comments reproduced here with their permission.)

According to the World Health Organization, the COVID-19 pandemic has been exacerbated by an "infodemic" amplified by social media that has propagated misinformation and disinformation about the pandemic at an unprecedented scale and speed. Susceptibility to misinformation and false claims reduce individuals' compliance with public health measures such as mask wearing, physical distancing and vaccination, that are critical to containing the COVID-19 pandemic (Roozenbeek). Young people 18-24 years of age seem to be most susceptible to believing false claims about COVID-19 compared to older age groups (Baum et al.). To respond to this urgent need to address the infodemic as a way to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, we designed a course to help students, a majority of whom are under 25 years of age, build resilience to COVID-19 misinformation and fake news through a

deeper understanding of the science, epidemiology, and social aspects of COVID-19 pandemic and through media literacy education.

However, educators trying to incorporate the pandemic into their courses must also navigate the "infodemic" to keep pace with new understandings of the virus and its spread or to select appropriate readings for their students. Developing and teaching a course on COVID-19, as the pandemic has surged around us, accentuated the role of educator as co-learner in the classroom. This ever-evolving nature of the course theme highlights the importance of working to create a co-learning environment, in which educators make transparent what they do and do not know and actively encourage students to go out and find information to share with the class. Thus, having the skills to navigate the "infodemic" so that we can process this shared crisis together is important to educators and students alike.

Ultimately, these media literacy modules were successful at equipping students with the knowledge and skills to better navigate the infodemic and to identify accurate, reliable, and up-to-date information about COVID-19. As a result of systematic skill and knowledge development through weekly assignments, by the end of the course, not only were students able to critically evaluate sources about the COVID-19 pandemic and be more judicious about which media they share and repost, but they were also able to deliberately stop the spread of misleading and false information by challenging it when they encounter it. Students have attested to the fact that they have left our class as more responsible consumers and creators of media.

Works Cited

Baum, Matthew, et al. "The COVID States Project #14: Misinformation and Vaccine Acceptance." OSF Preprints, 10 Feb. 2021. DOI: 10.31219/osf.io/w974j.

Caufield, Mike. *Sifting through the Coronavirus Pandemic: An information literacy hub*. WordPress, infodemic.blog/.

"Mediaocracy." *We the Voters.* Vimeo, 30 August 2016. vimeo.com/180771524.

National Research Council. *Education for Work and Life: Developing Transferable Knowledge and Skills in the 21st Century.* National Academies Press, 2012.

Romer, D. & Jamieson, K.H. (2020). "Conspiracy theories as barriers to controlling the spread of COVID-19 in the U.S." *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 263, 2020. DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2020.113356.

Roozenbeek, Jon, Schneider, Claudia R, Dryhurst, Sarah, Kerr, John, Freeman, Alexandra, Recchia, Gabriel, van der Bles, Anne Marther, and Sander van der Linden. "Susceptibility to misinformation about COVID-19 around the world." *Royal Society Open Science*, vol. 7, 2020, p 201199. DOI: 10.1098/rsos.201199.

Salvi, Carola, Iannello, Paola, Cancer, Alice, McClay, Mason, Rago, Sabrina, Dunsmoor, Joseph, and Antonietti, Alessandro. "Going Viral: How Fear, Socio-Cognitive Polarization and Problem-Solving Influence Fake News Detection and Proliferation During COVID-19 Pandemic." *Frontiers in Communication Health Communication*, 2021. doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2020.562588.

World Health Organization. "Managing the COVID-19 Infodemic: Promoting healthy behaviours and mitigating the harm from misinformation and disinformation." 23 September 2020. www.who.int/news/item/23-09-2020-managing-the-covid-19-infodemic-promoting-healthy-behaviours-and-mitigating-the-harm-from-misinformation-and-disinformation

THE PARADOX OF ISOLATION WHEN CARING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

REFLECTIONS FROM A TEACHER TRYING TO CONNECT DURING COVID-19

Jon Metz

Department of Theology

I find myself standing on a six-foot-high stage, spotlights beaming on my face, squinting into the 1000-seat auditorium of the Marquette University Varsity Theater. No, I am not reciting a Shakespearean monologue. It is the first day of the spring semester of 2021. I am teaching a class called "Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice." Ideally, this course would be heavily discussion-based, in which seniors could take a meaningful look back at their Marquette experiences and discern where they are headed next. As I look out across the sea of seats, mostly empty, I struggle to see the thirty students scattered around the large room. I quickly realize my well-planned class may have to be adjusted. I do the best I can to project my voice into the void through my ever-oppressive cloth mask. Of course, the louder I attempt to speak, the more constrictive the mask feels because I need more air.

As I look at the audience, and I do mean *audience* because this is the loosest definition of a classroom, it is incredibly difficult to measure any sense of engagement. Each student isolated in a six-foot

bubble is also masked. If one is wearing a hat, I can only see a two-inch slit from the brim of the hat to the top of the mask. Even if they are fully attentive, it is challenging to make them out under the hot lights. The closest student to me is at least twenty feet away. I am sweating, and I am questioning if anything I am working extra hard to communicate is connecting. I feel panic. This panic is not about my own mastery of the content though, but rather how I am going to engage students in a way that makes them love theology like I do. How was I going to make it personal to them in the isolation of this large theater?

It has become abundantly clear to me that I did not get into teaching theology in higher education to hear myself talk. I know there are gifted lecturers at all universities. I have seen them and learned from them, but I am just not drawn to lecture. I am a facilitator at heart, which is rooted in my ministry and social work background. Relating to people is what I know. It is in the relationships where I thrive. I have found that effective group dynamics happen when focusing on forming meaningful community. I find the subject I teach fascinating, but I know that for many college students, it has to be relevant to be engaging to them. This conundrum is probably why I found teaching in the middle of a global pandemic incredibly challenging.

I have spent much time over the last ten months reflecting on the challenges of personal connection during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a teacher and a lay minister, I spend much of my time cultivating community for the purpose of building trust, opening doors, and providing a safe space for the open exchange of ideas. Community building, or more basically, relationship building, is strained by our current situation. So much of what we are asked to do right now for the sake of the common good isolates us from one another. We are all doing what we can to care for the common good right now. We wear masks to protect ourselves and those with whom we come in contact. We stay socially distant. We avoid crowds. We look out for the most vulnerable among us by shopping for elderly neighbors or quarantining for weeks at a time. We avoid seeing parents and grandparents for months upon months.

The paradox is that we are taking these steps for the common good, but in many ways they make us feel separated from our communities. Our echo chambers consequently only grow louder because we do not have the variety of voices we are used to hearing. The "us vs. them" mentality magnifies. Political discourse has literally become deadly during the pandemic. One of the themes of the class referenced earlier is the inherent dignity of the human person. We are losing sight of each other's dignity during this time, and we have the tendency of seeing our neighbors as "others." We need to find ways to combat this perspective. We need to recognize our solidarity. Pope Francis describes solidarity as "weaving a fabric of fraternal relationships marked by reciprocity…" (Pope Francis 10). Fr Greg Boyle puts it more directly, "there is no 'them' and 'us.' There is only us" (Boyle 6:04). The elderly and immunocompromised are fearful of leaving their homes. Families are terrified of infecting each other. Schools and churches have the heavy burden of weighing the responsibility of offering effective educational experience with safety.

As a teacher, I have found these restrictions especially difficult. I rely heavily on discussion in my classes to cultivate a sense of ownership and engagement. This tried-and-true technique proved to be challenging in the current situation. In the beginning of each semester, I often begin by trying to create an atmosphere of appropriate vulnerability. I want students to feel safe enough to be open, to ask ideas without the fear of judgment, but also to trust each other enough to challenge beliefs. I often set this groundwork by using the work of Dr. Brene Brown to talk about the sense of belonging and worthiness. I tell students that research teaches us that there is only one difference between those who feel a sense of love and belonging and those who do not. A person has a sense of love and belonging if they feel *worthy* of love and belonging (Brown 145). I remind students that if they are open to their peers, they give permission to their fellow students to let down their own walls in return. I affirm that vulnerability is not weakness, but rather it can be an asset in the human experience. The choice we have to make is how much engagement we wish to offer. This courage to become vulnerable will dictate the depth of our shared experience with one

another (34). One of my favorite quotes by Dr. Brown is what she calls her vulnerability prayer. "Give me the courage to show up and let myself be seen" (42). In a theology class, this type of environment can often lead to some wonderful faith sharing and an openness to dive more deeply into the material.

Over the last year, it was nearly impossible to create a consistent and comfortable feeling of community, let alone vulnerability, in which students felt safe enough to be open to one another. There were many contributing factors to the lack of consistency. First, not a day went by when I did not receive an email from a student saying that they had to quarantine or were exposed to the virus. As long as the student was not sick, I would invite them to join the class virtually so as not to miss any material. This technological capability worked to keep students connected, but it did not work toward building community. I would have some students virtual and some students in front of me in the classroom. Inevitably, these groups would flip flop back and forth, not creating or allowing for "normal" or "usual" or even "comfortable" environments for my students or for me.

For instance, there were almost ALWAYS technology problems. I am in my early forties. I consider myself tech savvy enough to get around, but there is nothing worse than having a tech problem and having thirty 18-year-olds staring me down. I swear I was that 18-year-old making fun of my ancient professor not knowing how to work the VCR like a minute ago. Furthermore, distance between students meant that there would be no more "turn to your partner and…." Instruction became difficult, but I could also tell that students felt isolated, too. They did not have that same level of engagement with or accountability to their classmates. These sad realities made me work extra hard to try to engage the students as best as I could.

Ironically, my most successful community building occurred in my all-virtual class. This course focused on Vatican II. A historical look at the second Vatican council does not scream openness to neighbor, but in this particular circumstance it worked. The class's single instructional modality actually proved beneficial. I asked all

students to have their cameras on, so they all started in the same place with the same circumstances. Next, I did something unorthodox. As I took attendance, I asked each student to give me a quick update about their lives. This process took a little more time, but it really helped to break the ice and help students get to know each other quickly. Last, I put them into virtual discussion groups that met every other week to discuss the current document we were reading. I asked each group to record their discussion, and then I reviewed the recording to make sure students were present and participating. Those groups stayed consistent all semester. I truly was shocked by the flow of these conversations that were recorded. I merely provided them with a list of questions to answer, and the students self-administered the discussions. They were excellent. I suppose it helped that I was not present, but I also think the consistency of the groups helped them to foster the trust needed to open up as the semester went on.

So, I learned. The elements that made my virtual class so successful I plan to incorporate to the best of my ability in future classes. Why is community so important to me? I think cultivating community is one of the best ways and often first steps to engage students. Once students are engaged and care about their community, they care about what happens within that community. They feel accountable to each other and do not want to let their community down. They feel responsible to one another. They like being in the community and look forward to coming together. They genuinely want to learn because they see the passion of the others, including the professor, and that sense is contagious. When part of the pedagogical plan includes room for community building, incredible doors open in the classroom (Allen 23). Research has also shown that community building leads to student achievement. As Dwyer et al. state, "Fostering a positive climate and sense of community for students in educational settings has been linked with retention and academic success" (Dwyer 265). I have found this to be true in my classrooms. I believe that all my students learn, but the classes that manage to develop a committed community have a deep sense of loss when the semester comes to an end.

I often reflect on the role of mentors in our personal development. I ask students to reflect on who had the greatest influences on their development. When the students name a former teacher, I ask them why this individual had such an effect on them. They have never once named an academic bit of knowledge like the quadratic formula or the theory of relativity. Rather, they describe how a class or teacher made them feel, or they describe a value that was instilled in them because of the relationship forged in the classroom. These values are often educationally based like "teacher X instilled in me a deep curiosity and a desire to grow in my understanding." How do we cultivate life-long learners? Through, as Kouzes and Posner put it, "encouraging the heart" (Kouzes 21). This practice of encouraging the heart helps to "build a strong sense of collective identity and community spirit that can carry a group…" (23). It is difficult to do this when we don't fully know our students, and the pandemic makes doing so much harder. Brene Brown defines connection as "the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they give and receive without judgement; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship" (182).

The idea of being "fully seen" is a reflection of each person's inherent dignity. I hope my classroom speaks to this theological perspective. The foundational principle of Catholic Social Teaching is the understanding that each person has dignity because we are created in the image and likeness of God. The next layer of this teaching reminds us of our call to community and participation. God did not create us in a vacuum or to be isolated. We thus have a responsibility to one another. We are called to engage one another and lift each other up when needed. As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states, "We believe that people have the right and duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable" (USCCB). In a COVID-isolated world, it is challenging to know who is the vulnerable in our community, let alone how to help them.

In his latest social encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti" (on Fraternity and

Social Friendship), Pope Francis reiterates this point, reminding us that we need each other. This is yet another warning, reminiscent of Fr. Boyle, that our separation and isolation can create the "us" and "them" mentality that makes us forget about our solidarity. Pope Francis states "If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family…" (87-88). Pope Francis doubles down by declaring human beings cannot live without others. He claims that human beings comprehend their own experience only in context of their relationships with others. This point means that we understand ourselves better through our experience with other people. Pope Francis then states it most directly:

> No one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. "Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails." (87)

Our abilities to connect are critical to our engagement, and for a student, their learning. There is something lost when we lose the ability to interact in the classroom. Students learn from one another. They hear questions from one another that they did not know they themselves had, and they are a little less invested when not accountable to each other.

I want to affirm that I am completely supportive of the safety measures to protect all from COVID-19. After all, these precautions are the most basic steps we can take to serve the common good. I am grateful for these measures that have kept my family, my community, and me safe. I am just naming some of the costs to these necessary measures or casualties of the virus. Unfortunately, we have a paradox. The actions we take to ensure the safety of the common

good unintentionally also make us feel separated from the same people we are trying to protect. In a time of a pandemic, we have to make choices. We prioritized, obviously, offering education, but the challenges in delivering this education have been real and taken their toll.

Of course, in the face of challenges, the human spirit often thrives. Creativity abounds. Teachers have gone out of their way to engage students. They have found creative ways to deliver content to students that a "normal" year would not push them to do. Many instructors have become expert video editors, creating content that would rival the latest Marvel movie with interesting camera angles and star swipe transitions galore. Others have developed interactive activities and creative assignments. I have also witnessed a generosity of spirit. Individuals have been merciful with each other in these challenging times. Instructors have gone out of their ways to be available to students, and students have shown extra patience with the less-than-ideal educational experience.

So, returning to my theater stage, looking out at my gigantic classroom, I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve my students amidst these circumstances. I have seen incredible responsibility within the community, concerned with the common good, to abide by the safety precautions so that we can continue to have classes. I have seen generosity and creativity in engaging each other as best we can. All that being true, I cannot wait until this pandemic is over for everyone's health and safety, but also for our social and emotional health, and our collective ability to educate the best we can. I want to witness the engagement in a community that is stronger together. We have a lot to learn from each other. We are called to embrace one another the way God has intended. God created us to be social, to be open and vulnerable with one another. This interaction makes us better through challenging one another, supporting one another, helping to fill in each other's gaps, and encouraging each other's hearts.

Works Cited

Allen, Tom. "Creating community in your classroom." *The Education Digest*, Vol. 65, no. 7, 2000. 23–27.

Boyle, Gregory. "Compassion and Kinship: Fr. Greg Boyle at TEDx Conejo 2012." June 20, 2012.Thousand Oaks, CA. TEDx Conejo, 20.39.

Brown, Brene. *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Penguin Random House Audio Publishing Group, 2017.

Francis Pope. "Message of His Holiness Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace." Vatican. January 1, 2014.

Francis Pope. "Fratelli Tutti." The Holy See. October 13, 2020.

Dwyer, K Shereen Bingham, Robert Carlson, Marshall Prisbell, Ana Cruz, & Dennis Fus. "Communication and connectedness in the classroom: Development of the connected classroom climate inventory." *Communication Research Reports* vol. 21, no.3. June 2009. 265–272.

USCCB. *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*. Washington, DC. 1998.

THE BENEFITS OF AN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT IN PANDEMIC TEACHING

Thomas Kaczmarek

Department of Computer Science

A favorite book of mine about entrepreneurship is titled *Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck* (Tjan, Harrington and Hsieh). Entrepreneurs are often considered lucky. In the book, the authors' study of entrepreneurs indicates that "luck" is the result of being prepared to apply lessons learned through experiences related to heart, smarts, and guts. Entrepreneurs are lucky only in the sense that they pivot and adapt to change quickly when required. Of course, we educators, like everyone else around the world, did not prepare for a pandemic, but while the COVID-19 pandemic was and still is painful, we were prepared to pivot. That is what educators do, after all. In this case, we had to pivot to be fully online with students learning remotely, so the lesson is not that we are lucky to be able to deal with COVID-19, but rather, that we were prepared to be lucky through heart, smarts, guts, and luck.

I have come to appreciate an entrepreneurial spirit in developing pedagogy that increases resilience in teaching and learning. Before COVID-19, the Department of Computer Science had gone

through an entrepreneurial effort to support remote learners in our graduate program in Computing, which encompasses all parts of computer technology. Our entrepreneurial experience to develop remote learning prior to the pandemic helped maintain positive outcomes for faculty and students during the pandemic rift. We had taken some risks (we had guts). We had adopted some technology based on our knowledge (we used smarts). We adopted remote education to prepare students for careers using remote work tools that were on the cusp of widespread adoption (we had heart).

The Computing Program story of venturing into remote learning was based on a desire to help students persist in their learning and obtain their degrees, which we have been doing since 2012. Almost a decade ago, a room on the fourth floor of Marquette's library provided access to remote learning opportunities that were special in part because they were new, and our program embraced them for a first attempt at distance learning. The idea of physically going to the top of the library to use special and complex technology to connect with students was new then, but the entrepreneurial spirit that made those efforts possible became even more important in Spring 2020 after several years of development.

In a class that I was teaching in 2012, I had a cohort of graduate students who were employed by GE Healthcare at two remote sites with facilities like what was installed in the Raynor Library. I had the idea that I could use the Raynor Library facilities to teach the class; the students from GE had experience with internal training using similar facilities; the student experience was going to be very familiar to them; life would be good. However, I found out shortly before the start of the semester that several of the students were on rotational assignments at other sites without the technology, so I needed to improvise. I used a webcam and web-conferencing to support them in that first class. It worked! That first experience was a revelation. It was a proof of concept for a technological experiment that we would undertake. It converted the department faculty to being members in an entrepreneurial venture, and it allowed us to be "lucky" when Covid hit eight years later.

By the time the pandemic arrived, we had several years of experi-

ence with distance learners participating in our classroom sessions. We were offering 25 classes online using remote learning. Faculty had developed a style of instruction suitable for distance learning. With the tech industry noticeably starting its venture into "cloud computing," we called the delivery format that we were developing the "classroom in the cloud." The M.S. in Computing program became 100% available online. The program had even moved into the top 20 online programs in IT in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings.

HEART: Commitment and Conviction

The faculty in the program had heart, commitment to a solution, and a conviction that it was in the best interest of the students. We were determined to build a remote learning experience for faculty and students that was the best it could be, not just to add remote students, but to prepare all students to work in an environment that included remote work. Whatever we were going to do had to be in the best interest of the students. I knew that the computing business was leading the way in remote work teams and that students would need to learn to work in this environment. If the computer science faculty would agree, we could add that experience to our courses.

I had experience offering a class in front of a camera. GE was doing that in its engineering development program. A combination of audio and visual communication could be used to support instruction and training. Online classes with pre-recorded elements were emerging and becoming accepted. If recorded audio-visual presentations could work, live audio-visual sessions with an instructor making the presentation in front of a camera and microphone could also work and add an element of spontaneity that pre-recorded sessions could not. By adding a camera and microphone to a classroom the faculty could continue to deliver their classes mostly however they were doing it in the classroom. The exception was that they needed to move from blackboards and chalk to PowerPoint slides. Having seen the benefits of using a tool like PowerPoint to organize and prepare my thoughts for a presentation, I was convinced that using cameras, microphones and prepared slides

would increase preparation for classes, be best for students, and benefit the faculty.

The faculty teaching courses to the M.S. in Computing students were willing to try the move to supporting remote students, and the department seized the opportunity. After garnering support from administration, we adopted what has become called, "synchronous remote learning." Our students welcomed the experience, and some students began choosing our distance learning sections. We still had students in the classroom, but we also had a few distance learners joining in the classes. With technology that was available, the remote learning sections of classes were nearly the same as the classroom sessions but delivered remotely: same content, same learning, same opportunity.

Our faculty tried various forms of instruction including lectures, active learning, flipped classrooms, experiential learning, and whatever they thought was most suitable for a blend of remote and in-person students. The commitment drove improvements in pedagogy, and students commented that being in a remote class was as close to being in a classroom as possible. We did not prepare for the circumstance of COVID-19, but we had embraced online learning and committed to make it work. COVID-19 was not why we were remote, but with the best intentions in our hearts we were prepared to be remote.

SMARTS: Knowing that the technology can work

In choosing to add cameras and microphones to the classroom, we explored alternatives and used our understanding of technology to make sound decisions.

- We chose low-cost push-to-talk microphones on student desks to cut out noise from the classroom and enable everyone to hear students asking a question or making a comment.
- We chose to use a classroom with a projector connected to a computer in an instructor's podium so that remote students and in-class students would see the same materials presented.

- As technologists, we knew that the speakers in the classroom could be connected to the audio from the classroom's computer so that everyone would be hearing the same content; most importantly, the in-class students could hear remote students when they talked.
- We used a pair of cameras, one pointed at the instructor and the other at the class. The push-to-talk signal from a microphone told the camera to pan and focus on the students speaking.
- We mounted sensors on the ceiling and used a wireless microphone for instructors who liked to walk around the classroom a bit during their presentations.
- We chose technology that was commonly distributed and supported by Information Technology Services to provide help to users and increase availability.
- We discovered capabilities to record classes using new technology and standards that made video recording and sharing much higher in quality and more practical. Knowing that this technology was booming in computer science, we added it to our process.
- Using our knowledge of technology solutions, the M.S. in Computing program created a set of standard procedures that covered preparing for a semester, preparing for a specific class, starting up the class, and delivering a class. This structure was documented, and the faculty were provided training sessions.
- We asked remote students to use headphone sets with microphones to ensure audio quality and told them what software to use and how to use it. We discovered that they were probably ahead of us in using online audio-video tools, such as streaming, Face-Time, Instagram, Tik-Tok and more in their daily lives.

The M.S. in Computing program was smart in its understanding and use of technology. Using technology is what we are about in our discipline. Exploration and adoption of new technology by faculty

and students came easy in the online ecosystem that was built. We used our "smarts" to become effective in hybrid learning environments that shared instruction between students in the classroom and students who were remote. In our hearts we knew that this was a valuable experience for students because of remote workforce trends. We used our smarts to reason that the technology could work.

GUTS: Taking on Technology

We realized that there was risk, but we had faculty, students, and administration with guts. We could not eliminate risk, but we could manage it.

- Technology can fail, but by choosing technology that was supported by the university through Information Technology Services, we could provide a help desk and other services to mitigate the risk of technology failure. There were episodes before and during Covid where the technology faltered. Before Covid, calls to the help desk generally got us through it.
- The process can fail, but by creating and deploying a standard process based on industry equipment standards, exceptions were avoided, and we mitigated the process risk. We discovered flaws in our original procedures, and technology changes kept us on our toes. Particularly during the many technology revisions that we saw during Covid, we had to make numerous adjustments.
- Faculty could reject the change to their classroom process, but by providing the tools that helped them prepare for and deliver a class, resistance broke down. Opening their classroom to more good students and making it easier to offer the same class again provided additional incentive.
- Students could reject the remote classroom, but, our students instead began to embrace the flexibility of remote classes.

"Guts" was combined with heart (commitment and conviction)

and smarts (knowledge of the technology) to begin a trial of hybrid education with in-person and remote students. Using our technology smarts, we committed resources to add the cameras and microphones classroom that was equipped with computing capabilities and a projection system. In an entrepreneurial world, having guts is about mitigating risks and balancing capabilities with potential negative outcomes. Assessing the situation, we adopted technology to deliver the best educational experience that we could and committed ourselves to deliver. We did not prepare for the circumstance of COVID-19, but we had taken the risks to have some students be remote. Balancing the risks and rewards, we were prepared to be exclusively remote when the pandemic forced this on the university.

LUCK: Creating our own

Our luck carried us through COVID-19. Synchronous remote education and the technology to support it had abundant backing, and we had practice and experience with it. We were prepared to absorb and leverage advances in technology.

- Video meetings became commonplace. Nearly everyone was relying on the service, and the acceptability of this form of two-way communication increased with faculty, students, and administration.
- Streams, an element of Microsoft 365, became widely available, more reliable, better integrated, and more functional.
- The importance of online meetings made the risk of using this technology to support our classes virtually disappear.
- The technology risk management strategy that we had chosen paid off as the university increased its commitment to the technology items that we had chosen.
- The integration of Microsoft Teams into our Learning Management System (LMS) made the old process that we had been using seem overly complex.

- Microsoft focused massive enhancement efforts on Teams, and suddenly it competed favorably with the best web-based meeting services.
- University leadership attention to what faculty required to deliver classes to remote students became a daily focus.
- We had experience using pedagogy that was attuned to students being online during classroom sessions. The efforts we had made to improve our classes paid off in a smooth transition to online classes.
- We had students who were comfortable with being remote. Even those students who had not tried a remote class had at least seen it work. They had experience working with classmates who were remote. I am confident that they experienced less anxiety and were more prepared for the transition.

Over the last several years, the Master of Science degree in Computing at Marquette University continued to make improvements and has been acclaimed as the sixth best online program by *U.S. News and World Report*. I believe that the faculty and students had a smoother transition to remote classes during Covid because of our heart, smarts, guts, and a good share of luck.

We are grateful for the acknowledgment that the *U.S. News and World Report* ranking brings to the program. I hope and expect, however, that our standing will continue to grow if we keep applying entrepreneurial ideas to our program and that we can avoid the pitfalls that are sure to come. As educators, we need to be entrepreneurial in spirit. We took advantage of technology on campus as it evolved. We refined our process, updated our training, and got the entire faculty involved. Our online program has been a success. We were lucky when Covid hit because we had gone through the entrepreneurial cycle. We need to continue to embrace the entrepreneurial spirit in our educational endeavors. We need to seize opportunities when they present themselves, to expand our repertoire of capabilities. We must do this remembering the princi-

ples of heart, smarts, and guts, and the lessons learned will undoubt-edly provide good luck in a future circumstance.

Work Cited

Tjan, Anthony K., Richard J Harrington and Tsun-Yan Hsieh. *Heart, Smarts, Guts, and Luck*. Brighton, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012.

BUILDING COMMUNITY IN THE (VIRTUAL) COVID CLASSROOM

A BLUEPRINT FOR MY TEACHING

Megan Heeder
Department of Theology

When I received an email stating that the summer Introduction to Theology seminar I was slated to teach for Marquette's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) was moving online, I was in the midst of my own suddenly-transitioned-online intensive language course. As my kind professor transitioned his language course online, he regularly surveyed our class of graduate students about effective online pedagogical strategies. He was open to suggestions and did his best to replicate the in-person learning experience, even finding an online community whiteboard feature, to meet our needs as learners. Still, several of us struggled to learn in this new environment.

Wading through the uncharted waters of online learning in a pandemic, I thought carefully about the kinds of learning experiences I wanted my future students to have. My seminar would be one of their first college courses. I had never taught a seminar in a university setting, and the thought of teaching online made this responsibility more daunting. The normal challenges for students

moving from high school to college—the increased workload, the demands of analytical thinking, the intimidation factor of writing college-length papers, the fear of the unknown, and numerous others —remained the same. Most apparent and acute in my reflection was that the kaleidoscopic constellation of challenges existed against the backdrop of a significant loss of community.

Marquette's summer EOP is uniquely structured to support first-generation and low-income students whose parents do not have a baccalaureate degree. Students in the EOP receive support from nearly every conceivable angle because doing well in the summer program is a prerequisite for earning a four-year scholarship to complete their education at Marquette. In a "normal" year, students arrive on campus in early July and are provided with a highly struc-tured educational experience: their schedule includes attending classes, study halls, office hours, review sessions, weekly meetings with a peer mentor, and bi-monthly meetings with EOP staff members. The EOP community is a significant part of students' success. Students live together, eat together, attend study hall together, and lean on each other as they navigate being a first-genera-tion college student. The summer program creates a tight-knit community that accompanies students from their first summer college class to the joy of graduation. Suddenly, the normal ways that EOP students' lives and community were structured to support their success—through a shared reality, space, schedules, and courses—had been made impossible by the stay-at-home order and subsequent transition to online learning. While the EOP students would continue to receive support through each of the aforementioned avenues, the community's existence would be virtual.

In my role as a seminar leader, I was especially aware of the need for students to feel comfortable in our classroom community. As part of the EOP model, seminars are designed to accompany a lecture-based course (in my case, the Introduction to Theology lecture) and provide a space to review and raise questions about the course material. In addition to discussing lecture content, students are introduced to various skills they need to be successful in college. A degree of trust is essential for students to feel comfortable asking

questions, engaging in discussions, and divulging their weaknesses so we could address them. We simply could not remain mere pixelated faces in a box on a screen.

Research on the role of community and relationships in student success confirmed the results of my personal reflection. Dr. Louis Cozolino, a professor of Psychology at Pepperdine University and an expert on the role of social neuroscience in the classroom, indicates that positive social development in the classroom, constituting "enriched environments," activates the brain's frontal cortex (Cozolino 7). Cozolino understands enriched environments as spaces where students are safe and have a trustworthy environment. A trustworthy environment is characterized by acceptance, belonging, and a sense of "emotional warmth" (10). Safe environments are necessary for opening neural patterns within the brain, increasing blood flow to the frontal cortex, and enhancing the brain's problem-solving capacity (7). In short, learning communities in which students feel safe and that they belong have physiological effects that increase students' abilities to learn.

Visualizing the strategies that I used to develop a community within my face-to-face classes, I imagined my students and me entering the classroom and beginning to chat. I thought about how I, as a teacher, learned what to ask students about (their little brother? cat? favorite local sports team?) as a first step in connecting not only to students' heads, but to their hearts. It was through sharing what was important to us that we learned about one another. I also believed that, as a theology course at a Jesuit institution, ours should contain elements of spiritual reflection; great fruit comes from thinking about who we are, where we have come from, and where we believe we are called to go.

St. Ignatius of Loyola is known for the role of contemplative self-reflection in his approach to spirituality. St. Ignatius's Examen prayer offers a reflective process for igniting self-awareness. It helps people become aware of how God has been present in their past and look forward with hope to their future. So, I decided we would integrate an opportunity for each student to reflect on their journey to Marquette and share that reflection with us through an object that

was representative of their journey. The structure of our class, I explained on the first day, would take the following form: after attendance, the first five minutes of class would be dedicated to sharing. Each of us would select an item that represented some part of who we are and what brought us to this Marquette community and share as much about it as we wanted to. I spoke about St. Ignatius's invitation to reflect on where we have been and where we are going, and how his Examen offered a pattern that could help us reflect on what item to share. In an effort to make students feel safe sharing their stories, I presented this as a listening exercise for those of us who were not sharing. So often, we listen only halfway; part of our mind will be dedicated to listening, while the other part composes a question, response, or story we want to share in connection to what we are hearing. In an effort to be present with and truly listen to one another, we would receive one another's stories with no expectation of a response. Nervously, I asked for volunteers, jotted down the volunteers' names on my calendar, and prayed that my idea would have the intended effect of making our online class a community.

In the weeks to come, students joyfully shared incredible stories of their journey to Marquette. One of the first students, Josh, presented the class with a ceramic cross that he had hand-painted with depictions of what was most important in his life. Josh shared how God had used each of his loves to shape him into the person he is today, and how some of his talents and skills had not only helped lead him to Marquette University, but would aid his flourishing there. His passion for music and basketball, his relationship with his father as a coach and mentor, and his high school experience were all present on his cross. Connections with his faith and relationship with God made the cross's depiction of his life's loves particularly resonant in the setting of our theology seminar.

Tiana asked if we were all ready and leaned down off screen to pick up her white, fluffy terrier and place her on her lap, where the dog gazed into the camera with liquid brown eyes. As she petted her dog and students collectively made "she-is-so-cute" faces, Tiana shared about her mental health challenges and how the pandemic had intensified them. Her dog served as an emotional support

animal for her and had transformed her journey and her struggles. She made the point that she didn't know how she would be navigating college-level courses in a pandemic without her dog. During the course when Tiana was stressed or overwhelmed, her dog would walk in front of the computer and allow her to pick her up. "If you see her make an appearance on the camera," Tiana chuckled, "you know I be stressin' out! But don't you worry; she's got me covered." She laid a kiss on the dog's head and set her gently back on the floor. Students' stories grew deeper by the week and began to connect our hearts and alter the architecture of the community.

During the middle of the semester, one of the class's quietest students held a Bible that had come with her and her family when they immigrated from a country in Asia due to persecution and violence. Maleia shared that they were very lucky to get out, as several of their family members remained there living under fearful conditions. In the dark of night as their family was moving toward the border to make their escape, they were stopped by a large vehicle. Maleia said that she didn't remember all of the details, as she was quite young, but she did remember that her father stepped forward to talk to the soldier who had stopped them, protecting his family as they huddled behind him. She was aware that the soldier was drunk, held a gun, and that what he was saying to her father did not make a lot of sense.

Maleia remembered, as she stood there trembling, that in the bag of possessions her family had with them was their family Bible. "As if prompted by an angel," Maleia said, "I remembered the Bible was there with us and I spontaneously started praying Psalm 23. I don't have it memorized in English, and I don't even know if I realized I had it memorized at that time. I was so small. It just came into my mind and I prayed it silently with all my might." As Maleia was praying, waiting for the unthinkable to happen (for her family to be collected by the soldier and put into the army vehicle or worse), suddenly the soldier stopped talking to her father, turned, walked back to the vehicle and drove away. In shock, the family quickly gathered their belongings and headed in the other direction. They made it across the border that night, became refugees in a new coun-

try, and eventually were able to come to America. Maleia said that she never imagined she would make it to the United States, much less attend college. Her life is unfolding like a dream before her eyes, and Maleia said she will never forget that prayer that night and God's faithfulness to bring her and her family to safety.

Students who rarely, if ever, spoke in our lecture course came alive when it was time for them to share. Lucía, who was exceptionally quiet, speaking only when called upon, showed us a photo and started laughing. She was attempting to hold up the photo, watch the little rectangle at the bottom of her screen which showed her what we were seeing, and get the computer's camera to focus so we could see the photo's contents all at the same time. When the photo was appropriately centered and focused, we could see that it was a group of students gathered in front of St. Joan of Arc chapel on Marquette's campus. Lucía shared with us that this photo hung on the bulletin board in her room, and that the picture was taken when she was in fourth grade and had come to Marquette's campus for the first time. She wasn't just visiting Marquette, but was on campus to complete a remedial summer math program. Lucía shared how clearly she could remember walking around campus, in awe of its beauty. She never imagined when she was struggling through that summer program that she could—or would—one day attend college here. Now, Lucía said, she can't wait to be on campus in the fall and walk around the university she once attended to strengthen her math skills as a student. She proudly told us that this picture will come with her and hang in her dorm room because it reminds her of how far she has come and that she can, indeed, achieve what seems to be impossible.

When assessing student engagement with and comfort within our class community both quantitatively and qualitatively, students expressed that our endeavor succeeded. As the semester went on, during our seminar students began to affirm the contributions of others or revisited ideas that their peers shared during lecture that had positively influenced their own learning. We developed a rapport that resembled the kind of community I had established in an in-person learning environment. Students felt comfortable

turning on their microphones or sending a message via the virtual chat function to interject their appreciation for a pun I made as I explained a new concept. Students stayed after class individually or in groups to discuss course content and challenges they faced outside of class. Some students even shared their mental health struggles and asked for advice on how to navigate different situations they foresaw in their undergraduate futures.

My student evaluations verified my perception that our class had become a cohesive community. When asked how successful the instructor was in creating an environment that was conducive to student learning and sharing of students' opinions or personal experiences, 100% of the students selected the "highly successful" option. In the free response portion of the evaluations, students spoke about how connected they felt and how much they appreciated having a space to share about themselves with one another. One student noted how the safe environment, especially for them as an introvert, aided their participation and engagement with the course. Another student noted that our seminar became a place where friends were made, where listening took place, and where they found support as well as clarification on theological content. One student shared that they would miss our seminar so much, they "could cry."

Some students commented that the instructor getting to know the students personally, and truly listening, increased the students' comfort to share and speak up in class. In addition to the encouraging community-based feedback, students' self-reported perceptions of the instructor's teaching effectiveness was also high. Eighty-one percent of the students said the instructor was "very successful" at teaching effectively, and 19% stated that the instructor was "successful." The same breakdown was represented when students commented on how successfully the instructor fostered students' critical engagement with the material. Additionally, 88% of students said that they "agreed strongly" that their questions were answered with clear explanations; the remaining 12% "agreed" with that statement. While no teaching evaluation can capture the multifaceted experience of a learning community, the numerical data and open-ended feedback reflected a group of learners who formed deep rela-

tionships, developed a foundation of trust among one another, and learned with a spirit of joy. Reaching students' hearts contributed to exemplary learning outcomes, a truth that was tangible not only in the evaluations, but in students' faces as they beamed through boxes on a screen.

As I look forward to advancing in my career as a teacher and scholar, I hold our seminar and all that my students taught me close, both to my heart and to my pedagogical-strategies toolbox. When the world and our lives were turbulent and uncertain, our seminar became a cherished, safe space. Our stories and reflections about our journeys to Marquette united us and gave all of us hope for the future. The gift of pivoting to teach online during a pandemic reminded me that good can come out of surprising circumstances, especially when one is open to opportunity. When I thought about my hopes for my career prior to experiencing this seminar, I was determined to avoid teaching online. I had rarely, if ever, had an online learning experience that did not become a list of assignments to complete. The learning communities in which I felt connected to my peers and enjoyed the experience of learning took place in person. I thought it very rare to create, much less find, a culture of encounter in an online learning space. While I consider the gift of our learning community to be special and not to be taken for granted as a normative experience, I also believe our learning community helped me discover tools that can create a learning environment where hearts and minds are inspired through the co-construction of teaching and learning.

First, our seminar taught me that a classroom community must be a space where authentic listening is practiced. Discussing how we usually listen, how that practice differs from listening with our hearts, and how we have the opportunity to gift one another with the experience of being listened to in a confidential and supportive space is central to creating an authentic learning community. Listening with open minds and hearts to receive, not judge, the journey and experience of another creates a sacred space. Such a space is fertile ground for learning together. Second, not only allowing, but inviting students to bring themselves and part of their jour-

neys into our communal space encourages authenticity and allows for content-based learning as neurons fire and wire together in a safe, welcoming learning environment. When students witness their peers' willingness to be vulnerable with one another, they are then invited to do the same, not only with their story sharing, but in their question asking. Shared vulnerability creates mutual trust, and sharing our journeys with one another helps us create opportunities for connections.

An additional benefit of becoming aware of the journeys of others is the invitation this experience offers to be empathetic and compassionate towards oneself and others. Just as our lives share similar themes, they can also contain radical differences. There are times when we communicate with people whose ideas and opinions about a topic seem wholly unintelligible to us. These differences are often apparent in the classroom and can be a locus of debate or frustration as they disturb the norms of our worldview. When we take time to listen to the challenges others face, however, especially when they are different from our own, we are reminded that their respective experiences are not our own. We can understand better why people think differently from us and we can appreciate and respect that difference. This lesson about empathy and difference is important not only within a learning community, but for life in the real world.

Finally, sharing stories reminds us that everyone has a story and fosters connection. While this is by no means a shocking revelation, it is easy to become pulled into the fray of making quick judgments based on what we see or hear without thinking about the "why" behind what we perceive. Each of us—students and instructors—is on a journey. Glib and tendentious narratives that transfer responsibility to students for "failing" to learn in our classes do not help us become better teachers. When we come to know our students as human beings with stories as opposed to another student name on our class list, and when we model and encourage our students to do the same with one another, we experience the reality that we are all works in progress, together.

After our final seminar together, three students hung around

after the rest of the class signed off to thank me for the course. This class experience, they said, had been unique among their experiences of online learning. They said that they were filled with hope and excitement for the start of their fall semester at Marquette, and they hoped that we could gather together in the fall. While COVID safety protocols did not permit a formal gathering, providence arranged for the same group of three students to cross paths with me at the end of the fall semester. In the dusk of a cold Wisconsin evening, with all of us masked and bundled in winter gear, I didn't recognize them, but they knew me and called out my name in disbelief. We rejoiced at seeing one another in person and caught each other up on how our respective semesters had gone. The connection we felt to one another three months later was palpable. The students thanked me again for our class together, sharing that what they learned in seminar had helped them be successful in their first full semester as Marquette students. I knew, however, that it was I who should be thanking them. They taught me that while there is no blueprint for future success in the classroom, uniting hearts together in a community is one of the most powerful tools I have to successfully create learning communities as I progress in my career as a teacher and scholar.

Work Cited

Cozolino, Louis. "The Social Brain and Education." *Neuropsychotherapy in Australia*, Issue 25, January-February 2014. www.researchgate.net/ publication268747115_social_brain_and_education. Accessed 15 April 2021.

TEACHING IN THE MIDDLE OF A PANDEMIC

HOW A CHALLENGE TO TEACH DIFFERENTLY REINVIGORATED MY TEACHING

Sumana Chattopadhyay
Department of Digital Media and Performing Arts

As I started to put my thoughts on paper for this piece, I was reminded of a John Cotton Dana quote that I mentioned in my teaching statement submitted for my third-year review, "He who dares to teach must never cease to learn" (Dana). These words resonate strongly with me, but this pandemic has made me develop an even deeper appreciation for them. Academic year 2020-2021 was a year of change and challenge, but it was also a year of growth, learning, innovation, collaboration and resilience. It is hard to believe that it has already been more than a year now since we started our transition to this new *pandemic normal*. For academics, the pandemic ushered in a complete change in the way we would have to do our jobs.

I still remember the first time I saw my students online on Microsoft Teams. I was teaching a lecture on digital marketing for my Digital Campaigns undergraduate class. I recall how relieved they were to be able to see some of their classmates even though only virtually. The early enthusiasm gradually made way for weariness in

those last few weeks of the 2020 Spring semester, and by the time summer had arrived, everyone was relieved to be able to take a break from the screens to which we had all been held captive. Summer was a time to plan and prepare ahead for a somewhat difficult fall, which would feature a modified learning environment. Added to that was the uncertainty associated with how long our campus could stave off a virus outbreak and continue in-person teaching. We were told to be ready to transition online at any moment if there were an outbreak or if public health guidelines changed.

I ended up with two fall courses on my schedule, one of which would have the majority of the students doing in-person instruction and a few doing the class completely online. Teaching this Television Criticism course would entail figuring out a way for both groups of students to have a similar immersive experience with the content. Having never catered to both kinds of students in the same class before, I was a little anxious about how it would pan out, especially given the nature of the course. The goal of Television Criticism is not just to impart concepts to students, but to enhance their critical thinking skills, to develop an ethical approach to television criticism, and to develop a deeper understanding of the TV industry. Accomplishing these complex learning goals in the modified environment forced me to innovate and adapt my teaching to this new normal. I realized through reflection that the regular course experiences, which were more lecture based, would not be successful in inspiring critical thinking in the current environment given the challenges and disruptions embedded in it. I factored all these variables into my course planning for the fall semester.

I found out early enough that I had been assigned a large lecture hall for my class of twenty-seven students, which meant that I could have all my students in class at the same time, with the few online-only students joining through Microsoft Teams. I would not be required to implement a hybrid format. I was cognizant, however, of the risks of teaching during a pandemic. I knew we might have to transition to remote learning at a moment's notice, and I also knew that we would likely encounter multiple students physically not being in class. If they had any cold or flu symptoms, they would get

a "red" sign on their COVIDCHEQ, the campus virus tracking survey that everyone was asked to take daily prior to coming to campus.

Keeping this in mind, and also given that I was teaching the Television Criticism class on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and that this necessitated watching some TV (an activity we would normally do together in class in the pre-pandemic era), I created a course plan that required students to be in lecture during one day of the week, and then do work at home on the other class day. The "at home" workday would involve reading material and my notes focusing on a specific TV show and analysis related to that show and then watching an episode of the show and participating in a discussion board right after that. This strategy would cut down the number of in-person days, but it would also encourage students to engage in more interactive learning. Prior to that, I had regularly used discussion boards in my courses, but their questions had only tested whether students had been reading the content assigned for class. This semester though, since students would be participating in more discussion boards given the modified course schedule and would be spending a considerable amount of time on them, I knew I would need to create a more interesting online experience that would hopefully inspire them to interact more with the shows and the characters, while also critically connecting these them to concepts learned in class. So, I started designing discussion board prompts that would also be perceived as "fun" by students. I would ask students about their favorite characters in the episode, their favorite scenes, and other specific questions, catering to the concepts they had read about that week in relation to the show. For their posts, students would need to respond to my questions in the prompt, but they would also need to respond to another classmate's post on the board.

The first show that the students were asked to watch and analyze was *Better Call Saul*. I still remember how dynamic the discussion in that board was. Some students told me later in conversation that they had ended up watching the entire season because they liked the show so much. Throughout the semester, students watched other shows including *Orange is the New Black*, *Mad Men*, *Modern Family*,

Master of None, and their final project was an ethical analysis comparing the two political shows *Boardwalk Empire* and *The West Wing*.

I would peruse the discussion board posts and add multiple screenshots from different student responses in the in-person lecture slides for the following day of class with student names shared in each slide. I have used this strategy in past classes as well, but this time it seemed to work particularly well. The discussion board posts were in-depth and insightful, people interacted well with each other on the board, and when we discussed the responses during class time, meaningful discussion occurred. I cannot say for certain what led to this, but pedagogy research offers a potential explanation. Pedagogy scholars would likely identify the changes I made to my class in the fall as a form of resilient teaching, which is defined as "the ability to facilitate learning experiences that are designed to be adaptable to fluctuating conditions and disruptions" (Quintana and Devaney). Resilient teaching is often perceived as emerging from a design approach shaped by learning goals and course activities as well as the environments where learning happens. It calls for the need to redesign learning experiences based on the evolving learning environment. Being a resilient teacher is what I think inspired my students to also become resilient and engaged learners.

Maybe the students felt more connected to the shows and the content, given the nature of questions asked in the prompt, or maybe the students just had more time to focus on schoolwork at home because the pandemic had curtailed other activities. Overall though, I saw a higher quality of work being turned in, and my teaching evaluation scores for this class were much higher than evaluations I have previously had in this course. A couple of important themes also emerged in their final take-home essays regarding what resonated with them from the course. First, students expressed that being able to understand the intentionality of plotlines and how characters acted in certain ways on TV helped them better connect with the TV content and enabled them to think critically about it. Further, some students mentioned how they felt more adept at deconstructing the connection between societal myths and entertain-

ment content. In Television criticism, "myths" are considered stories that societies tell to construct an ethical guide for the present and a vision of a future. An understanding of these myths and their influence was a big part of the course curriculum.

Seeing students make these connections from the theory to the cultural phenomena they were analyzing in the TV content was heartening because it reflected that they were engaging in what Bloom et al. refer to as a higher order of learning. Bloom et al. in their taxonomy distinguish the various levels and types of knowledge starting with a simple review of facts leading up to higher levels of knowledge assessment and creation. The higher levels in the learning hierarchy which eventually lead to critical thinking, however, cannot be reached until the lower levels of learning happen first (Bloom et al.). For example, students cannot analyze information if they are unable to recall the information or if they lack an understanding of what the information means. Seeing my students expertly navigate the information they had acquired through the semester and use it for higher-level analysis and critical thinking was a bigger reward for me than the good teaching evaluations. It energized my teaching as well. What made me even prouder of their work was that they were doing it in the middle of a stressful pandemic. Multiple students were experiencing struggles at home including illnesses suffered by their loved ones, financial challenges created by this pandemic, and a general isolation through which many were living. This achievement to me was a testament to their resilience and abilities to adapt in the face of crisis and change. Going into the winter break, when I had some more time to reflect on the semester, I realized that my own ability to adapt to this pandemic and modify my curriculum and assignments had also facilitated some of these positive learning experiences for them as predicted by the literature on resilient teaching (Quintana and Devaney).

Since the spring semester was fast approaching, I decided to spend a part of winter break planning my courses for the upcoming semester. I was scheduled to teach two undergraduate spring courses: a Digital Campaigns class for social issues and a Global Television course. For this piece, I will be focusing on my Global Television

course experience because unlike my other course which would be in-person, the Global Television class would be a hybrid course. I had some anxiety about the hybrid format since a couple of colleagues who had taught hybrid courses in the fall had shared their struggles with this format. My concern, based on what I had heard from them, was that students would be confused about the days they were supposed to be in person and the days they were supposed to be online. Further, I had heard from others who had taught in the hybrid format that there was a difference in quality of class participation when they were in person vis-à-vis when they were online with students showing more engagement in person.

Like Television Criticism, this course too had complex learning goals. It aimed at helping students understand factors shaping the global TV landscape and critically understanding the roles of culture, economics, and politics in determining the nature of television in different countries. My broader objective of teaching this class has also been to nurture 21st century citizens. Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) identifies the 4Cs of critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation as being essential to becoming an ideal 21st century citizen (*What is 21st Century Learning and Citizenship?*). I grappled therefore with the question of how to structure the course in a way that would serve my students well and help them learn in alignment with the course goals and the 4Cs despite the pandemic-related disruptions.

Since the format of having students attend in-person lectures one day and doing at-home work on the other day, which included watching a TV episode, had worked well for my fall Tuesday and Thursday TV classes, I decided to try a similar model during the spring as well. Given that this would have to be a hybrid course, a difference in the model however would be that one group of students would do in-person lecture one day followed by at-home TV viewing and analysis on the next class day, while the other group would do the opposite. This type of hybrid schedule enabled me to add some extra TV screenings into the syllabus (broadening the cultural exposure for my students who would now learn about the

cultures and TV industries of more countries) since there would be a higher number of viewing days than in previous semesters. It would also force students to innovate and think of the TV industry cases in different ways and to interact with each other about these concepts in the boards. In past years, we used to watch full episodes from just 2-3 non-US shows in class while only watching excerpts from other shows during lectures. This time, however, given the nature of the scheduling necessitated by the hybrid format, students were able to watch shows from Mexico, Spain, Colombia, Israel, India, Australia, South Africa, and Iceland. As in the previous semester, students were again asked to read assigned material about the shows ahead of time and examine my notes for those readings. They were then asked to watch the shows and participate in the discussion board focusing on content from those shows. This time the discussion board prompts were designed to examine cross-cultural factors reflected in the content, the localized versus international nature of content, U.S. imperialistic influences reflected in the content, and the economic decisions at play that led to global TV content evolving in a certain way. Also, similar to the fall class, students were asked to respond to my prompt and a classmate's response on the board. Again, I would share screenshots from the student responses in the discussion boards during in-person lecture days with their names added to my slides. Students seemed to take pride in seeing their names on the slides with their responses. In the early days of the semester, they would even congratulate classmates when their names would show up in the slides. They seemed to be invested in their discussion posts, and most had thoughtful takes on the content which I thoroughly enjoyed reading.

Since the goal of this course is to introduce students not just to television from a range of countries but also to the cultures of these places, I felt that the nature of questions they were asked to address after watching the content truly helped them expand their understanding not just of global TV but also of global cultures and TV industries around the world. I heard this point reiterated from my students during our individual final draft discussion meetings. Multiple students told me that they had enjoyed being

able to watch television from so many countries and how this helped them appreciate the global and interconnected nature of the TV industry, to which they had not given much prior thought, and how this further helped them understand the role cultural imperialism plays in entertainment industries around the world. A few students also mentioned that they felt better equipped to take on jobs that would require them to have a global perspective of the world. A few students shared that this class was enjoyable because of the unique nature of the assignments and because it was not just about listening to lectures and writing a bunch of papers, but that it also involved critically analyzing a broad range of TV content and connecting the emerging insights to issues central to the global TV industry. One student mentioned how he liked the freedom of being able to choose content that was of personal interest to him for analysis in the longer assignments.

I also interacted with a couple of students who started experiencing mental wellness challenges around the middle of the semester. Speaking with them made me realize how the pandemic isolation, the changing demands of pandemic learning, and all the loss and suffering around us had taken a toll on their mental health. I will never forget what one student said. He remarked that he used to look forward to my class and that he found this exposure to multiple foreign cultures and entertainment content truly gripping. I offered both students the opportunity to take an incomplete and finish their remaining work during the summer.

This pandemic has highlighted the systemic inequities that exist in society and within the student population, and it has also brought to the fore the mental health challenges with which current students are grappling. These realities have made me renew my commitment to practice grace not only during this year of pandemic teaching but also to continue practicing it in a post-pandemic world because sometimes, all a student needs to be successful is someone willing to empathize with them. To quote educator Jeffrey R. Holland, "And if those children are unresponsive, maybe you can't teach them yet, but you can love them. And if you love them today, maybe you can

teach them tomorrow" (Holland).Going forward I hope to make this the cornerstone of my teaching.

I also intend to continue being a resilient teacher by continuing to adapt to future changes and disruptions in the learning and social environments to better facilitate student learning. As this pandemic has shown, disruptions and change can be good, and none of the innovations in my teaching discussed in this piece would have happened without the COVID-19 pandemic. I would have continued teaching my courses the way I normally do, with more lecture-based learning and some TV viewing during our time in the classroom. I would not have redesigned my curricula in both TV classes to include more days when students would be asked to watch full television episodes that broadened their perspectives about television, and I would not have designed these immersive assignments. What started out as a year laden with anxieties about what pandemic teaching would entail, and whether my students and I would be able to adapt to this new normal, ended up becoming a year of learning and growth for me and my students. It was a collaborative story of resilience and adaptation. In the face of crisis, it left us wiser and hopefully better. As Haruki Murakami writes, "And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about" (Murakami 5).

Works Cited

Bloom, B.S., Englehart, M.D., Frost, E.J., Hill, W.H., Krathwol, D.R. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Handbook I: Cognitive Domain*; David McKay: New York, 1956.

Dana, J.C. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary of Quotations.* Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. Chicago, 2008.

Holland, J.R. *Teaching and Learning in the Church.* churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2007/06/teaching-and-learning-in-the-church?lang=eng. Accessed 16 June. 2021.

Murakami, H. *Kakfa on the Shore.* Penguin Books. City of Westminster, 2002.

Partnership for 21st Century Learning (2021). *What is 21st Century Learning and Citizenship All About? Education for a Changing World - A Parents' Guide for 21st Century Learning and Citizenship.* www.cfsd16.org/application/files/7514/6912/4628/P21_ Citizenship_Overview.pdf. Accessed 28 May. 2021.

Quintana, R., DeVaney, J. "Laying the Foundation for a Resilient Teaching Community" *Inside*

Higher Ed., 27 May, 2020. www.insidehighered.com/blogs/learning-innovation/laying-foundation-resilient-teaching-community. Accessed 28 May. 2021.

PANDEMIC GIFTS FOR THE CULTIVATION OF STUDENT EXPERTISE

Alexandra Crampton
Department of Social and Cultural Sciences

The pandemics of a public health crisis and systemic racism suddenly commanded public attention in 2020. They also brought new pedagogical challenges, including greater demand for attention to social inequality and social injustice. In my experience teaching during Spring 2020 and Fall 2020, these challenges helped transform my teaching for students who want to be in the world as social welfare and justice (SOWJ) students. Meeting challenges of teaching during pandemics also led me to more inclusive practices that better encouraged emergent student expertise. To put this transformation into context, I begin with my pre-pandemic conceptions of "good teaching," which had been largely based on my socializations within higher education. I then move into tensions that surfaced during teaching at Marquette before turning to pandemic gifts.

"Good Teaching," Pre-pandemic

Prior to this moment, I had not as deeply questioned how my concept of "good teaching" reinforced an artificial separation

between what I think of as "ivory tower" expertise and "real world" lived experience. What I had learned as "good teaching" also required professors to have high levels of control over what was taught and how it was taught. Senior colleagues in my department seemed to agree, and they had heavily relied upon MOCES scores to track my progress and failures. Their responses were familiar to me due to lessons my father had modeled as a college professor. In assessing my progress as a student, he had taught me that learning is primarily a matter of knowledge transfer from expert to novice. I had worked very hard to earn his approval. My ability to do so had been rewarded by entrance to a competitive private high school and then into top universities for undergraduate and graduate education. I had also, however, sensed a real void in my learning. I kept pursuing new disciplines and areas of practice, searching for answers that often seemed just out of reach. What I most wanted was to be in the world and to contribute meaningfully, but I was unsure of how to connect this desire to formal education, and how either connected to a career.

Upon graduation, I worked as a volunteer with a nonprofit organization that sent me to Viet Nam to teach in three universities over two years. Due to cultural norms, I stood on a stage, and students showed respect each class by rising for me as I entered and rising again for me as I left. I was, quite literally, in the role of "sage on the stage." Eventually, I went to graduate school at a research-intensive university for social work and anthropology. There, I was trained for research without any required courses in pedagogy. My cumulative experiences from childhood through graduate school had taught me that content expertise was the main, if not sole, criterion for teaching. How to transmit this knowledge required clearly defined professor and student roles; professors prepare, lecture, assign exercises, and grade performance, and students prepare required reading, listen, take notes, and perform as expected on assigned exercises or suffer the grade implications. The end goal was an isomorphism between what professors knew and what students knew. Success therefore could be objectively assessed through standardized tests and grading rubrics. While obviously not all material could be trans-

ferred in one course, each class would enable students to take a step forward toward expert knowledge. At the same time, teaching at a Jesuit institution and teaching outside of any singular discipline or profession encouraged a challenge to do more, and I was drawn to this challenge.

Desperately Seeking Transformation

During my early days on the tenure track as an Assistant Professor at Marquette, I used to feel a bit bemused and perplexed by a large billboard at the Milwaukee airport. It called out to prospective Marquette students to, "Come as you are… and leave transformed." I thought, "Wow, that is way above my pay grade." My reaction came, in part, from concern that this transformation was supposed to happen through *my* teaching. Transformation was asking for *a lot*, and yet, I was also hopeful and curious. Pursuit of transformation was a far more interesting adventure than correcting student exams and papers.

The Social Welfare and Justice (SOWJ) major is an interdisciplinary social science mix taught in the Department of Social and Cultural Sciences that had replaced the social work (BSW) program some years before my 2009 arrival. My job was to teach two required courses as if in a social work program, which meant training students in social work as a profession and anchoring courses in textbooks approved by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). In addition, I was free to create two electives. Given my interests and practical experience in "doing good" through international volunteer work and mediation of interpersonal conflict, I developed Global Aid and Humanitarianism, and Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice.

Developing SOWJ courses had been fraught for me. One tension was between teaching as professional training and as serving a larger purpose to promote social welfare and social justice. For me, this tension was also between that of "good" professional practice and the billboard's promise of transformation. Meanwhile, I was encountering a similar tension in my research as a cultural anthropologist. The parallel problem was that closely following the lived experience of people whom professionals were tasked to help yielded

data that conflicted with more narrow "expert" representations. The common struggle in teaching and in publishing research was about confronting differences between ideal forms (theories and models) and more complex realities of helping real people in the real world. I kept finding it difficult to connect what experts advised to what I had learned in local realities and also wanted to bring into my courses.

Meanwhile, my habits of "good teaching" had been variably supported and challenged by students. Overall, I felt as though I had tasked myself, and had been tasked by my students, to have the answers and to transmit them. In my early years at Marquette, student comments through MOCES surveys suggested that I was insufficiently playing the role of expert in their education. I sought advice from pedagogy experts and tried to imitate their work, yet I was also motivated to do differently by students who were less interested in getting the "right" textbook answers and more interested in how to promote social welfare and social justice in the "real" world. I had developed a few twists on teaching textbook material but was also wedded to weekly PowerPoint lectures followed by exams, especially for required courses. The ritual of lecture and guided response just seemed *necessary* for the weekly time slots. I could not imagine how it might go differently. I was apprehensive to upset habits that had enabled acceptable MOCES scores and positive peer review.

In the midst of these quandaries, a pandemic hit that interrupted my concerns. For me, teaching during Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 enabled a temporary dissolution of contexts and structures that had reinforced my "good teaching" habits. I found this to be liberating. For my students, the lie of expertise was exposed now that they had front row seats to crises that leaders clearly did not know how to solve. The world became a living laboratory in a suddenly very urgent way. Professors were not experts who would somehow solve the problems of others, and therefore, students would not be trained to follow predetermined expertise. Instead, we were all suffering to varying extents and needed to pull together for the answers. This space was great for teaching SOWJ courses. It lessened the "us" and "them" dynamic of professor expert with power

over student novice. Although this style is needed in some fields and can fit the pedagogical preferences of successful academics, it is not my preferred style. My preference is to presume that each of us needs spaces in which to reckon with the social welfare and social justice challenges of our time, and none of us will have a perfect answer that provides permanent answers. Thus, we need to come together to confront these challenges. Pandemic pressures brought an urgency to confronting these challenges while interrupting established habits of classroom-based teaching. This interruption facilitated shifting my role from transmitting knowledge to cultivating student expertise. This interruption first hit in the second half of Spring 2020 and then became more extensive in Fall 2020. I therefore divide the description of effects between the two semesters in the next section.

Spring 2020

An ongoing pedagogical challenge for me had been how to shift from a content-driven and professor-controlled approach to student exploration and self-direction. In the first half of Spring 2020, I was working towards this shift without knowing how a pandemic would soon require it. I was co-teaching an Honors course and teaching Global Aid and Humanitarianism. My contribution to the Honors class was largely in providing SOWJ-type lessons into an interdisciplinary course. Both courses were structured to lead into student-directed learning through final projects. For the seminar, I had planned an active learning exercise that would create group conflict. The purpose was to create the need for reflection on interpersonal dynamics of conflict and teach tools for how to resolve. An intended practical benefit was to help students anticipate possible conflict in completing a final group project. For the Global Aid course, I had taught the foundational content that students were expected to use as they developed their own research projects. Class time was therefore no longer needed for lecture or other content delivery. I felt a dilemma in how to use class meetings for the rest of the term because the students varied widely in their interests and abilities relative to course objectives. I hoped that working individually or in pairs would allow them to naturally disperse according to

what questions interested them and the degree to which they could dedicate time and energy to the project.

Then plans were upstaged by a virus. In both classes, the pandemic kicked us off campus and eliminated weekly class meetings. I could not provide the active learning exercise in conflict resolution, but I did not need to because the pandemic created new barriers to communication and collaboration that were far more poignant. In both courses, scheduled class time was abandoned in order to enable flexibility and realistic engagement expectations. This move also enabled more tailored mentorship, working with each group in the seminar and with individuals and pairs in Global Aid to identify workable plans based on student ideas and interests.

This tailoring, in combination with a global crisis, also eroded much of a distinction I had been making between students who were "on track" and those who needed accommodation. In previous semesters, most students were held to the same standards and completed assignments at the same time and in the same manner. I then provided feedback and grades at one time. The syllabus was the map that kept us on track. At the same time, accommodation letters from the Athletic Office and the Office of Student Disabilities provided official rationale for allowing a small number of students to be treated differently. Each term, additional students would also approach me more privately for accommodation. This practice had been teaching me to not presume that the goal was for everyone to be on the same track and to achieve the same kinds of results. After Spring Break, the new official word was that most if not all students required accommodation and we were to extend kindness and compassion over rules and strict rubrics. Moreover, MOCES scores would be suspended and students would be able to choose a pass/fail option after they viewed their grades. For me, this adjustment erased a lot of tension each semester had brought, in which I worried over impending MOCES scores and students worried over impending letter grades. I was free to transcend teaching as a tension between the professor role and novice role as *we* faced a shared problem in an urgent time. Course instruction and learning were shifted from requirements to challenges and to becoming a means of coping,

which is what they are for students trying to keep up with classes during more individual crises. This pandemic was thus a teachable moment in social welfare and justice education. We were in a shared space of urgency in which kindness and compassion came naturally. I hope greater capacity for kindness and compassion continues as these pandemics recede in the eyes of many while their influences will continue to be felt deeply by others.

Fall 2020

By fall, any illusion of short-term crisis had been replaced with a need to carry on without direct contact or expected structures. I think of this now as contactless or "hands-free" teaching. In my case, hands-free teaching liberated my ability to invite students into a space for cultivating their expertise. In this liberation, I found the opportunity to shift from knowledge transmission to enabling transformation.

Both of my fall courses were taught in person. Many professors were unable to offer this modality, and the campus became a bit of a ghost town. I was fortunate that I could teach in person and was curious as to how this might shake things up, pedagogically speaking. At the same time, the country was additionally shaken by the need to better reckon with historical oppression against people of color. I revised smaller portions of courses in Fall 2020 and then larger portions in Spring 2021. This "moment" of reckoning with racial injustice seemed to bring a shift in public discourse such that it was clearer, both nationally and globally, that this is a *we* problem and not a minority or minoritized people problem. I feared that this moment might not last because the pull of racism is quite strong in this country, and thus it was additionally imperative to revise my courses to do better, or at least try.

In the fall, I was teaching Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice, as well as Human Behavior in the Social Environment. A key part of teaching about barriers to social welfare and justice is how to help students become more aware of structures they may not have consciously noticed. Systemic racism is one such social structure. Learning to identify underlying structures is important for privileged students, especially those with implicit (unconscious) biases. It is also

important for many students who have suffered from systemic racism and other forms of abuse and oppression if they have internalized these experiences as "normal" or as particular to them rather than as connected to social injustice. A way towards addressing this issue is to teach students to identify structures of thinking and behaving that are embedded within social fabrics, and what role human agency plays in this.

Teaching about structures and agency is much easier when students have, or have had, experiences that suddenly brought these structures to their attention and demanded active response. The public health restrictions on classroom learning provided this at no charge. As professor, I asked students to identify what had changed for them as students and how that felt. As they readily offered personal experience, my task was to give them social science terms to frame their experience into seeing the systems underlying social realities. For example, they had lost much of the structure of what had made a class into a "real" class, such as required class participation through weekly meetings. Most of their student behaviors had become automatic due to years of habit forming. Now, however, we had to recreate structures to trigger the brain into formal education mode, and they consequently became aware that a) they had been relying on structures that had now been taken away, and b) that people, through their human agency, create and sustain these structures, and c) that this provides insight into how to change structures of racism and other social problems.

We now had to do more than show up on time for rituals and rules that were repetitions of past socialization into "good classes." Instead, we had to more often *consciously* make choices about when and how to show up. We also had to communicate through masks while six feet apart, work in small groups without moving chairs, and receive handouts virtually. For me, this aspect was intriguing. It reminded me of a famous painting of a large pipe under which the artist René Magritte wrote, "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (This is not a pipe). Here were two classes that I had taught many times, and yet much of the material and social manifestations of these classes were gone. There were so few in-person classes and so few students

permitted in any given room during the fall that this time became special, even sacred. Knowing how many reasons might keep a student from attending, it felt like a small miracle to welcome each student who was able to attend class. In the fall, sickness and quarantines took out students, while others realized that their fears of getting sick were too great for them to continue physical attendance. Due to flexible policies and the option of Teams, it was possible to creatively adapt to a degree I had never considered. At the same time, the loss of students altered class dynamics, so those who did show up each week learned how much of a class is not due to their individual attendance as much as relying on most others to do the same. This point is yet another SOWJ lesson, the importance of social interdependence.

A third pandemic lesson applied a lesson learned from my colleague, Michelle Rodrigues. As she had explained in a department presentation in Fall 2018, scientists identified a fourth stress response beyond the fight/flight/freeze. After a crisis, females will "tend and befriend," which refers to caring for offspring and providing peer support. I had drawn from that concept in the small group assignment for the HOPR seminar in Spring 2020. Continuing into the fall semester, I assigned students to small groups of three or four. In these groups, they had tasks of team teaching a small portion of class. They also were expected to serve as each other's "COVID buddies," which meant they would be responsible for looking out for each other and would have at least two students they could contact if they had to miss class. I knew as a professor that I could not try to accommodate each student without help, and this project offered a way to structure this help into the course. By assigning responsibility to each other, I also was enforcing natural coping and a way to derive meaning from the experience through caring for others. This relationship was the kind of class "community" I had wanted to cultivate but had trouble reconciling with my professor role. Now, it was urgent because stress can also pull people apart. More important than playing professor was how to direct anxious energy that might pull people together. I lectured, but only minimally, choosing to work from a google doc on which I could

add notes, replacing PowerPoint and chalkboards. Once the COVID-19 buddy teams got started, team teaching took over and allowed me to shift from "sage on the stage" to "guide on the side." The "professor as expert and student as novice" power dynamic diminished because the students had to learn the material well enough to teach peers, with a professor there to correct and guide as needed. For those students who may have felt intimidated by their professors, this move also gave them a chance to experience the role of expert and to learn from peers as experts on one part of the required material. In assessment, in-person exams were replaced with take-home assignments using more open-ended questions. The result in teaching and assessment was less about knowledge transmission than the cultivation of emergent expertise. My goal was not for students to be able to cover the entire textbook, which has for me been impossible in one semester, but to learn to use it as a reference. This pedagogical approach achieved that goal.

Conclusion

Through the help of pandemic necessity, my teaching transformed from knowledge delivery to cultivating a space for students to develop expertise. I had not fully appreciated how much my ideas about "good teaching" had been restricting my ability to engage with students and for students to engage with each other. I do not want to minimize or somehow rationalize the great pain and injustice wrought through pandemics. This past year was an amplification of many social injustices that require active intervention. Teaching social welfare and justice lessons during these pandemics also brought my attention to how crises can call people to do differently and to more creatively and insistently strive to do better. "This moment," for me is partly one of pandemic gifts that helped bring a desired transformation in my teaching. I look forward to integrating lessons learned from these semesters into post-pandemic work towards better pedagogy for social welfare and justice practice.

SECTION IV

BE CONNECTED
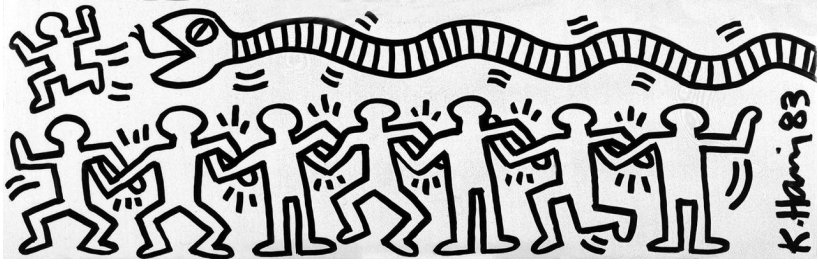
Keith Haring, American, 1958–1990, Untitled, (Detail), 1983, Ink on foamcore, 40-1/4 x 60-1/2 in, 102.2 x 153.7 cm, 83.12.1, Gift of the artist, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University

EDUCATING FOR LIBERATION

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AS A PRACTICE OF RADICAL KINSHIP

Theresa Tobin
Department of Philosophy, Education Preparedness Program
Mahmood Watkins
Education Preparedness Program
Marisola Xhelili
Department of Philosophy, Education Preparedness Program

Jesuit education in this moment

This moment is George Floyd and COVID-19 and Donald Trump. This moment is also Black Lives Matter, front-liners, and Stacy Abrams. This moment is saturated with injustice, but it is also infused with extraordinary resilience and a politics of love that refuses to let injustice have the day. What is the "value" of education in addressing, responding to, or being in this moment? When we ask our students why they come to Marquette, nearly every one of them tells the story of modern capitalism: they are here to get a good job so they can earn money, to buy a house, to live "the life." Some also want to make the world a better place. Some want to advance knowledge. Students do not typically say they seek to be trans-

formed, but a Jesuit education is supposed to be transformative, though it may be unclear *who* is to be transformed, and to what ends.

In 2008, the Thirty-Fifth General Congregation of the Jesuits "retrieved from the biblical tradition the notion of justice as 'right relationship' and asserted that Jesuits and their collaborators are called to establish such relationships through a "mission of reconciliation" (McCarthy). Ten years later in July 2018, Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa, S.J., boldly called on the Jesuit University to be a source of a reconciled life. The Jesuit mission in education in this moment aims to transform people and society toward justice—right relationship—through reconciliation. We understand reconciliation as an action to repair harm that breaks relationships.

In a word, "reconciliation" acknowledges that human relationships remain violated by ongoing racism, colonialism, oppression, and environmental devastation. In our social context, reconciliation does not seek to restore relationship to a previously just state; it means reckoning with human relationships that have been broken from the outset of our nation's history, taking responsibility for addressing the harm, and collectively constructing a just community. Fr. Sosa today presses Jesuit universities to prioritize knowledge that can repair the social fabric of relationships human beings require to build just communities where all thrive. As philosophical educators and people deeply involved in today's issues, we are all pursuing what kind of knowledge this is and how Jesuit universities can help foster this knowledge, especially given our own historical and often ongoing participation in oppression and exclusion, especially of communities of color and indigenous communities (Hill Fletcher 12).

We think reconciliation requires truth, understanding, and reckoning with complicity in violence and oppression, which cannot be achieved in siloed and exclusionary classrooms that keep us separated, numb, contained, segregated. As a student in one of our shared classes remarked, "education isn't really transformative when you are learning with and from people mostly like you," (Leibsch). Our classrooms ought to create conditions "for citizens of our

universities (and of our country) to become what the pope called 'artisans of the common good'" (McCarthy). What a phrase. The artisan is a practitioner of a skilled trade, typically one that involves creating by hand: slow, deliberate, present, patient, and open. Artisans of the common good are skilled practitioners in radical kinship. They know that we belong to each other. They know there is no quick fix or bypassing the slow, deliberate, often painstaking but also joy-filled work of creating together a new social fabric. Our desire is to become, and to help our students become, artisans of the common good in this moment that requires reckoning and reconciliation.

Philosophy born of kinship

We are a community member (Mahmood Watkins), a graduate student (Marisola Xhelili), and a faculty member (Theresa Tobin) who co-teach a Marquette University undergraduate philosophy course on mass incarceration, justice, and freedom. Mahmood is a Black Muslim man from Chicago who, while incarcerated, began his liberal arts degree and read over one thousand books. Marisola, an immigrant woman from the mountains of Albania, is pursuing her PhD in philosophy. Theresa is a white Catholic woman who grew up in suburban Dallas and is faculty in Marquette's Philosophy Department. Our lives have taken very different paths, but each of us has experienced the humanizing potential of philosophy when pursued through relational pedagogies that foster self-worth and kinship with others.

Our course is titled Engaging Mass Incarceration: Justice, Freedom, and the Arts. It offers an introduction to perceiving the injustice of mass incarceration from the perspective of those most vulnerable to and harmed by it, as well as theories for interpreting and understanding its historical roots and its harms. This course started in Spring 2020, and runs for three years as an Honors Program Engaging Social Systems and Values (ESSV 1) core course. We anticipate a version of the course to be ongoing through Marquette's newly established Education Preparedness Program, which offers pathways to higher education for justice-affected students. The content of the course is encountered through a peda-

gogy that prioritizes relationship with and the expertise of those directly harmed by the problem and closest to the solutions. We invite mass incarceration directly into the classroom. The course enrolls as co-learners students who are incarcerated and students who are not incarcerated, and it is likewise co-taught by instructors who are formerly incarcerated and instructors who are not directly justice-affected. We read books and poetry in this class. We also prioritize "texts" of lived experience from people harmed by these systems and people whose privilege blinds them to these harms. We learn creative practices of resilience and freedom from those who defy these systems and teach us how to be human.

Our class is an invitation to build radical kinship among people whom unjust social systems separate and to learn how to be "artisans of the common good" through those relationships. We have no pretense that a single class can do more than it can do. What our class in our experience has done is to foster encounters of what Fr. Greg Boyle calls "exquisite mutuality"—astonishingly beautiful human connections that are seeds of reconciliation, starting points for reckoning and repair on the road to right relationship— to lead to justice (172). In this essay we offer a glimpse into the evolution of our class and how we arrived at our vocation as co-educators in this moment.

Our course has a history. The first version, Narrating Freedom: Gender and Mass Incarceration, was taught from 2015-2018, by Marisola and Theresa along with other graduate students and faculty[1] through the Marquette Honors Program in partnership with the Milwaukee Women's Correctional Facility (MWCC). Each year this course enrolled approximately twelve women incarcerated at MWCC along with twelve Marquette undergraduate students. In 2019, we piloted an expansion of the course in partnership with Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) that enrolled MATC students recently returned from being incarcerated and Marquette undergraduates. Mahmood Watkins was an MATC student in this pilot course. He is now a full co-instructor of our most recent iteration of the course.

Marisola—2017

Today is the first day of our Honors class at MWCC, unfailingly fantastic for the past two years, but this year feels special. Having just come back from the Women's March in Washington DC, I am riding a wave of change broader and deeper than myself, seeing that we are all connected in the struggle, and wanting to live that struggle in the company of other women. I marched with a sign that my friend Jennie gave me, depicting a white hand holding a black hand underneath a Mother Theresa quote: "We Belong To Each Other." Mother Teresa's face was hung everywhere while I was growing up in Albania. Herself ethnically Albanian, the nation claimed Mother Teresa as an emblem of a kind of holiness that can be generated out of immense suffering and the continual human process of overcoming.

We all come to the HOPR class knowing a thing or two about suffering. Unspoken details of individual struggles become sand we sift on a beach together, for a few hours a week, so that we may also bask under the sun of our collective light. We make this oasis in the cafeteria of the correctional facility. Today we are doing introductions, and I am paired with Veronica, one of the inside students. She is twenty-six, bright, and confident. We do not pry into students' backgrounds but make space for what they want to reveal and how they want to reveal it. Most of them are forthcoming about the struggles that led them to be incarcerated and the struggle of incarceration itself. In the openness and strength of these gestures, in the knowledge and light the incarcerated students have mined out of deep suffering, they invite the rest of us to confront the challenge of that kind of being and that kind of knowing.

I am startled listening to Veronica tell me that she went to prison because she took the rap for her mother's drug charge. It was a calculation she had to make: it was either her mom go to prison and Veronica take care of her three younger siblings, or Veronica take the charge so her mother could stay to take care of the kids. My mind cannot easily wrap around the courage needed to make this kind of decision and then having to show up in court, as Veronica did, to have a white male judge send her to prison for "deformation of character."

The rage in my response is met with a calm closed smile. "It's the kind of thing that's meant to break you," she says, "but God does not face us with any challenge we cannot overcome, and I overcame this." She spent the first sixteen weeks of her sentence in solitary confinement, reading upward of one hundred twenty books, rising above the baseless criminalization of her character, defying it by her very way of living. After four years of incarceration, she is now close to the end. I wonder where the justice in all this is, and, hearing my question without me having to ask it, Veronica smiles again. She knows that she is teaching me about injustice, and we sit there for a while longer, my soft gaze of loving gratitude meeting hers.

Veronica wrote a lot of poetry while incarcerated, part of her battle against the criminalization of her identity. Over the course of our semester together, she taught me about the freedom-attending and freedom-opening elements of poetic engagement with one's suffering. For their final project, her group distributed Nayyirah Waheed's poems to women in the correctional facility and women on Marquette's campus, recording each of them reading aloud a poem that touched them. They stitched these readings into a video collage, many voices speaking as a freedom-affirming chorus of one.

Veronica admits that there is too much risk in reading her own poetry aloud. She can do so in our classroom, but that's it. The freedom-affirming risk of writing about injustice when the injustice is at the hands of an institution created to confine, control, and diminish, and which also has the power to punish and kill, can be life or death. My parents grew up under Enver Hoxha's Communist regime in Albania and tell me that intellectuals and poets were the first to be imprisoned and executed. The ones who were not caught sought exile in other countries, and a small handful secretly critiqued the regime under pseudonyms. They tell me stories of illicitly listening to The Beatles undercover in the basement, illegal to consume because they promoted too much freedom of thought.

Veronica's caution about how she uses her voice reminds me of the enduring costs of speaking against oppression when under oppressive structures, that it is not just a feature of dictatorships. It has been a feature of structural racism throughout American history,

as noted by Langston Hughes in his 1947 essay, "My Adventures as a Social Poet," wherein he writes that his poems "about poverty, oppression, and segregation" result in him being "put out of or barred from quite a number of places all because of [his] poems" (207). Like Veronica, Hughes knows that poetic engagement with suffering is part of the struggle against social death. Our classroom becomes an oasis precisely because we are caught up in structures that still call for this engagement and the associated risks. And so we become social poets.

Theresa—2019

I met Mahmood Watkins when he entered Marquette's Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) classroom for the first day of a course that enrolled Marquette students and Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) students who were recently returned from being incarcerated. I reached out to shake Mahmood's hand and welcome him to Marquette. As a Muslim he politely declined the handshake and offered his own form of greeting.

The CTL classroom sits on the third floor of Raynor Memorial Library with windows overlooking Wisconsin Avenue. It was a bitterly cold, gray, and massively snowy January morning, but all eight students showed up: five from Marquette and three from MATC gathered around pushed together tables. The room felt tentative, filled with nervous but somehow also hopeful energy. As we introduced ourselves to one another, Mahmood was not shy about sharing that he never imagined he would take a class at Marquette. He explained that people from his neighborhood see Marquette as a "city on a hill," a distant, inaccessible place even though it is next door. "For us, Marquette is that place where you have to wait for students to cross Wisconsin Ave., so you can get to where you're going that day." A roadblock. Mahmood spoke the uncomfortable truth that our predominantly white university has not served the students in our community, in our city. But why not give this class a try and see what Marquette was all about?

On that first day, the class developed guidelines to foster respectful discourse. Mahmood suggested a guideline he called "pass the mic" to encourage those who talk a lot to step back and make

space for others to speak. As it turns out, Mahmood talked a lot in this class and, with a sense of humor, would often apply the "pass the mic" rule to himself. One subject Mahmood talked about is how incarceration silences people. He shared that on the inside, every single conversation must be guarded. You must be hyper-vigilant about what you say, who you talk to, when and how you speak. Every word is a potential weapon adding more time to your sentence, sending you to "the hole," or even threatening your life. One "hello" to the wrong person may unknowingly signal affiliations that turn others against you; a personal detail shared in small talk about family or friends on the outside may get used against you or them; or the C.O. on duty who had a fight with his wife that morning may take out his frustration on you for "your tone." Every piece of mail in or out is read and scrutinized. To speak in prison is a freedom-affirming risk. He admitted that one of the hardest parts of returning to society was his need to speak so desperately that he could not stop talking, but that that compulsion itself made relationships hard because he also needed to listen.

During one class session, after speaking at length about the cruelties of solitary confinement and the resilience of people who survive it, marking time and their humanity with pushups and prayer, Mahmood "passed the mic" to himself. A Marquette student in the class gently responded: "After twenty-five years of silencing by a system that hides behind 'law and order' you have a lot to say that we need to hear." The whole room softened. Mahmood smiled and nodded in agreement and appreciation.

I often wonder how I got here, to be an educator in this moment doing this kind of teaching and learning. My Catholic faith is central to my identity and part of the answer to these wonderings. Early faith formation planted seeds of social justice, and my sixteen years of Catholic education watered some of these seeds. My Catholic upbringing though also denounced many social movements addressing the structural causes of much human suffering. The Church has silenced people too, and for a long time I felt silenced by the Church. Church leaders characterized feminism in particular as sinful, equating it with an undefined "gender theory," and instilling a

sense in me from a very young age that even asking questions about or exploring these bodies of knowledge would separate me from God. Internalizing these messages, I became afraid of my questions about gendered experiences that were in tension with what the Church taught me about women. I feared that my questions were indications of sinfulness and that pursuing them would alienate me from God, so I suppressed them. My early Catholic formation denied me access to knowledge I needed to understand that my experiences of gendered exploitation and powerlessness were rooted in unjust social systems rather than the will of God or personal inadequacy. I found this knowledge through feminist philosophy. The *academic* practice of philosophy did not recognize my questions as valid, though, and also did not value the voices and experiences of women or feminism as sources of wisdom. Academic philosophy also silenced and excluded.

Philosophy pursues questions at the heart of human existence. What does it mean to be human and to live ethically? What is the nature of justice? What does it mean to be free? It is a discipline potentially well suited to advance Fr. Sosa's call for the Jesuit University to be a source of reconciliation and justice. Philosophy gave me tools for social critique and self-understanding, but its academic practice, taught and learned by a largely homogenous group of people pursuing wisdom from their armchairs, left me empty. I found kinship with Marisola and Mahmood who, like me, wanted to shift narratives about who counts as philosophers, what texts and experiences count as sources of wisdom, and how we seek understanding about justice, freedom, oppression and responsibility. We are not trying to add more diverse voices to the practice of philosophy as we know it; we are experimenting with philosophy as a practice of radical kinship, to make philosophy a more inclusive apprenticeship in becoming artisans of the common good and a pathway to knowledge for reconciliation and justice.

Mahmood—2020: If Not Now When and If Not Me Who

I guess I have been on the path to being an educator for quite a while; however, I ran from this and had a fervent denial of it. I never read a serious book until being incarcerated almost thirty-two years

ago. Before then, I had only read the whole New Testament (KJV) from which my Grandmother, Donnie B. Watkins, who made it through the eleventh grade before having to leave to work in the cotton field, asked me to read to her often. Nevertheless, upon my incarceration, I reflected on the activities of my associates and me, and I realized that of the many topics we discussed, one we did not talk about was books. So, I decided to do with my time what I did not do with it in the free world: READ. I listened to anyone I thought was intelligent without interrupting and asked if they had a book on any subject I did not understand. Furthermore, and not to exclude any person or faith, but it was the Muslim inmates whom I observed carrying books with them around the prison and having what appeared to me to be lively conversations about not just religion or their religion, but about other religions, politics, civics, law, history, philosophy, poetry, international relations, psychology, the plight of minorities in America, and the plight of African Americans, in particular.

During this time, I obtained my GED, was enrolled in college offered at the prison, and read on the average three books a week, a practice I continued until my release from prison. For the first ten years of my prison sentence, I listened, read, and went to school. I did this until I felt I had an informed enough opinion to participate in at least some of the conversation that the learned inmates participated in. This began my sharing of my opinion and pedagogy, so to say. I began having conversations with a chosen few of the inmates about any and all subjects and did it with power, clarity, and authority. Before reading so much, I knew what I wanted to say in my mind but could not articulate the same with my words. Reading books taught me the art of expression, and reading over so many subjects, I learned a lot of ways to articulate my thoughts and feelings in an intelligent way.

Now, why run from or have a fervent denial of teaching? Well, I was taught in school that Christopher Columbus discovered America, and as a student or a teacher if we did not stick to this false narrative then we were wrong. I did not want those constraints. It is that simple. However, I was asked by friends, family, mentors, and

instructors if I would consider teaching as a profession. At those times I would respond with the Columbus spiel. It was my go-to answer. No one could be boggish and deny that truth. However, Rodney McClain, an instructor at Milwaukee Area Technical College, shared something that I could not be boggish about and deny. He said, "Watkins, when we are in class what are you doing? Are you not answering questions and adding commentary from the many books you read, as well as your lived experience?" I replied, "yes." He asked, "Is not that teaching?" I thought for a few seconds. "Yes." Then he said, "Why not get paid for it then?" At that moment, the light bulb lit up. So, when this opportunity came up, I didn't run from it; instead I ran to it.

In light of my story and the crises of 2021, I will address the question, "Why is teaching during this time so significant?" For me, I think those who are closest to the problem are closest to the solution, and this is a shared belief among the formerly incarcerated (Returning Citizen) community. For years, politicians, legislators, and activists without firsthand experience of incarceration communicate what they think and feel needs to be done in relation to mass incarceration. Some of these parties have formed organizations, received grants, and did not have one returning citizen on their board. Long story short, Returning Citizens did not have a seat at the table in conversations about them/us. Here at Marquette, as a subject matter expert and co-instructor of this course, I have a seat at the table of learning with students who will be future lawyers, politicians, health care workers, and activists. Having something to share and doing it on a level playing field is why I find teaching very significant in this hour.

Be the difference?

Mahmood is now a full-time co-instructor of this course. He starts each class with joy and a big smile, opening sessions with: "I know you couldn't wait to get to this class today, am I right?" He often bursts out in song to lighten our spirits and set a tone of hospitality. Mahmood disarms students even as we discuss what for many of us are uncomfortable topics. He knows how to receive them. He shares with a ROTC student that his brother is in the Navy; he

discovers with another student that they are from the same neighborhood in Chicago; and he always, with permission, takes a class photo. His own willingness to embrace vulnerability openly sharing with us painful truths from his life about how mass incarceration dehumanizes people and communities are lessons in vulnerability as a pathway to understanding.

In his book, *Radical Kinship*, Fr. Greg Boyle recounts his conversations with high school students who come to volunteer at Homeboy Industries, a place that employs and works with formerly incarcerated gang members, and who ask "What am I supposed to 'do' at Homeboy?" His answer:

> Wrong question. The right one is: What will *happen* to you here? . . . when we seek to "save" and "contribute" and "give back" and "rescue" and seek even to "make a difference," then it is all about you. . .and the world stays stuck. . .Don't set out to change the world. Set out to wonder how people are doing. . . stop trying to reach them. . .Can YOU be reached by THEM? Folks on the margins only ask us to receive them. (174-175)

Marquette University calls on its students, faculty, and staff to "Be the difference," but this well-meaning Marquette mantra can too easily default into a platitude of service that makes social change "all about me." In a still predominantly white university, an individualistic orientation to social justice too easily centers white agency and control. A recent student remarked, "How can Marquette be the difference if we are not really in it?" Through co-teaching and learning philosophy as a practice of vulnerability, humility, and empathy, we are trying to be "in it," to cultivate an unwavering sense that we belong to each other and that our liberation is bound up with each other's liberation. Mahmood often says if the heart doesn't vibe, if the heart doesn't buy in, the mind never will. We are co-educators of the heart.

Works Cited

Boyle, Gregory, S.J. *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*. Simon & Schuster, New York, 2017.

McCarthy, C. Michael S.J. "The American Jesuit University: A Source of Reconciliation." *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education*. January 10, 2019. Accessed 15 February 2019. www.conversationsmagazine.org/web-features/2019/1/9/the-american-jesuit-university-a-source-of-reconciliation.

Hill Fletcher, Jeannine. *The Sin of White Supremacy: Christianity, Racism, and Religious Diversity in America*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2017).

Hughes, Langston. "My adventures as a social poet." *Pylon.* Vol. 8, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1947), pp. 205-212.

Leibsch, MegAnne. "Undergrad and incarcerated students are learning side-by-side at Marquette. The result is transformative." www.jesuits.org/stories/undergrad-and-incarcerated-students-are-learning-side-by-side-at-marquette-the-result-is-transformative/. Accessed 8 March 2021.

HOW TO RIGHT SOCIOLOGY GONE WRONG: REVISITING THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Louise Cainkar

Department of Social and Cultural Sciences

This essay considers the following questions: If we have known about systematic racial inequality for decades, if our research has demonstrated it, and our texts have taught about it, where did we go wrong? Why has so little changed? While these questions can be examined from many angles, I address them from the perspective of the scholar, the teacher, and the student.

Background

When renowned sociologist C. Wright Mills defined the "sociological imagination," I am not sure he expected that his vision would become interpreted both individualistically and as historically static (Mills 6). Mills wanted students of sociology to understand the magnitude of the relationship between "history and biography;" that is, one's own life and those of others cannot be understood in the absence of understanding the larger social structures that shape them. This idea means that from the moment we are born, our personal trajectories are shaped by factors larger than ourselves. The U.S. is socially organized by human hierarchies common to the

imperial West. This construct holds that our possibilities are especially expanded or contracted depending upon our social class, race, religion, physical ability, gender, and sexuality, as social privileges and disadvantages are distributed according to these characteristics.

Our typical sociology, social problems, and social justice textbooks are organized according to these dimensions of inequality, with the goal of advancing student awareness of these social facts. Yet, as a sociologist, I'd stake my bet on this: that persons disadvantaged by these hierarchical structures already *know* that, at least in the ways that they affect their own freedom, and that teaching the "sociological imagination" at the university level has for too long been aimed, largely implicitly, at advancing the recognition of inequalities among white, able-bodied, middle class and above, straight, cis-gendered, Christian men, and secondarily, women. Clearly though, in the sixty years of training students since Mills coined the term, not all that much has changed on the ground, and what has changed has been due to the hard work of the subaltern. In other words, the awareness we as teachers cultivate in college students has contributed much less to social change than has the activism of the affected.

Much of the same can be said about the influence of sociological research. While it has made advances in detailing the intricacies of inequality, it has done little on its own to force change. As sociology became more macro and quantitative after the 1980s, scholars and policy makers learned with more precision, through statistical correlations, the complexities and gradients of inequality. For example, we came to know which Blacks and which females were most affected economically by structural inequalities and which among them had more of a fighting chance. We also learned which (mostly Black, Native American, and Latinx) neighborhood characteristics played roles in enhancing or limiting social mobility, stress, asthma, and crime, yet as it was taken for granted that these were largely non-issues in white neighborhoods, critical questions asking *why* those differences were the case, beyond sheer economics, were not asked. From feminist research we learned to think about intersections, say between race and class and gender, or sexuality and race. In the

context of multiple hierarchies of power and privilege, feminists pointed out that some people are doubly and triply disadvantaged. The problem is that while understanding the effects of social structure and its variations on people's lives increases awareness and may guide micro-level changes, this knowledge does not inform us on how to make substantive structural change.

In his paradigm-shifting article "Rethinking Racism: Toward a structural Interpretation," Eduardo Bonilla-Silva pointed out that although racial projects have both ideological and structural dimensions, "whether implicitly or explicitly, most analysts regard racism as a purely ideological phenomenon" (465). In other words, racism is treated mainly as a way of thinking. Ideological dimensions manifest themselves in narratives, discourses, stereotypes, and representations. They are not deployed innocently. They are deployed to defend and support structural practices: laws, policies, and discriminatory behaviors. Bonilla-Silva argues that the sociology of race that dominated the second half of the twentieth century in the U.S centered its work on ideologies and paid less attention to structural practices. It was therein able to make the claim that when ideas and attitudes about race (among whites) changed for the better, we were moving towards a post-racial society. So, while racialized structures such as segregation, mass incarceration, and police brutality remain in place, a new "color blind racism" sees these structures as individually surmountable. "Most whites believe that if Blacks and other minorities would just move beyond the past, work hard, and complain less we would 'all get along'" (Bonilla-Silva, "Racism without Racists"). Bonilla-Silva argues that whites need to face their own self-segregation with other whites. He also calls for a new civil rights movement that has "equality of outcomes" as its goal, because equality of opportunity cannot in itself overcome the products of centuries of racism. According to Bonilla-Silva, we can only end race by going through race.

It is important to note that these ideological and structural dimensions of discriminatory projects hold true for all hierarchies built on notions of a superior "us" and inferior "them," including those applying to gender, sexuality, ability, religion, social class, as

well as those crafted by the global north's domination of the global south. We possess a wide repertoire of stories of "their" shortcomings to defend a wide range of discriminatory structures, but reimagining the stories does not undo the structures. When I see the small amount of change decades of research on social inequality has achieved — for example it has only made a dent in the Black/white and male/female income gap — I wonder if sociology has not become in some ways an industry, one whose main purpose is to provide jobs for researchers, textbook writers, and teachers. I think as teachers, we need to be clear: information raises awareness and provides support for social movements, but it does not make change. Power does. I do not mean the power of bombs and guns, because that is only more of the same. I mean organized nonviolent people power. Each time we provide information on a social problem, it is incumbent upon us as teachers to also explore with our students what has already been done to eliminate that problem and how and why it succeeded or failed. That knowledge moves us beyond awareness to empowerment.

[Self-]Critique

During the COVID summer of 2020, I was teaching an asynchronous online Introduction to Social Welfare and Justice course. At the start of the second week of classes, on Monday, May 25, George Floyd, a Black man, was murdered by white Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the presence of three other officers and bystanders, after a police pursuit stemming from a store clerk's allegation that he had passed a counterfeit $20 bill (mandatory reporting in Minnesota). Mass mobilizations broke out across the U.S. protesting yet another murder of an unarmed Black American by police. It so happened that our class that week was studying white supremacy and mass incarceration. What timing, I thought. Right when the nation is on fire for racism, we will be focusing on these topics. I believed that as teacher and student we could really make some strides in formation.

On white supremacy, we read a textbook chapter on racial inequality (the stories and the stats), an article on "How the Irish became White" demonstrating how race is socially constructed, and

Ta-Nahisi Coates's "The Case for Reparations," which details the life of an African American man named Clyde who moved to the North from the Jim Crow South to get his family ahead. All of Clyde's efforts to provide a stable home for his family were frustrated by laws, policies, and ill-spirited whites in the North, particularly through the ways they systematically denied home ownership to Blacks and forced them into highly predatory contract purchases. We watched Richard Rothstein's "Segregated by Design," which examines the ways in which our federal, state, and local governments segregated every major metropolitan area in the US through law and policy. Both "The Case for Reparations" and "Segregated by Design" provide extensive detail on how racial segregation was produced by whites holding power, whether in government or as realtors and middlemen. We also watched an interview with Eduardo Bonilla-Silva in which he explained why color blind racism is "Racism without Racists." Professor Bonilla-Silva argued that "except for members of white supremacist organizations, few whites in the US claim to be racist." They say they don't see color, just people, who are all inherently the same. Whites do not see the privileges they take for granted just for being white, allowing them to assert that race really does not matter. Once the civil rights movement unchained African Americans therefore, any problem people of color have is seen, by whites, as not a product of racism but of their own fault, or of economics and market dynamics. Bonilla-Silva argues that you "have to go through race" to solve racial inequality. Color blind solutions that do not pay attention to race, and ideological solutions that do not pay attention to structures, will not work.

We use a Social Problems text for this class, and the first week's lesson stressed the importance of designing solutions that match the "problem." My assignment for this material offered the following instruction:

> Put Dr. Bonilla-Silva's discussion of Color Blind Racism in conversation with Clyde's statement "The reason black people

are so far behind now is not because of now, it's because of then." Here is what to do: 1) Summarize Clyde's discussion of the problem, then 2) adopt Bonilla-Silva's stance to identify one policy/action that would work towards a solution to the problem. Remember, in a social problems framework, identified problems are paired with solutions that match.

I was terribly disappointed with the responses I received to this assignment, but given what I said above, maybe I should not have been surprised by them. I thought that given the intensity of the moment, with people across the country marching in the streets against racist policing, combined with the clarity and depth of the materials we studied, student responses would be bold. Instead, most of the solutions to the problem of racism suggested by my students showed little sense of urgency, almost no absorption of class materials, and focused on race as a way of thinking. Their proposals had one or more of the following characteristics:

1. They were white-centered and focused on the ideological: They proposed ways to change the *attitudes* of *white* persons towards African Americans.
2. They focused on the individual (and also the ideological) level of getting to know one another better. Solutions called for "encouraging interflow" between Blacks and whites. Social groupings in which Blacks and whites mainly socialized with members of their own racial group were identified as the problem behind racism that needed to be fixed.
3. They saw education as the solution to the problem.

- Mostly these solutions were directed at whites learning more about both racism and about African Americans. These responses made no mention of the fact that members of BIPOC communities already know that racism exists, a fact that was seen as not relevant.

- A few sought to improve inner city schools by increasing their funding and resources so that Black children could improve their life chances through merit. These responses implicitly accepted neighborhood segregation and adopted a "pull yourself up" approach.

Three students of the twenty in the class offered national-level policy solutions, two of which called for affirmative action and one for reparations. What was particularly distressing to me, aside from the white-centeredness of these solutions and their focus on individuals and attitude change, was the presumption that these proposals were new and innovative ideas, as if they had never been considered or tried before. That line of thinking can only presume a few points: that (white) social awareness of racial inequality is very recent, or that while not recent, no prior efforts have been made to change it. Clearly then, for this lesson to be more effective, students must also be exposed to ideas that have been tried, like "busing" to integrate schools or efforts to integrate white neighborhoods, as well as to their degree of success or failure, including the ways whites responded to these programs. My initial instinct was to respond with something like "did you really read and watch these materials?" But I knew that better teaching was needed, not reprimand. So instead, I sent them an essay I wrote that wove the arguments together and explained them better.

Moving Education Forward to Empowerment

Teaching sociology, social problems, and social justice involves discussion of social inequalities. What this story tells us is that moving forward, these discussions must include two additional elements commonly not found in textbooks: 1) A discussion of the history of knowledge of the particular inequality being studied. How long has this inequality been known and to whom has it been known? How long has it been documented by social science research? 2) What significant steps have been taken to remedy this inequality? When did they commence and what have been the results? 3) If inequalities still exist, what does this knowledge, taken together, suggest needs to be done next?

When we do not find the answers to these questions in text-books, as teachers, we need to find innovative ways to introduce them. With regard to the assignment I noted above, I might amend it as follows:

> Put Dr. Bonilla-Silva's discussion of Color Blind Racism in conversation with Clyde's statement "The reason black people are so far behind now is not because of now, it's because of then." Here is what to do: 1) If we cannot change the past, adopt Bonilla-Silva's stance that color blind solutions (that do not directly address race) will not work and identify one policy/action that has the potential to solve the problem. 2) Conduct some research to determine whether your policy/action has been tried and to what result. 3a) If it has failed to make significant change, identify the barriers that were faced. 4a) Then suggest what needs to be done next; or, 3b) If it has succeeded, demonstrate how and identify the elements that led to its success. 4b) Suggest how those elements of success can be used to promote more change.

This assignment is *a lot* more work than the original one. It is not amenable to what I might call lazy answers. By using the word "lazy," I am not suggesting that students are lazy. I am arguing that as a society and as scholars, *we* have been lazy. We, and here it must be stated that the "we" is dominated by the racial group in power (whites), have been largely content with the status quo of inequality, at times tweaking it here and there after demands from the subordinated have risen up to the point where they cannot be ignored. Our students are merely modeling what they have observed in our society and among scholars, largely without consciously being aware of it. Consider it this way. Students of structural engineering learn that bridges are necessary to improve traffic flow in urban areas and that certain bridge structures are prone to failure. They are not then left on their own to figure out why they failed and to suggest alterna-

tives. Rather, they learn in the classroom the reasons for these fail-ures as well as what has been done successfully to improve on them. An assignment would likely ask students to apply these successes in new ways, but in the field of social inequality, we only teach that we have failed, and failed over a long period of time. We leave students guessing about why we failed and about what possible solutions might look like. We expect them to come up with the answers, and then we might, as I was, become disappointed when their solutions do not exhibit critical thinking but instead, naivete.

A critically thinking student might ponder, "I would not propose that gender-integrated schools and men and women getting to know each other better would resolve the male/female wage gap, so why would it make sense with race?" After reading "The Case for Reparations" and Rothstein's "Segregated by Design" a critically thinking student might consider that the infusion of capital into neighborhoods, on its own, does not work, including in "their" schools, and that we might need to take steps to end the very fact of racially segregated neighborhoods. How though do we do that in the context of racism *and* when race is so tied to income? Coates convincingly offers a solution that goes through race: reparations. Yet only 1 of 20 students accepted that proposal, most opting instead for solutions that primarily focus on whites, therein totally ignoring the messages of Coates and Bonilla-Silva's lecture. (How likely would ignoring a lecture on solutions to bridge failure occur in an engi-neering class? What would be the outcome of doing so for a student?) I would argue that the white-centeredness of students' proposed solutions evolves directly from the white-centeredness of a social science industry that is content to explore inequality over and over and over again, without making concerted efforts to empower people to change it.

As a society, we would not accept repeated bridge collapses, and we would be right to ask where the problem lies and for its imme-diate solution. Inequality, especially systematic racial inequality, is a failure of our society. Its solution is political because the problem is political: it goes back to who holds power in a society, how they got and maintained that power — which is both ideological and struc-

tural — and what needs to be done and undone in order to distribute power and rewards more equally. The same is true for gender inequality and wide economic inequalities. Because of these power dynamics, left on their own, change will not occur, a recognition that fuels, for example, voter suppression. Our efforts to teach without "getting political" are like engineers teaching about structural problems without introducing solutions.

The sociological imagination must include more than teaching students about the intersections of social structure and people's lives. It must encompass critical reflection on how to change a failed social structure. We might consider reflecting on, for example, the relationship between protracted mass public protest in the streets across the nation and the guilty verdict in the case of Officer Derik Chauvin, as well as the federal charges filed against him and the three officers who did not stop him from killing George Floyd. If these case outcomes are recognized as indicators of a meaningful power shift due to protest, that conversation can inform a discussion of the role of power in our "blind justice" system and its relationship to mass incarceration. We might reflect on what the 2021 withdrawal of the MLB All-Star game from Georgia in response to new voter suppression laws there tells us about power and about the interests of those who say sports and politics don't mix, which as Dave Zirin points out is a narrative that defends the existing structure. All of these discussions can advance our thinking on the means to real social change. If we want our students to "be the difference," we can do no less than make these critical explorations.

Works Cited

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. "Racism without Racists." *Book TV at Duke University: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva*. 4/24/2014. www.youtube. com/watch?v=dR0McDpaCX8.

---."Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation," *American Sociological Review* 62:3, 1997), pp. 465-480.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic.*

June, 2014.

Mills, C. Wright. *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press, 1959.

Rothstein, Richard. *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America.* New York: Liverlight, 2017. Video: Silkworm Studio.

Zirin, Dave. *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics, and American Sports*. Media Education Foundation, 2010.

21

TEACHING SPANISH CULTURE IN A PANDEMIC

Scott Dale

Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures

"How am I possibly going to shift my in-person Spanish culture class to a completely online format by next week?" I remember asking myself in the middle of the night during the second week of March 2020. I was unprepared. As some language learner specialists have recently observed, "most language educators have had little or no professional development in online language design, development and delivery" (Russell 339). It was as if all my key professional tools became obsolete at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. What I had known and relied on now seemed almost useless: my pedagogical approaches, my ability to communicate in class, my content transitions, my use of the whiteboard, my communicative approach in Spanish, my use of small group work, etc. I found it difficult to suddenly reinvent all my pedagogical approaches mid-career, reimagine my scholarly field, reengage with my students in an online environment, all without the proper training. I felt alone, as many others in my field have felt during the pandemic (Knight 298). I had cold sweats. I shook. I also felt incapable of

identifying and learning how to use the most appropriate technologies that would allow me to teach the Spanish cultures classes that I have been teaching the past twenty-five years. I was in trouble, up a river without a paddle.

In March 2020, I had no choice but to figure out how to continue with my syllabus objectives and goals without being able to meet with my students for the rest of the spring. It was cut and dry. I had an obligation to figure out the online technologies and come up with a plan within just a few days. Another reality was also becoming overwhelmingly clear: it was all on me to troubleshoot any potential online technological problems, and my students would be waiting for me to solve them. I was terrified.

Before I created a COVID-19 action plan for the remainder of the spring semester, one that was morphing from a face-to-face environment into a completely online context during a pandemic, I reflected upon an important and well-accepted social concept recently revisited by social scientist Arthur C. Brooks. He simply reminds us that many of us are either extroverts (like dogs) or introverts (like cats) and that a shift to a completely online environment would be like "shutting down the world and turning it into Catland, at least for a little while" (Brooks 1). In ordinary times, Brooks reminds us, American introverts are like cats living in "Dogland," but the pandemic was forcing all of us to exist in a sort of "Catland," an environment not ideal or comfortable for many of us. I was very conscious of the fact that many of my students, extroverts, introverts, and others, would be shifting into new, unfamiliar learning environments, but also into new and unprecedented social contexts. I reminded myself of this emerging reality before I created an action plan that would hopefully engage my students.

My particular pandemic action plan, which I labeled "ARRI" on a piece of legal paper, was staged into four basic parts: **assess** the realities of the new pandemic situation; **reimagine** our new class environment; **retool** my syllabus activities and expectations; and, finally, **implement** a revised activity plan for the remainder of the semester. First, I assessed the 15 students in my Peoples and Cultures of Spain class and tried to learn as much as possible about how each

one responded to the pandemic's implications in March 2020. How significant was the change to "remote learning" for them? How did their daily lives and living environments change? After contacting my students via e-mail and conducting my first class on Microsoft Teams, I learned that some students left campus and returned to live with their parents in different states (4 of 15 students) and that many of them suddenly had the added pressure of taking care of their younger siblings or grandparents (5 of 15 students). Others took on new domestic chores at home, such as cleaning, cooking, shopping and washing clothes (5 of 15 students). Some students expressed to me that they had the added pressure of putting family responsibilities first (5 of 15 students). Many felt they had no real choice. Others began working more hours at their part-time jobs, believing that no more class on campus meant more available time to work part-time (6 of 15 students). Other students remained in their dorm rooms, and many of them were quarantined for two weeks during different periods of the spring and fall semesters (7 of 15 students). A lot of students suddenly had more responsibilities, pressures and anxiety than before the pandemic.

Assessment. In assessing the student population of 15, it soon became clear that I actually had a much more diverse student population than I thought and, as a result, I realized that my students were now engaged in my class from very different learning environments. More importantly, the students were taking my class on a seemingly uneven playing field. This experience was an eye-opener; I never knew that my students had such diverse backgrounds. While I knew that my students came from diverse ethnic and geographic backgrounds, I failed to realize just how influential the socioeconomic and demographic factors were in the daily lives of college students. A significant percentage of my students remained in their cozy campus dorm rooms with strong wi-fi connections, three prepared meals in the cafeteria and convenient access to quiet study spaces, gyms, computer rooms and printers (8 of 15 students). Many other students, however, were unexpectedly back in their high school bedrooms, maybe sharing a bed with a younger sister or even sleeping on the sofa (5 of 15). Many of these students attempted to

do homework activities without a reliable wi-fi connection, and others lacked a private quiet space to study, read, or meet for a class held on Zoom or Teams (5 of 15) at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Some found it almost impossible to pay attention in class with all the background noise at home. An unexpectedly high number of students found it difficult to find time for online class meetings, since they elected to take on more part-time work hours before, during, and after class time (6 of 15). Some even worked night shifts.

Although some in higher education have argued that synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) has had a "democratic effect on discussions among language learners," I found that the recent COVID-19 pandemic actually showed quite different results (Knight 300). In fact, the pandemic exposed a socioeconomic dynamic in which some students had clear learning environment advantages over those who had to share domestic spaces with families or others who felt the need to work more part-time hours. My assessment of the student population during the pandemic presented me with more pedagogical challenges and questions than I had anticipated, and no pertinent research was immediately available to help me create a new learning environment in which all felt well equipped, well connected, and comfortable for the online learning format. In short, I found it very challenging to "level the playing field" during the pandemic. While the traditional classroom environment has clear advantages for a more democratic learning space, the popular online learning platforms such as Teams and Zoom often highlight the socioeconomic and demographic disparities among our student population.

Reimagination. I also needed to reimagine the delivery of the content of my undergraduate Spanish culture class and rethink its purpose. How would I transform my pedagogical vocation into a purely online enterprise? While I knew the class content well and knew how to effectively engage with students in the physical classroom, I suddenly had to become more imaginative, pragmatic, and creative in reenvisioning what I did and how I did it, as well as identifying the most important component that made my class success-

ful. What was the one key ingredient for the success of my class? What is the glue that keeps my class enjoyable, meaningful and successful? I tried to identify the one quality that allowed my students to feel a sense of purpose. I struggled to identify what that one component was, but soon I realized that it was actually a sense of community and teamwork, a close-knit togetherness molded in the classroom during the first two months of face-to-face class in January and February 2020. Feeling like a part of a bigger group, much like a family, was exactly what gave purpose and joy to my Spanish culture class. My students knew each other by name in the first week of class, had already exchanged phone numbers, and many studied together for exams, supported each other, called each other for help and completed activities in small groups in class. They also recognized the personalities and senses of humor of their peers. They felt comfortable and unified working together. Perhaps I never completely valued the importance of community and teamwork in the classroom until much of it was taken away from us. Without the sense of a close-knit collaborative group, the class would not function nearly as well. Reimagining how this sense of community could continue to thrive in my Spanish culture course meant the need to somehow replicate this community in an online context. But how would I do this from a laptop at home? I imagined students working remotely, but also together using internet-based technologies of their choice: FaceTime, Teams, Zoom, VR headsets, text messages, phone calls or, in some cases, socially-distanced group work outside of class.

Retool. During the first week of class in January 2020, I made a conscious effort to strongly encourage my students to make meaningful connections in class, and always in Spanish. It was not obligatory, but I did suggest that making new friends in class can be very helpful, since many unforeseen challenges can arise during the semester, and having a realistic Plan B can actually save a student (or a professor's course!) from drifting into failure. As other instructors have noted this past year, it is important to set realistic expectations for students during a pandemic (Ross and DiSalvo 378). By firmly underscoring at the beginning of the semester the idea that we can all help each other, the class dynamic becomes more communal,

inclusive, and even more meaningful when we all feel as a part of a larger group working together, helping each other. Isolation, anxiety and loneliness are real concerns in higher education, especially during this period of "remote learning." As Victoria Russell asserts, "online language learners are typically required to interact with their peers and with their instructor in the target language using audio and video tools; therefore, learners may have anxiety that is related both to the language and to the use of the instructional technologies that are used to communicate in the target language" (Russell 341).

Implementation. In order to alleviate student anxiety, I assigned brief one-minute PowerPoint student presentations on Teams, so students could elaborate a relevant topic of their choice, but one related to Spanish culture. These short, ungraded live activities on Teams proved to be therapeutic, as students took advantage of their one-minute video time to express whatever was on their minds relating to the class subject matter or life in general. By making room for creativity, a sense of community started to emerge and students began to feel less anxious and more confident when speaking in front of their peers in Spanish.

By reimagining the class structure during the pandemic, I also imagined a group of students working with one another, helping each other, and making use of various technologies in order to learn and grow together. Communicating remotely with supportive peers and working as a group is not only productive and collaborative, but also reassuring and reinvigorating during a time of isolation, uncertainty and anxiety. Students regularly relied on each other more and more, and it became clear by mid-April that my students had formed remote online support groups to maintain a sense of community and belonging. Students began sharing notes, asking more profound questions, exchanging practice exam questions and even studying together before exams. My students were learning how to build a sense of community and purpose, and in Spanish!

To better convey this important concept of community, we discussed, as a group, how Hispanic art echoes the significance of community in social groups. I reserved the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University and curated a small collection of art pieces,

one of which was entitled, "Orden de apartarse" (1970), by Juan Genovés, a black and white aquatint with six large arrows pointing to the right, an image depicting a large group of people confidently moving in one direction together. My students and I, all wearing masks, observed the art piece, all looking very carefully at the visualization of solidarity and community. While the piece is most certainly referring to social movements in Spain in the 1970s, my students could also see how the image related to the concept of community and social unity during a pandemic. Genovés's art seems to have even more significance now during a pandemic. A long period of time of social distancing reminds us how we are all part of a much bigger social network and a sense of community is what gives us purpose and strength (Dale 21). This activity was probably the highlight of the semester, a "field trip" that bonded all my students together. The COVID-19 pandemic indirectly exposed just how important and powerful a sense of belonging and purpose can be. By reflecting on art, we were all reminded that building a sense of community in a college class can be a very powerful learning experience. At Marquette's art museum, we also engaged with other pieces by Hispanic artists, including thought-provoking art that suggested other themes studied in class: emotion, love, religion, hatred, pain, etc.
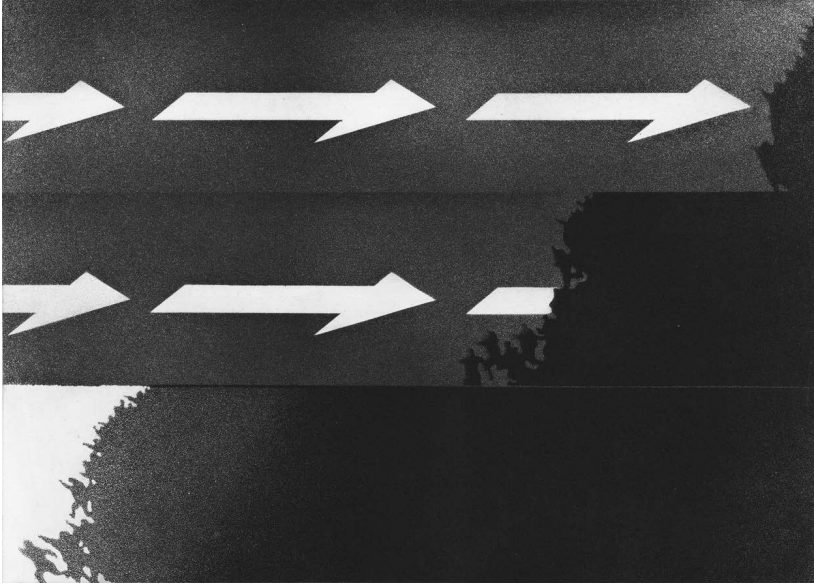
Juan Genov s Spanish, b. 1930, Order to Move Aside *(Orden de apartarse),
1970, Aquatint, 19 x 25⅞ in., 50.3 x 61 cm, 81.38.4.3, Gift of Mrs. Ann
Steinberg, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, 2021
Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VEGAP, Madrid*

I also wanted to remind my students that the COVID-19 pandemic was truly a global phenomenon and that we were all in this together, from Madrid to Milwaukee and Barcelona to New York. This concept of global community also dovetailed well into my low-cost virtual reality (VR) activities of enabling students to virtually explore the Spanish cities we were studying and immerse themselves in the urban landscapes, all from home using their smartphones. In my first VR activity each student downloads the free "Google Expeditions" app onto their Android or iOS smartphone. Students insert their smartphones into their own $12 Google Cardboard headset units. After preparing several geographical and cultural questions on D2L, I lead the students on virtual visits to cultural sites including Toledo, Salamanca, Santiago de Compostela and Madrid. We view VR panoramas, 3D images and annotated hypertext questions at strategically placed points in our virtual visits. After online debates in class, students also analyze and reflect on our

"virtual digital visits" and contrast the experiences with an actual visit to architecturally rich Chicago. These debates are all conducted in Spanish. Students are assessed by writing more formal online essays in Spanish about their immersive experiences "visiting" the aforementioned Spanish cities. Students write conclusions in Spanish about their experiences as "cultural travelers" to foreign locations. These virtual international experiences help to remind us all that the global pandemic may socially distance us temporarily, but eventually we will all reconnect and immerse ourselves in other parts of the world.

The second VR activity I use in my Peoples and Cultures in Spain class is also based on the use of Google Cardboard, but in this case we view digital immersive content on YouTube 360VR. The purpose of this learning activity is to analyze in more depth the cultural artifacts found in Granada, Barcelona, Sevilla and Ronda, Spain. We visit these locations in unison, all from home! Topics covered in these virtual visits include Muslim influence, Arab architecture, Modernist architecture, early Christian architecture, and geographical peculiarities of southern Spain. Students are exposed to typical Flamenco music as they explore these cultural sites. Dialogue is in Spanish. My students write more advanced essays about the variety of cultural influences in southern Spain. When we talk about Spanish architecture, what do we really mean? What is *Spanish* architecture? Students reflect on architectural influences in Spain and communicate their opinions at a more advanced level of written Spanish.

In the third VR learning activity, my students use their smartphones and use Google Cardboard to view digital VR and immersive content on Discovery VR. The purpose of this learning activity is to analyze the geographical characteristics of the southern coast of Andalusia. The content of this digital immersive experience is a series of perspectives filmed from a drone high above the coastline. With the use of the VR goggles, students feel immersed in the Andalusian coastline, mountain ranges, rivers, proximity to Africa, climate, city centers, fields and valleys, all from a bird's eye perspective. Students explore why so many different civilizations sent expeditions to the

southern Peninsula over 2,000 years ago and what geographical advantages the southern coast offers. Students compose essays reflecting on these immersive VR aerial experiences of southern Spain.

Over the past ten years, more and more of my students have been showing up to class holding smart phones. These activities using smart phones and Google headsets are not graded. Instead, these VR activities complement and enhance the content and skills covered in the class. These technology-based activities in class are designed to highlight, enrich, and articulate in an immersive manner the geographical, visual, and cultural material discussed in our class debates and course readings. Our students are sophisticated digital and visual learners and their language is becoming largely image-based. They are also capable of interpreting video graphics and 3D images in order to gather and process information.

Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic shook me to the core in March 2020. I felt immobilized. However, the circumstances and consequences of the pandemic also forced me to reexamine my voca-tion, social behavior, human psychology, pedagogy, core values, priorities, and, more importantly, my own passion for the profession. The unintended consequences of the pandemic eventually helped me adapt to new learning technologies, reminded me to focus on the core purpose of my Spanish culture class, and enlightened me about what was apparently elusive, yet so obvious at the same time: the importance of community and the social fabric of our world today. Having empathy for one another, understanding our common fears and helping one another in times of need are all core values that emerged during the pandemic. While my Spanish culture class shed light on the themes of love, religion, family, and war in the history of Spain, the pandemic also reminded us just how fundamental a sense of community is to the human spirit. As Arthur Brooks reminds us, the pandemic shed light on how we may all have our differences, but, as we can now better understand, we actually have more similar-ities than differences. Teaching in 2020 and using new technologies taught me one very valuable lesson: our students may be vulnerable learners during a pandemic, but they can also appreciate a well-

designed curriculum focusing on the complexities and strengths of our humanity and the importance of community and solidarity.

Works Cited

Brooks, Arthur C. "How to Build a Life: What Introverts and Extroverts Can Learn from Each Other." *The Atlantic*. 20 May 2021.

Dale, Scott. *What is Hispanic?* Milwaukee: Haggerty Museum of Art, 2015.

Knight, Stephanie W.P. "Establishing Professional Online Communities for World Language Educators." *Foreign Language Annals* 53:2, Summer 2020, pp. 298-305.

Ross, Andrew F.; DiSalvo, Mary L. "Negotiating displacement, regaining community: The Harvard Language Center's response to the COVID-19 crisis." *Foreign Language Annals* 53:2, Summer 2020, pp. 371-379.

Russell, Victoria. "Language anxiety and the online learner." *Foreign Language Annals* 53:2, Summer 2020, pp. 338-352.

CHALLENGED TO CHANGE

CREATING A HOPE-FILLED FUTURE BY TOUCHING THE HEART WITH DIRECT EXPERIENCE

Jennifer Henery
Department of Theology
Karen Ross
Department of Theology

At Marquette University all students are required to take Theology 1001, Foundations in Theology: Finding God in All Things. The subtitle of the course is derived from the "First Principle and Foundation" of St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, and this foundational course sets the stage for students' engagement with the Jesuit formation that should characterize a Marquette education. As theology professors, we understand our task to be to provide students with experiences that affirm and challenge the lenses through which they see their own education and spiritual and moral formation. Especially during times of great social crisis, we want them to *go to the margins* of our world to experience the change of heart needed to truly disrupt and dismantle systems of injustice that keep us from living as one human family.

As former Superior General of the Jesuits Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach instructed U.S. Jesuit colleges and universities at a 2000

conference on the importance of the commitment to justice in Jesuit Higher Education, "[s]olidarity is learned through 'contact' rather than through 'concepts.'" He emphasized that "[w]hen the heart is touched by direct experience, the mind may be challenged to change. Personal involvement with innocent suffering, with the injustice others suffer, is the catalyst for solidarity which then gives rise to intellectual inquiry and moral reflection" (Kolvenbach). As educators, we take this task to heart. By providing students with opportunities to reflect on their own contexts and to open their hearts by hearing the stories of others, we can challenge them to see the world through different perspectives and reorient their education for the promotion of justice and service to others.

In this chapter, we illustrate our pedagogical commitment to accompany students as we challenged them to change their hearts amid a global pandemic. First, we ground this commitment in the historic Jesuit sources that have shaped our understanding of this call to education for justice, and we offer pedagogical examples, specifically of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm's (IPP) principle of *context*. Then, we will turn to the Jesuits' recently initiated Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) and reflect on how the current moment helps to elucidate their importance for the role of the educator now.

The Textual Grounding of Ignatian Pedagogical Practice in Foundations of Theology

When we began teaching at Marquette in the fall of 2018, the University had just implemented its redesigned core curriculum, the Marquette Core Curriculum (MCC), and Theology 1001 was a required component of the Foundation Tier. As new faculty, we wanted to design our course informed by the charism of Jesuit education and Jesuit identity that would mark our students' formation at Marquette. In order to do this, not only did we assign core Jesuit documents, but we also implemented pedagogical practices to show students the practical implications of these teachings. We wanted students to begin their formation at Marquette knowing and experiencing why this choice to attend a Jesuit University would be the difference in their becoming men and women for and with others.

The contemporary goals of Jesuit institutions to educate for justice were initiated by the 28th Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. While acknowledging the Society's previous failure to properly educate students for justice, in his pivotal 1973 address to the International Congress of Jesuit Alumni in Europe, Fr. Arrupe set out a prime educational objective for Jesuit education today:

> To form men and women for others; men and women who will live not for themselves but for God and Christ – from the God-human who lived and died for all the world; men and women who cannot even conceive of love of God which does not include love for the least of their neighbors; men and women completely convinced that love of God which does not issue in justice for others is a farce. (Arrupe)

This speech famously became known as "Men [and Women] for Others" and has since influenced conversations about pedagogy and mission at Jesuit educational institutions around the world. Central to Arrupe's now famous tagline "men and women for others" were three attitudes which would bring the "principle of justice through love down to the level of reality:" "Live more simply," "gain no unjust profit," and "change unjust structures" (Arrupe). In order to engage students in the personal *context* and implication of this text, we have them do a personal inventory. They each are given a paper doll that they decorate and label with all of the objects that they bring to class, from their computers to their sneakers. During the class, they mark out those items of which they have more than two, those replaced before they were broken, and those made, bought, or sold resulting in unjust profit or as the result of unjust structures. It is not long before most of their dolls are bare. This activity initiates the conversation about what Jesuit education is asking of them and whether they think these ideas are "just a little bit up in the air." Most students love the personal connection and quickly could name

the companies exploiting workers and the environment, but in reality, they were just not ready to give up their latest model iPhone, recent shipment from Amazon, meal-plan-acquired Starbucks, or their third pair of sneakers. They could, however, walk away from class committed to three actions to live "Arrupe Attitudes" for the rest of the semester.

Like our MU freshmen, many Jesuits all over the world began to raise questions when Arrupe first delivered his speech and wondered whether Jesuit schools could contribute to the apostolic purpose of the Society. In the fall of 1980, an international group of Jesuits and laymen gathered in Rome to discuss "the kinds of renewal that would enable Jesuit secondary education to continue to contribute to the creative and healing mission of the church, today and in the future" (ICAJE "Characteristics"). This meeting created the International Commission of the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE) to consider questions related to education and commissioned them to clarify ways in which the vision of Ignatius continues to make Jesuit education distinctive.

The ICAJE released 28 characteristics of Jesuit education in 1986. These five most directly shape our classroom: insisting on individual care and concern for each person; assisting in the formation of the individual within a community; being value-oriented; relying on the spirit of community; encouraging lifelong openness to growth; and focusing on education for justice. All 28 principles outlined in that document are essential for grounding the vision of Jesuit education that conceives of "a new type of person in a new kind of society, in which each individual has the opportunity to be fully human and each one accepts the responsibility of promotion of the human development of others" (ICAJE "Characteristics").

As a matter of course design, we integrated each of these elements into our teaching, our activities, and our assessments. Within the first three weeks of class, we would meet with every student, individually or in their friend groups. In order to better learn their names and faces we would pray through the roster. We would create discussion groups and integrate community-building activities into each class. Our choices of readings and assignments

were all oriented around helping students discern and articulate what their most important values were and how they would live and act those values daily. Central to the whole endeavor was the Jesuit ideal of education for justice.

Just as we embraced and tried to implement *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education,* the reception of this document was very enthusiastic, and educators in Jesuit schools were eager to understand a pedagogical method that could embody the 28 characteristics. This pursuit led to the Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA) developing another document in 1993, *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach.* Created around the educational philosophy that education is more than the transmission of information, but instead should be a transformative experience that affects students on a cognitive, emotional, and ethical level, the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP) has shaped the pedagogical approach for many Jesuit educators and enlivened the classroom as the locus of education for justice. This approach to education seeks to change how people look at themselves and others, social systems and structures, and the global community. The commission was even so bold as to proclaim: "If truly successful, Jesuit education results ultimately in a radical transformation not only in the way in which people habitually think and act, but of the way in which they live in the world, as [people] of competence, conscience and compassion, seeking the greater good (the magis)" (JSEA "Ignatian Pedagogy").

It is important to note that much of the work being done by the ICAJE and the JSEA focused on secondary education. This is not to say that universities were not adopting these characteristics or these methods, but in 2000 Fr. Peter Hans-Kolvenbach attended to the specific role of the Jesuit University in his address to Jesuit higher education. His talk, "The Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education," reminded the participants that Jesuit education seeks to "educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world" and form people "for and with others." He urged American colleges and universities that the promotion of justice should have a central place in Jesuit Higher education. In calling for a new educational standard, he said, "[t]omorrow's 'whole person'

cannot be whole without an educated awareness of society and culture with which to contribute socially, generously, in the real world." To this end, students "must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering, and engage it constructively." Students should learn to "perceive, think, judge, choose, and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed" (Kolvenbach).

This combination of oral and written documents defines the Jesuit mission and Jesuit pedagogy for our own curricular design as well as provides the guiding content to root students in the discussion of the formation that they should expect at Marquette. In one way these documents told us what to do, how to design a course, and how to engage students. The five components of the IPP address the question of how to put the foundational characteristics into practice in both the secondary and college classrooms. The middle three components--experience, reflection, and action--change the role of the teacher to one who accompanies the learner in growth and development (Duminuco 240). The additional two components, context and evaluation, are meant to envelop the other three by setting the stage for the lesson and crafting goals for the future.

For our classroom, attending to experience meant creating activities to accompany every reading that would allow students to engage in the real-life implications of the text. It also meant immersion into the art at the Haggerty Museum on campus and learning about biblical stories through the art, life, and experience of Marc Chagall. There were even classes held in the Church of the Gesu to practice Ignatian Imagination while encountering the stained glass windows depicting biblical stories. Built into all of the course experiences were opportunities for reflection. We were acutely aware that most of our students were not theology majors or minors, that many of them were not even Catholic, let alone Christian, and yet they were being required to take this course. We wanted our students to walk away being able to have a deep sense of the intersection of theology and their vocational fields. As this was a foundations course, we were International about making connections between what we were

reading and experiencing in theology class, leading students in reflecting on their commitment to justice, and introducing them to actions they could take to engage in the wider Marquette experience that reflect that commitment.

Creating a course attentive to experience, reflection, and action, made evaluation easy. Whether evaluation took the form of traditional exams, podcasts, oral exams, or digital scholarship projects, students were already thinking beyond the rigid boundaries of right and wrong content and were engaging reflectively about their growth and moral development. The context component of the IPP was really the place that we needed to develop engagement. "Personal care and concern for the individual" were hallmarks of Jesuit education and we were trying to be attentive to becoming as "conversant as possible with the life experience of the learner" (JSEA "Ignatian Pedagogy"). However, we were recognizing a chasm between the life experience of many of our students and the worlds of injustice with which we wanted to engage them, and when we were attentively listening to students, we recognized that they too were suffering and lost, hopeful and exploring.

Two years ago, the Jesuits doubled down on their commitment to justice through the creation of new Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAPs) which are to guide the Society through 2029. These preferences are meant to be a guide for all Jesuit Apostolates, and unlike the previous preferences initiated by Peter Hans Kolvenbach that called the Society to specific action, these preferences initiated by Father General Arturo Sosa are meant to orient Jesuit apostolates to a way of being (Sosa). These preferences were discerned in a consensus among Jesuits and their partners worldwide:

1: To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.

2: To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.

3: To accompany the young in the creation of a hope-filled future.

4: To collaborate in the care of our common home. (Sosa)

While Father Arturo Sosa, S.J. exhorts that these preferences are

to be taken as a whole to guide and shape all Jesuit Apostolates, it seems rather obvious that Jesuit Universities have a unique place in the third preference. In his introduction to the third Apostolic Preference, which outlines the dimensions of accompanying the young in creating a hope-filled future, Father Sosa points out that most young people in the world are poor, facing enormous challenges including economic instability, increased political violence, discrimination, and the deterioration of the environment (Sosa). Again, as we thought of how to incorporate these new preferences and to accompany our young people, we struggled with our collective privilege.

Few of Marquette University's students would be identified as "most young people." Statistically, most Marquette University students are not poor: yearly tuition with room and board at Marquette University is $59,478. The median family income of Marquette students is $148,000 ("Economic Diversity"). In 2019, although mass shootings hit a record high and violent hate crimes were on the rise, political violence was not yet a reality in modern America. Discrimination and systemic oppression, while embedded in the fabric of American identity, was not the personal experience of most of our majority middle-class white students from majority middle-class white communities ("Diversity and Inclusion") who had never experienced or empathized with discrimination due to racism, classism, or xenophobia. As we worked to create curricula for the Foundation in Theology courses for the 2020-2021 school year, we brainstormed ways in which to touch our students' hearts with direct experiences of poverty, economic instability, and political violence so that they too could empathize with the experiences of the least of these. Little did we know that the "deterioration of the environment" would create a worldwide context of experience and empathy.

The Role of the Educator, Today: The UAPs and the Freedom of Accompaniment

Since Spring 2020, economic instability has become a reality for Americans as state after state issued shutdown orders and mask mandates. Shockwaves rippled through the economy, pushing the

unemployment rate to near record highs affecting millions of people, especially the most vulnerable. Women, particularly women of color, were most forced to leave the labor market due to the pandemic. Furthermore, the risk of political violence and instability became a believable possibility after a mob incited by the former President of the United States overran the US Capitol in a violent insurrection on January 6, 2021. The injustices deeply embedded in our institutions were laid bare as thousands took to the streets in protest during the Summer of 2020 in response to killing after killing of unarmed Black persons by the police.

March 2020-2021, the year of the plague, changed our "young people" and changed our faculty though too. Together, we adapted to living and learning in a society and church in crisis, drawing from the richness of the Ignatian spiritual tradition and its commitment to practicing "contemplation in action" as well as constructing pedagogy that considers the whole person: body, mind, and spirit (McCoy). This moment allowed us to embrace the UAPs in new ways and changed our roles as educators.

Jesuit educator Sharon Korth describes the IPP's first step of *context* as crucial to understanding "the world of our students." She states, "Since human experience, always the starting point in Ignatian pedagogy, never occurs in a vacuum, we must know as much as we can about the actual context in which teaching and learning are taking place" (Korth 281). Students' social contexts affect the ways they move about the world, the ways others perceive them, the ways in which they participate (or do not) in certain communities, and even the ways that they understand their relationships with God. If theology is contextual—that is, if the study of God is influenced by the context of the person doing the studying, the seeking, the questioning—then it is necessary for each person to identify from where they speak and exist in their own communities. As Catholic theologian Elizabeth A. Johnson notes in her reflections on language about God, "Our language is like a finger pointing to the moon, not the moon itself" (Johnson 18). By asking students to name their contexts, we are drawing attention to the multitude of "fingers" pointing to the divine.

Before the pandemic, the way in which we applied the IPP's principle of context was to create classroom activities that elicited student reflection on their individual contexts when engaging a specific theological topic. A classroom activity such as the Social Identity Wheel Exercise, like the one offered by the University of Michigan's Inclusive Teaching site, can be a powerful way for students to explore their own contexts and reflect on how their socialization has placed them in privileged or marginalized groups throughout their lives ("Social Identity Wheel"). The exercise asks participants to name different components of their social identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, religious affiliation, ability, and first language. After naming these components, participants are then asked to identify which aspects of their identities affect the way others see them and which aspects affect the way that they see themselves. When students share these contextual reflections with others, they can see how their experiences moving about the world differ based on their identities in both dominant and marginalized groups.

Especially in a theology classroom, where abstract ideas about religion and spirituality tend to dominate, these exercises have the power to create spaces for students to share the aspects of their identities that shape how they see the world (or contribute to their own blind spots) and reflect on how they enter a classroom with the "totality of their lives" (JSEA "Ignatian Pedagogy"). When giving students the option to share their own stories of vulnerability with others, their hearts can be touched even before a textbook is cracked open. We have used these social identity exercises before introducing an oft-forgotten biblical character, or when telling stories of how holy men and women like St. Ignatius, Dorothy Day, or Martin Luther King, Jr. were influenced by their own contexts. These exercises can also point out aspects of a student's privilege, especially when a white student may reflect on *why* race is an aspect of their social identity that they rarely think about. Ultimately, reflection on context centers both the learner and educator as active participants in the narratives that we create about others and ourselves. As writer and speaker Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie articulated in her TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story," the stories we tell matter, and

there is a danger in only telling one story from only one perspective and life experience (Adichie).

During previous semesters pre-pandemic, this exercise had proven to be a useful pedagogical tool to help students share their context and engage them in conversations about theology and race, gender, and social justice, all rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. This last year, however, offered us a new way to listen to students and to not only think about content that we create to engage students in Jesuit formation on these topics, but to think about how to accompany students on their journeys. For our students, as for most students, the 2020-2021 school year was experienced mostly through a computer screen or masked in socially distanced classrooms where attendance numbers ebbed and flowed in response to the daily COVID rate. The world context around our students screamed injustice. While most of our students had the opportunity to be in school in some way, they recognized they lived in a city where many students of all ages could not physically attend school or lacked the technology and resources to engage remotely. Many of our students participated remotely for the entire school year and experienced the consequences of the virus in their local communities. They watched as Black and indigenous people of color (BIPOC) communities became disproportionately affected by the virus and saw the evidence of people losing their jobs as food pantry lines grew and unemployment rates skyrocketed. Our students watched in horror as police officers killed more Black men and women, and they watched streets fill with protestors. They then watched civil unrest as the country chose sides on everything from race to wearing masks.

In the past when we engaged in this activity, students respectfully shared their personal contexts and were then able to better think about how context informed theology, but in this unique environment, talking about, listening to, and sharing student contexts allowed us to truly listen to one another. Instead of using this exercise to engage theological characters and ideas, the Social Identity Wheel allowed us to sit with students in their individual contexts and in the obviously shared context of a pandemic and ask theological questions. In this most unique context, we had the opportunity

to accompany students, to sit with them in their disorientation, their pain, their isolation, and their uncertainty. We could ask questions about what they wanted from the future and what they hoped for. We could "do" theology and think about, pray about, and dream about creating a hope-filled future.

At the end of the semester, one of our assessment tools is an oral exam. It was during one of these sessions that we recognized that the UAP's preference of accompaniment freed us to listen to our students in a way that we could do theology at the margins and accompany them in a new way of being. During the oral exam we allow students to draw questions connected to material they have encountered in class and theologically reflect on the way it intersects contemporary context. The question Maria (pseudonym) drew was, "How would you describe the concept of "The Crucified God of Compassion" (from Political Theology) to a community affected by COVID-19?" Immediately Maria's nerves turned into confidence, and with the passion of a preacher she began proclaiming, "God does not want you to suffer. God is hurting when you are hurting. You are NEVER alone. Jesus felt abandoned too, and through the cross God chooses to suffer with you...because of LOVE. God is with you in your pain." She continued, "As a Latina living in Milwaukee, my community has suffered a lot, and I have known a lot of people who have died from COVID. Learning about this [concept] really helped me understand that God doesn't want us to suffer like this."

Through this interaction, our hearts were touched by listening to her direct experience as a Latina living and learning through a pandemic that has disproportionately affected communities of color in Milwaukee. As educators we often spend our time thinking about ways to *provide* direct experiences to our students, but through Maria's story we were given the opportunity to be touched by *her* direct experience and the way that she was able to relate that experience to the material learned in class. This pandemic year has challenged us to change the way that we interact with students, with compassion reigning first and foremost, since we do not know what our students are carrying with them to our classrooms.

As our masks come off and we think about returning to the classroom next fall, our vocations as educators have been enlivened and humbled. What we have come to know is that education at a Jesuit University in the 21st century should be about student formation. As we educate students, we must listen to them as *locus theologicus* and invite them into a formational experience that allows them to flourish in the service of justice. It is this formation that provides the context within which our students' education realizes its deeper purpose and true meaning.

Works Cited

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "The Danger of a Single Story." *TEDGlobal 2009*, uploaded July 2009, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story. Video.

Arrupe, Pedro. "Men for Others." Address to the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni in Europe, 31 July 1973, Valencia, Spain. "Diversity and Inclusion Dashboards: Composition." Institutional Research and Analysis, Marquette University, September 2020, www.marquette.edu/institutional-research-analysis/interactive-reports/composition-dash.php.

Duminuco, Vincent. *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum of 1599:400th Anniversary Perspectives.* Fordham University Press, 2000. "Economic Diversity and Student Outcomes at Marquette University." NYTimes.com, 2017, www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/marquette-university.

International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE). "The Characteristics of Jesuit Education." Rome, 1986. *Jesuit Institute,* jesuitinstitute.org/Pages/CharacteristicsJesuitEducation.htm.

Jesuit Secondary Education Association (JSEA). "Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach." Rome, 1993. *Jesuit Institute,* jesuitinstitute.org/Pages/IgnatianPedagogy.htm.

Johnson, Elizabeth A. *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God.* Continuum, 2011.

Kolvenbach, Peter-Hans. "The Service of Faith and the Promo-

tion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education." Address to the Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education Conference, October 2000, Santa Clara University, California.

Korth, Sharon J. "Precis of *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach." A Jesuit Education Reader,* edited by George W. Traub, S.J., Loyola Press, 2008, pp. 280-284.

McCoy, Marina Berzins. "Contemplation in Action." *Ignatian Spirituality.com*, www.ignatianspirituality.com/contemplation-in-action/.

"Social Identity Wheel." University of Michigan Inclusive Teaching, sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/social-identity-wheel/.

Sosa, Arturo. "Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus 2019-2029." Rome, 19 February 2019.

THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AMPLIFIED

INFORMATION ACCESS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Leatha Miles-Edmonson
Raynor Memorial Libraries

F r. Michael Maher, a Jesuit and historian, upon learning that I was a librarian, expressed that he views the academic library and chapel as the wings by which our institution soars. Below is an excerpt from a presentation he offered to librarians at a Jesuit university:

For me, there are two fundamental or "iconic" buildings in a Jesuit school, the library, and the chapel; they are like two wings in which we fly towards God and move effectively towards the betterment of the human community. Of course, the library and the chapel are symbols of that effort which takes place in several locations of campus. It would be a grave error to presume that the pursuit of the spiritual and the intellectual occur in only two locations, but these two buildings stand as a type of road signal for how we are best to

proceed, they are for us two icons that both contain and point to greater realities. (Maher 2)

The COVID-19 pandemic threatened to clip one of those wings, but librarians and library staff were able to pivot to meet the needs of community members. As a Research and Instructional Services Librarian, my primary concern was that the pandemic would exacerbate existing barriers and create new barriers to access information for faculty, students, and staff. When the entire state shut down, the campus library, which is considered an essential service, was one of the last public buildings on campus to close.

As a mid-career librarian, I provide reflections here about how college students encounter barriers to using the library fully. I was able to witness the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the need for more equitable access to library materials. Using my professional skills and observations led me to a conclusion: the digital divide continues to disadvantage students who experience the greatest barriers to accessing information. In short, I saw the digital divide exacerbated at its intersections with information privilege and information literacy. Information literacy is "the ability to locate, evaluate, and...use information [effectively]. [It] require[s] that schools and colleges appreciate and integrate the concept of information literacy into their learning programs and that they play a leadership role in equipping individuals and institutions to take advantage of the opportunities inherent within the information society" (American Library Association).

Barriers to Information Literacy in the Wake of the Digital Divide

Since 2006, I have honed my awareness of information-seeking and information-discovery behaviors of college students through direct interactions and observations. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant changes to those information-seeking behaviors as the digital divide has grown. My position allows me to observe and serve multidisciplinary college students at various

stages in their college careers, from undergraduate to doctoral levels. The needs of all college students may be similar at times but vary greatly depending on the stage of their academic journey. After all, college students not only want information access, but their success and achievement require it. As college students across the world were forced to transition to remote learning quickly in 2020, supporters of online learners, including librarians and libraries, felt unbelievable pressure to provide access to library and information resources remotely. "Despite increased access to online collections, library resource use was disrupted. No matter how many services can be offered online, plenty of students and faculty still use traditional items such as print books" (Sara Connell et al 5). The pandemic severed students' physical access to the library and in-person services. It also strained college students' access to print and online information resources.

The gap between people who have access to technologies and those who do not is only one aspect of the nuanced and complex "digital divide." The digital divide "identifies a new landscape of inequity. People who do not have access to ICTs [Information and Computer Technologies] early in life or with frequency are at a disadvantage. They will have limited access to information, including media reports, medical information, and opportunities to learn, as well as limited access to current methods of communication" (Kady and Vadeboncoeur). Prior to the pandemic, academic libraries provided access to ICTs. Because ICTs are fully integrated into academia, libraries not only provide information resources but the tools to access those resources. During the pandemic, the library could not offer access to ICTs until the campus reopened. The library also provided access to a skilled set of professionals to aid library patrons in person and remotely. Helping patrons in person was commonplace, but the pandemic made remote assistance the new normal. It was difficult to translate in-person services to remote services. Remotely serving our patrons created challenges because there was a learning curve for everyone, including issues with bandwidth and other unexpected technical problems.

It is important to note that access to technology does not mean that students possess the skills to use technology. Moreover, if students' access to technology is limited, they could also be lacking the development of necessary computer literacies to use technology effectively. For example, there were instances where the solution to an information access issue was simply to clear the cache, which was a new consideration for some college students. It is important not to assume that students possess basic knowledge of common software like Microsoft Office and their own personal hardware.

Another technical complication is that libraries can sometimes be beholden to vendors and vendor platforms such as EBSCO, ProQuest, OVID and many others, which are purchased to give students access to research resources, primarily electronic resources. Library databases are designed to connect users to information, but they do not function intuitively. Librarians with subject specialties often know the databases in their subject areas, communicate regularly with vendors, and nurture advanced research skills. We know that databases do not operate like Google, and we observe many college students attempt Google-like search strategies that simply do not work well.

Having access to technologies and the ability to use them to find useful information is key for college students' success. In the era of fake news and self-proclaimed experts, students often do not know how to find, evaluate, analyze, or synthesize information. Library and information professionals can customize information literacy and library instruction sessions to fit the needs of different campus departments, and because of this, it is even more important to teach information literacy skills inside and outside college classrooms. It is important for students to gain information literacy skills alongside subject knowledge in the classroom. Partnerships to teach information literacy skills put our students at an advantage. During the swift shift to online learning, some teaching faculty needed to transition courses to an online format. I wondered if faculty had considered how a student might access resources or if they consulted librarians to determine library availability.

Access to Information and Information Privilege in a Pandemic

A significant percentage of my professional responsibilities is to provide research support through staffing the information desk, offering consultations/appointments, information literacy instruction, and library instruction. I think it important to mention the distinction between information literacy and library instruction. Information literacy instruction teaches highly transferable skills, like how to locate, evaluate, and use information resources, while library instruction teaches how to find and access information through a specific library. Many academic libraries ground information literacy instruction in the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) information literacy framework, which offers six overarching frames: Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, Information Creation as a Process, Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry, Scholarship as Conversation, and Searching as Strategic Exploration (ACRL). It is difficult to encompass the full framework in a single instruction session, but it is often the time allotted to librarians who are invited into classes by teaching faculty. Information literacy instruction is an underutilized high-impact practice. During the pandemic, there were fewer library instruction sessions overall. In-person offerings of library sessions and bringing students into the building integrate the library into the student educational experience. During the pandemic, librarians could not invite students into library classrooms, so librarians went to the designated classrooms throughout campus for in-person courses while other sessions were offered online both synchronously and asynchronously. In addition to in-person and online sessions, librarians also created other online learning tools like electronic library guides (LibGuides), videos, and other digital learning objects.

Offering a plethora of research tools is how libraries reach a variety of college students. However, not all libraries are alike. Having worked at a small private college, then a medium-sized state university and now a medium-sized private university, I recognize how much our collection differs from my previous institutions. I consider our university to be among the information

privileged. We are privileged because we can acquire resources that much of the public cannot access for free. The information privilege to which I am referring is reserved for those who are affiliated with this institution, affiliated with a different educational institution, or privileged enough to buy resources. According to Char Booth:

> The concept of *information privilege* situates information literacy in a sociocultural context of justice and access. *Information* as the media and messages that underlie individual and collective awareness and knowledge building; *privilege* as the advantages, opportunities, rights, and affordances granted by status and positionality via class, race, gender, culture, sexuality, occupation, institutional affiliation, and political perspective. (Booth)

College attendance provides status and places our students at a position of privilege. College students may not have been aware of the extent of information privilege prior to being physically cut off from campus libraries. The effects of being cut off from the physical library meant that the work of library staff was required to somehow bridge the gap.

Even after campus closed, the library still had essential service providers in the library building to aid students in getting access to resources. The interlibrary loan department was present to fulfill growing numbers of requests. This feat was not small, especially when staffing was reduced, and social distancing was required. The research and instructional services department faculty were able to staff the information desk and provide other research and instruction remotely but there is no substitute for face-to-face interactions. Other library departments that were tethered to the building were loaned library laptops, which would have been used by students under normal conditions, to work remotely. The library Information Technology department supported our transition to remote settings

and provided remote access to sources that required usage on campus.

While working remotely, I celebrated when the information desk telephone rang to our departmental laptops. For us, having our information desk and desk phones connected to our laptops was one less barrier. I knew of other institutions that could not easily make that transition and where telephone numbers changed or staff were unreachable via phone during normal business hours. Call forwarding, cellphones, and Google numbers were used by some of my counterparts at other libraries. The library itself is divided into several departments, and each had its role in supporting the campus community during the pandemic. Our resource management department paused accepting resource deliveries in person, but still fulfilled streaming video, electronic book, and other electronic resource requests; they also arranged deliveries to faculty of print materials. Like many libraries, we saw the demand for electronic resources rise, and that demand is not going away. The Research and Instructional services librarians, like me, offered research consultations and continued to teach information literacy and library instruction sessions via telephone, email, and video conferencing services. We also created new tools to reach students with the support of our departmental instructional designer. So much of the work that libraries and librarians do in person was halted as we pivoted to find creative solutions to serve our students remotely. I did not stop thinking about our students, especially our international and first-generation college students, because those student groups can be overlooked. Also, my liaison duties call me to work with international and first-generation college students in addition to my research and subject area responsibilities.

Library Services to International Students During a Pandemic

Prior to the pandemic, my approach to serving international students was to walk alongside them, but the pandemic strained that by forcing us into different time zones with sometimes an ocean between. I regularly served new and current international students through library tours and library instruction. In many cases,

international students will face barriers that provincial students do not face. It is possible that access to libraries or various electronic resources was not equal to what they know their region. Navigating library resources in a second, third, or even fourth language, as well as a new culture, creates barriers. Library databases often do not use obvious keywords and terms to search effectively, which can create problems for all library patrons but especially our international students. The library building itself acts as a safe gathering place. It allows our international students to study and interact across disciplines; it is another place where they can meet with other students from their home regions without expectations.

For a time during the pandemic, the library was closed along with most of the campus. "COVID-19 has had a broad impact on higher education's international student populations" (Couture et al 43). Many of the international students who could not return to their home countries immediately needed safe locations to gather. Other international students were forced to return to their home countries, which made synchronous communication difficult, and it also meant that I could not offer my usual tours. I met with international students during non-business hours and had regular email research consultations with them, since in-person library instruction sessions came to a full stop, and asynchronous services have their limitations. That meant that I needed to serve students differently and that sending sample searches to students became a necessary practice. I recall a research consultation with an international student as it was one of the few interactions that were synchronous. During our consultation, I discovered that the student did not understand my previous email correspondence and that our meeting was simply to understand how to use the resources I emailed previously. I realized I had given far too many resources, hoping that the student would have options, but this only created confusion and overwhelmed them. Providing students with more resources than what was needed created an unnecessary barrier.

Belonging and First-Generation Students: Barriers to Access During a Pandemic

First-generation students also use the library as a safe space

where they feel a sense of belonging. One study found that, "[First-generation students] generally expressed comfort using library spaces and asking for assistance. Their sense of the library as a safe, nonjudgmental space contributed directly to their ability to use library resources and spaces to their full advantage" (Couture et al 141). The library can also be a hostile place though if first-generation students are struggling with integration into the campus. Prior to the pandemic, I was able to reach many first-generation college students through academic support programs on campus as they would invite me in to provide in-person overviews of library resources. First-generation students were also encouraged to join me on library tours and to meet with librarians. Navigating college can be complicated for first generation students as they sometimes experience culture shock. It is especially important that first-gen students develop or hone information literacy skills alongside building and library collection orientation as it improves student success and retention. Integrating first-gen students into the campus can often continue in the library as it seeks to be a place for everyone.

First-gen students are not easily identifiable even with institutional departments and programs that target them. Previously, I was able to glean who needed additional help navigating the library. When physically staffing the information desk, I often encounter users during their first visit to the campus library, which could also be their first college experience. Online interactions rarely provided such insight. In-person interactions provided necessary library exposure as the library itself is designed to be a low-stress and welcoming space for all. The nature of the pandemic made the library a high-risk space that forced friendly faces to be hidden behind masks and Plexiglas. This feeling is not what we want our institution to have, but it was necessary to keep people safe. The library also had to decrease seating and close group gathering and study spaces that were often used by our first-generation students. Physical barriers for first generation students are undeniably one way that we lose connections, and when we lose connections, we risk the co-creation of a sense of belonging.

Eliminating Barriers in Uncertain Times

In a new place, a new country, a new kind of institution, or a new campus post-pandemic, a campus library should remain a low-stress and supportive environment that supports the student scholar journey at any stage. Because libraries are an integral part of the landscape of campuses, it is only natural that we remain a strong force. This is how we soar:

- Create environments that meet the need of many learners by partnering with the library.
- Encourage our students to engage with the library.
- Partner with librarians when selecting resources so that we can ensure equitable access to appropriate resources.
- Nurture libraries as they strive to be diverse and inclusive learning environments.
- Realize that anytime we serve marginalized student groups is when we get takeoff.
- Incorporate Ignatian values and pedagogical practices in library and campus offerings.

Works Cited

Booth, Char. "On Information Privilege." *Info-Mational*, 1 Dec. 2014, infomational.com/2014/12/01/on-information-privilege.

Connell, Sara, et al. "The Impact of COVID-19 on the Use of Academic Library Resources." *Information Technology & Libraries*, vol. 40, no. 2, June 2021, pp. 1–20.

Couture, Juliann, et al. "'We're Gonna Figure This Out': First-Generation Students and Academic Libraries." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2021, pp. 127–147.

"Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education." *Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)*, www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework.

Kady, Hitaf R., and Jennifer A. Vadeboncoeur. "Digital Divide." *Salem Press Encyclopedia*, 2019.

Maher, Michael. "The Library at Jesuit School." Presented to Librarians at Gonzaga University. Received 13 May 2021.

Mattson, Mark, et al. "International Students and COVID-19: The Initial Response from the Penn State Libraries." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, vol. 21, no. 1, Jan. 2021, pp. 37–46.

"Presidential Committee on Information Literacy: Final Report." *Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL)*, 8 Jan. 1989, www.ala.org/acrl/publications/whitepapers/presidential.

STOP, IN THE NAME OF LOVE

WHY WE NEED SILENCE, PRAYER, AND CONTEMPLATION

Danielle Nussberger
Department of Theology

The coronavirus pandemic has disclosed and heightened racial injustice and socio-economic disparities. A host of questions emerge from these pandemic realities. When people of color are violently assaulted and killed before our eyes, what can we do to stop it? Who are responsible for laws and institutions that disregard the common good? When some have access to healthcare and others do not, how do we discern human needs and rights? Are our rights also duties we have toward others? If we are yearning for a day when the most vulnerable are not suffering unrelentingly and when loss and death are undone by hope and regeneration, to what or whom do these desires point? Students want to ask and answer these questions. My vocation as a theology professor is to nurture the most fertile environment for squarely addressing these challenges.

As they raise these questions of meaning and value, students begin to appreciate that such issues are at once philosophical and practical, universal and personal, intellectual and spiritual. They will unreservedly invest themselves in the process of inquiry when they

can trust they have an invaluable role to play in it and they have space to investigate what they believe without being critiqued or misunderstood. Deep down, they are not satisfied with the popular view that finding happiness at work, at home, and in the larger society requires attainment of perfect skill and the wealth that attends it. In our classroom, we learn that living well necessitates wisdom and compassion, because our choices and actions have consequences that are ultimately matters of life and death. Students grasp this and want to draw upon and develop their innate wisdom. For instance, when an engineering major joins his ancestors in meditating upon nature's beauty, he creatively considers how the company for whom he is interning could be more ecologically conscious about their disposal of waste so as not to further damage our precious earth.

This student demonstrates how growth in wisdom occurs when we tend to the mind, body, and spirit and their inherent unity. Fostering holistic personal integration for the cultivation of wisdom is central to my theology classes. Studying Christian beliefs about the triune God and salvation in Christ must be coupled with performing spiritual exercises (to borrow Ignatius of Loyola's phrase) and the patterns of living that flow from them. After all, we are at a Catholic, Jesuit institution that traces its heritage through Ignatius back to Jesus of Nazareth, a premiere wisdom teacher who treated others as whole persons by healing their bodies, minds, and spirits and who exhorted his followers to go and do likewise (Bourgeault). Such wisdom also forms the basis for the Christian contemplative path and similar pathways of other indigenous and world religions. Theology eludes abstraction when it is concretely experienced through contemplative practices and the caring commitment to the common good that they engender. This embodied and impassioned theology has the stunning power to influence students' lives long after the semester ends.

I know this to be true, because I have seen it happen while teaching courses on the relationship between contemplation and action through an interreligious lens. The undergraduates with whom I work—no matter their backgrounds or religious views—

take seriously the following interfaith conviction about the interrelated significance of the Divine, the human, and the cosmos. Among the disparate names religious communities give to the Divine or the transcendent, one name echoes across the traditions, and that name is Love. The natural world is an expression of this love, and this love dwells within the silence of the human heart.

When we act with love, we have taken the time to listen to the voice of compassion abiding in us. As Catherine of Siena (1347-1380) prayed, "And what is my nature, boundless love? It is fire, because you are nothing but a fire of love. And you have given humankind a share in this nature, for by the fire of love you created us" (69). That we might commune with the fire of love residing in us, the Sufi mystic, Rumi (1207-1273) exhorts us, "Let silence be the art you practice" (Barks 121-122). It is a privilege for me to stop, in the name of love, with my students to find ourselves anew in the sacred space of contemplative silence. Discovering the love that undergirds our being and our doing, we seek innovative interventions to address the desperate needs of our hungry and wounded world.

Before exploring various ways of entering the silence of the heart, I ask the students to describe their present life experiences as undergraduates. The overwhelming majority of them speak of living in a frenzied world full of expectations and responsibilities. One of the external pressures they are hearing from others is that they need to keep moving so they can rise to the top. Examining more carefully the predominant demands they feel are placed upon them (for example, to be the best no matter what the cost), they identify troubling dichotomies that follow from these ultimatums, such as inclusion/exclusion, success/failure, and winning/losing. It becomes clear that these are not simply individual expectations and outcomes. They have social consequences. Some people are in; some are out. Some people win; some people lose. There is a temptation to believe this is how the world works and that we are bound by this way of proceeding.

Feminist theologian Constance Fitzgerald recognizes such an

occasion of feeling trapped within the confines of rigid, worldly assumptions as an "impasse." She writes:

> Today, instead of realizing that the impasse provides a challenge and concrete focus for prayer and drives us to contemplation, we give in to a passive sense of inevitability, and imagination dies. We do not really believe that if we surrender these situations of world impasse to contemplative prayer that new solutions, new visions of peace and equality, will emerge in our world. We dare not believe that a creative revisioning of our world is possible. Everything is just too complex, too beyond our reach. Yet it is only in the process of bringing the impasse to prayer, to the perspective of the God who loves us, that our society will be freed, healed, changed, brought to paradoxical new visions, and freed for nonviolent, selfless, liberating action, freed, therefore, for community on this planet earth. Death is involved here—a dying in order to see how to be and to act on behalf of God in the world. (32)

For Fitzgerald, "…the impasse provides a challenge and concrete focus for prayer and drives us to contemplation," because we have reached a dead end in which we intuitively grasp that some people being included while others are excluded is unacceptable. We are motivated to enter the silence of contemplation that the Jesuit theologian and social justice activist, Walter Burghardt, defines as "a long, loving look at the real" (14-18). When we do this, we will find life-giving alternatives to patterns of harmful exclusion and prejudice. To pray, to contemplate, is to take a long, loving look within ourselves and around ourselves to find the heart's core that sustains us. This movement is akin to Buddhism's mindfulness tradition that Thich Nhat Hanh summarizes by quoting Doc The's *The Essential Discipline for Daily Use*, "Just awakened, I hope that every person will attain great awareness and see in complete clarity" (6). This clear sight is attained through meditation practices that focus on the

present moment, "We must be conscious of each breath, each moment, every thought and feeling, anything which has any relation to ourselves" (8).

So that the students might begin to develop such attentiveness, I help them to select a contemplative practice that works for them. For some, it is going to mass on Tuesday nights at the Joan of Arc Chapel on campus, sitting for Eucharistic adoration, chanting the psalms, or singing worship music. For others, it is daily journaling, praying the Ignatian Examen (a consideration of one's day with gratitude and hope), meditating, taking walks in nature, or practicing yoga. Each of these typifies Burghardt's sense of contemplation in different ways. Along with engaging in their chosen forms of prayer, the students must explain how their practices uniquely enable them to take a long, loving look at the real. For example, those who have practiced yoga discover that the word yoga means to join, to yoke, or to unite. They learn how yoga facilitates the organic union between their minds and bodies, between human beings and nature, and between human beings and each other (Basavaraddi). Similarly, those who go for meditative walks in nature observe the interconnectedness between all living beings and their habitats, as well as an overwhelming inner sense of peace and communion with the Divine. Thich Nhat Hanh explains, "It is autumn here and the golden leaves falling one by one are truly wonderful. Taking a 10-minute walk in the woods, watching my breath and maintaining mindfulness, I feel refreshed and restored. Like that, I can really enter into a communion with each leaf" (16). Others who attend Christian liturgy or sit in Eucharistic adoration, gaze upon the centrality of Jesus in their faith tradition, the one who unites all things to himself (Ephesians 1.10) and who exemplifies an unbounded compassion that embraces the world on the Cross and recreates it through the power of the Holy Spirit.

All these examples illustrate that love and communion are the foundation of the world and the mainspring of the human heart. Famed cultural historian Thomas Berry elucidates how communion characterizes the cosmos:

> For every reality of the universe is intimately present to every other reality of the universe and finds its fulfillment in mutual presence. The entire evolutionary process depends on communion. Without this fulfillment that each being finds in beings outside itself, nothing would ever happen in the entire world. There would be no elements, no molecules, no life, no consciousness. (106)

This reality of love and communion exposes the false dichotomies of inclusion/exclusion, winners/losers, etc. that advance the divisions and prejudices causing the related impasses we face, including racial injustices, socio-economic and health inequities, political discord, and ecological degradation. Fitzgerald suggests we escape impasse by going inward to rediscover the love within that is united to the love without. In Christianity, this love is the Holy Spirit, the divine presence indwelling the human soul and the cosmos as the eternal source of justice and peace.

Fitzgerald's insights on impasse and its overcoming through contemplation are inspired by John of the Cross's (1542-1591) mystical poetry. His "Songs of the Soul in Rapture at Having Arrived at the Height of Perfection" sings of the love affair between the human person and God that takes place when the person savors the silent moments as opportunities to see the Holy Spirit at work within oneself. Because the silence is often disorienting and uncomfortable at first, John equates it with darkness, a darkness that is paradoxically filled with the light and fire of love. John writes:

> On a dark night
> When Love burned bright
> Consuming all my care,
> While my house slept,
> Unseen, I crept
> Along the secret stair.
>
> O blessed chance!

No human glance
My secret steps detected.
While my house slept,
I silent crept
In shadow well protected.

That blessed night
Concealed from sight,
Unseeing did I go,
No light to guide
But that inside
My eager heart aglow.

A guide as bright
As noonday light,
Which brought me where he dwelt,
Where none but he
Could wait for me
And make his presence felt. (19)

This journey inward—taken by my students through various means such as Christian liturgy, Eucharistic adoration, yoga, and meditative walks in nature—is simultaneously a journey outward that allows for an encounter and a dialogue with the God of love. John of the Cross describes this meeting between the Divine and the human:

Sweeter than night
Than morning light,
For Love did loving meet,
I knew him well,
And we could dwell
In ecstasy complete. (21)

The contemplative is transfigured or reborn into the love that

embraces her, and she recognizes the Divine as a love that both fills her and surrounds her.

John's motif of the darkness of night reminds us that this dual journey is not easy, because our long, loving look at the real is continuously impeded by the flooding of the mind with idols of power, achievement, recognition, and control. We are weighed down by worries, plans, and tasks that distract us from being present to the moment, exactly as it is, with its mixture of beauty, suffering, pain, and joy. It takes consistent repetition of prayer and contemplative practices to relinquish previous habits so that we let go of false modes of self-definition, asking, "Who am I really?" Mindful self-questioning makes way for communal interrogations of identity that are equally revolutionary, as we realize that the false gods of systems and institutions that we thought were inevitable, must come crashing down. Rhonda V. Magee expertly demonstrates this in her 2019 book, *The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness*, wherein she accompanies her readers in "a long, loving look at racism in the places called home now":

> It takes a special kind of effort for each of us to see more of what we have been trained not to see. But for those of us with the will to see and to pause with what we see long enough to understand, there will be much to support our waking up and understanding more deeply. Wherever we are, we can observe and better understand the structures of systemic racism in our own lives. (128)

Magee's integration of two indispensable modes of perception—social scientific research and mindfulness practices—reinforces for students how religious and scientific knowledge work together to foster their identity formation and further their maturation throughout adulthood.

After only a semester-long engagement with routine contempla-

tive practices, students begin to set aside the versions of themselves and others that the wounded and frenzied world endorses. Participating in the passionate love story that John of the Cross memorializes, they are gradually stripped of the personal and societal biases, prejudices, and presuppositions that prioritize estrangement over communion. They rejoice at having arrived at a blinding truth that generates tears over the world's brokenness caused by conflict and alienation. Their experiences of stopping in the name of love show them something profoundly life-altering—that they are dependent upon the Divine and interdependent with one another. This apprehension is comparable to French philosopher Simone Weil's (1909-1943) argument that those who heighten their awareness of the Divine simultaneously strengthen their relationships with and moral responsibility for other human beings because human equality is rooted in their shared bond with transcendent reality:

> The only thing that is identical in all people is the presence of a link with the reality outside the world… Anyone whose attention and love are really directed towards the reality outside the world recognizes that she is bound, both in public and private life, by the single and permanent obligation to remedy, according to her responsibilities and to the extent of her power, all the privations of soul and body which are liable to destroy or damage the earthly life of any human being whatsoever. (PBS)

Analyzing the phenomenon of interdependence, students are confronted with their vulnerability that causes them to reach outside themselves in cooperation with others to support mutual well-being.

Agreeing with prominent social work researcher, Brené Brown, the undergraduates admit that though vulnerability is frightening, it is a means to new life by imagining the world as it could be. They are emboldened by her words:

> This is what I have found. To let ourselves be seen, deeply seen, vulnerably seen; to love with our whole hearts even though there's no guarantee—and that's really hard, and I can tell you as a parent that's excruciatingly difficult—to practice gratitude and joy in those moments of terror, when we're wondering, "Can I love you this much? Can I believe in this, this passionately? Can I be this fierce about this?" just to be able to stop and instead of catastrophizing what might happen, to say, "I'm just so grateful." To feel this vulnerable, means I'm alive. (TED)

In their gratitude for being alive, the students begin to access their deepest yearning that supersedes all others, the longing to love and be loved. In the silence, this desire is met by the Holy Spirit's embrace, and we are transformed by absolute love. Learning with my students as we practice contemplation individually and communally, we have arrived at a shared definition of prayer. Prayer is openness to vulnerability, awareness and shattering of misconceptions, a revisioning of the world in light of divine intervention through the Holy Spirit, and a participation in its recreation. This is what it means to stop in the name of love.

At the end of our time together, the undergraduates complete a final project with their concluding observations about their prayer and meditation experiences. Some submit a journal they had been keeping throughout the semester. Others create a visual artwork accompanied by a written explanation. Some write short stories, poetry, or musical compositions, while others use a movie, play, story, poem, or song written by someone else that illuminates their accompanying thoughts. The students' recourse to painting, film, song, poetry, and prose is consistent with the kindred forms of spiritual reflection they have encountered throughout the term. Visual and oral art and literature are interwoven strands connecting the mind, body, and spirit, evoking the feelings, sounds, and sights that school us in the associated art of holistic integration within and between persons. Suddenly the pain and exuberance that cannot be

adequately uttered or ever quantified have a means of being poured out, seen, and heard, to be witnessed and respected. For our minds to be ignited by truth and our wills to be moved to action, we need our bodies to be treated with tenderness and our spirits to be visited with loving-kindness and hope. Growth in wisdom toward wholeness is an art that requires the arts to fully bloom.

I remember one occasion when I too journaled about our shared experiences as the semester ended, while listening to the song "Here I Am" by Emmylou Harris:

> I am standing by the river
> I will be standing here forever
> Though you're on the other side
> My face you still can see
> Why won't you look at me
> Here I am
>
> I am searching through the canyon
> It is your name that I am calling
> Though you're so far away
> I know you hear by plea
> Why won't you answer me
> Here I am
>
> I am in the blood of your heart
> the breath of your lung
> Why do you run for cover
> You are from the dirt of the earth
> And the kiss of my mouth
> I have always been your lover
> Here I am
>
> I am the promise never broken
> And my arms are ever open
> In this harbor calm and still
> I will wait until

Until you come to me
Here I am

In its lines, we can hear Divine Love calling out to us when we stop and listen. For me, this song represents my students' long, loving looks at the real that bring them close to a God they understand as personal, intimate, desirous of their love, thirsting for them to love themselves and others because they are all enlivened by the divine breath and God's kiss of extravagant compassion. They have learned to imagine what the world would look like if everyone felt the bond of shared breath, blood, and divine touch with people of each ethnicity, culture, race, socioeconomic status, religion, gender, and sexual orientation. They have envisaged what their undergraduate experience would be like if this were the case. They have asked themselves what they might do in their immediate sphere of influence to bring this about. What might they do in the classroom to advocate for this vision? How might they interact with others in their housing situations, in extracurricular activities, in their volunteer opportunities, in their visits with family and friends, and in their faith communities to champion their dreams of the future as it could be? Beyond college, what might they do in their professional careers to instantiate their hopes in the workplace?

My persistent aim is that my students leave my classes asking these kinds of lifelong questions. Now, more than ever, in a world grappling with the pandemic and the multiple injustices and inequalities that it has intensified, it is crucial that our study of theology assists them in affirming their inherent dignity, declaring their identity as beloved, and laying claim to their agency for change in their personal, communal, and professional lives. Many whom I have previously taught, have contacted me to tell me they have continued their contemplative practice and have been sustained by it during this time of crisis. May we never cease to stop in the name of the love that reinvigorates us, reconciles us to ourselves and to one another, reunites us with those we have lost or forgotten, reminds us that we all share the same blood and breath, and rejoices in our diversity that builds authentic communion.

Works Cited

Barks, Coleman. *Rumi: Bridge to the Soul: Journeys into the Music and Silence of the Heart*. Kindle ed., HarperCollins, 2007.

Basavaraddi, Ishwar V. "Yoga: Its Origin, History and Development." Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Web. 2015. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

Berry, Thomas. *The Dream of the Earth*. Sierra Club Books pbk. ed., Sierra Club Books, 1990.

Bourgeault, Cynthia. *The Wisdom Jesus: Transforming Heart and Mind—A New Perspective on Christ and His Message*. Kindle ed., Shambhala, 2011.

Brown, Brené. "Power of Vulnerability." *YouTube*, Uploaded by TED. Web. 2011. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

Burghardt, Walter J. "Contemplation: A Long Loving Look at the Real." *Church*, vol. 5, Winter 1989, pp. 14–18.

Catherine, of Siena, Saint, and Mary O'Driscoll. *Catherine of Siena-- Passion for the Truth, Compassion for Humanity: Selected Spiritual Writings*. New City Press, 1993.

FitzGerald, Constance. "Impasse and Dark Night." *Living with Apocalypse: Spiritual Resources for Social Comparison*, 1984.

Harris, Emmylou. "Here I am." *YouTube*, Uploaded by Emmy-Louharris. Web. 2015. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

John of the Cross, Saint, and Kathleen Jones. *The Poems of St John of the Cross*. Burns & Oates, 2001.

Nhat Hanh, Thich. *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation*. Beacon Press, 1976.

Magee, Rhonda V. *The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness*. Kindle ed., TarcherPerigee, 2019.
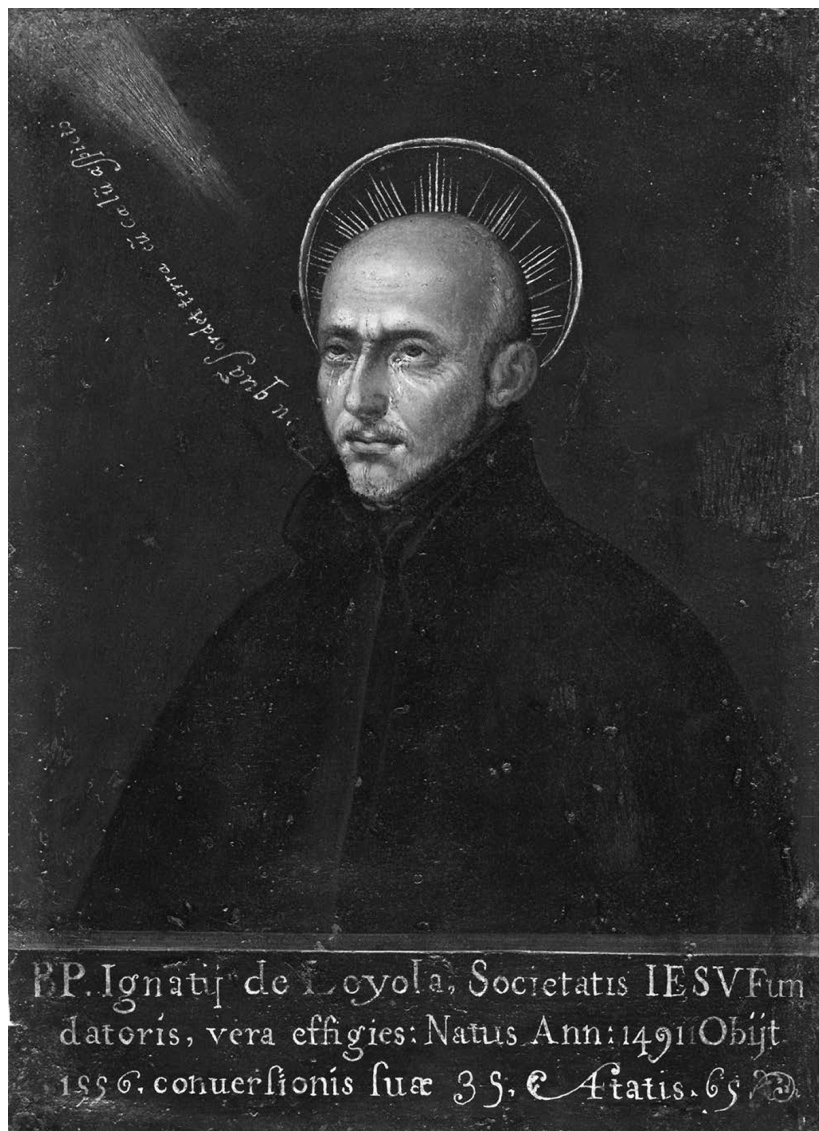
Weil, Simone. "Draft for a Statement of Human Obligation." PBS, *The Question of God*. Web. 2004. Accessed on 14 May 2021.

APPENDIX

BE IGNATIAN

Unknown Artist, Portrait of St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Mid-Late 1600s, Oil on copper, 7-5/8 x 5-1/2 in, 19.4 x 14 cm, 94.10, Museum purchase, Gift of Marquette University Jesuit Community, Collection of the Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University*

INTRODUCTION

IGNITION REFLECTIONS

Michael Dante
Faber Center for Ignatian Spirituality

May 2021 is the 500th anniversary of Ignatius of Loyola's wounding at the Battle of Pamplona. That injury started his process of transformation with its effects spanning the centuries and the globe. We can see the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian Spirituality, the Society of Jesus, and Jesuit Education flowing from his transformation. He did not plan to be a spiritual leader, create a religious community, or found schools, yet, in Ignatius, we see a model of what a series of "yeses" to God's ongoing invitations can look like.

Two qualities enabling Ignatius to have a lifetime of "yeses" to God were trust and flexibility. Over his life, Ignatius came to recognize how he was deeply and profoundly loved by God. This love not only accepted his past transgressions but also transformed them. Being deeply loved by God and having the awareness of God's fidelity offered him tremendous confidence. Even when circumstances would go awry, he still knew in his heart that God loved him and would provide. He had a foundational belief that God was somehow, though he did not always know how, working for the

good. Such a trust allowed him to take risks, to say yes again and again, and to give his life over more fully to God.

The other hallmark of Ignatius's life was his flexibility. He was trained as a courtier and soldier where these values were highly prized. For him to be effective and sometimes to survive, he needed to be aware of when plans needed to change. Hostile forces acted in unexpected ways, and he needed to have a "real-time" response. At times, this required him completely abandoning a particular strategy for one more appropriate given the situation. Cultivating such a stance in life though requires time, great attentiveness, surrendering of the self, and humility.

When we find ourselves in times of great uncertainty, Ignatian spirituality's gifts of trust and flexibility are tremendous resources that help us navigate these moments. There are times in our lives and communities when our abilities to make plans are nonexistent. For educators, this fact is particularly challenging. Not knowing the mode of teaching, whether it is in-person, hybrid, or entirely online, makes it hard to prepare a class. As we have come to know, preparing to meet the needs of students in periods of intense uncertainty brings enormous challenges. Gauging how well students will interact in different environments is not an easy science. Some students are more resilient while others become so overwhelmed with stress and anxiety that their abilities to focus, be present, and engage the course are greatly compromised. Furthermore, times of uncertainty require scrutinizing long-treasured readings, lab projects, and assignments. Letting go of what is known and comfortable in a class is not an easy task.

The purpose of these short reflections is to highlight five moments in Ignatius's life when trust and flexibility were cultivated. They provide a means to explore the wisdom they offer for us today. As we understand and reflect more deeply on his story, we gain a greater appreciation of his spirituality and an opportunity to reflect on how that same spirituality can assist us personally and professionally.

REFLECTION 1.

THE BATTLE OF PAMPLONA: IGNATIUS'S CANNONBALL MOMENT AND TEACHING IN CRISIS

In May of 1521, Ignatius of Loyola and his small garrison of about a thousand militia soldiers were facing an invading French army of over 12,000. With great zeal, Ignatius convinced his commanding officer to fight rather than surrender, hoping reinforcements would arrive in time. That decision went against the judgment of the more seasoned officers, but Ignatius's drive for glory prevailed. As the battle raged into its second day, the walls of the great citadel were breached by a barrage of artillery fire. Ignatius stepped, sword in hand, into the breach. He perceived his moment of glory in battle, but he could never have imagined a different type of glory towards which that moment was moving him.

Ignatius was born in 1491 as the youngest of thirteen children. His family was part of the Basque nobility and had a strong fighting spirit. As a child, Ignatius knew well the Loyola family history. In stories and songs, the feats of his ancestors were shared regularly. The fighting spirit grew strong in him, and he trained as a courtier and soldier. His greatest desire was to bring himself and his family glory.

He stood fighting valiantly in the wall when a cannon fired. Its ordnance struck his right leg and injured the left. Ignatius crumpled to the ground. The blow gravely injured his body, but at a deeper

level it was breaking open his understanding of himself as a soldier. After his surrender, the French reset the bone and sent him back to his ancestral home. The reverberations of the wounds though were only beginning to sink into the depths of his personage.

Many of us can relate to Ignatius's "cannonball" experience when considering how, in a moment, the life and world we once relied on and thought we knew can shatter, with our familiar worlds being turned upside down. Such unexpected changes are challenging. For educators, when the academic calendar with its regular rhythm of classes, exams, and graduation is disrupted, it can be difficult to find our moorings again. Or, when we need to change how we teach mid-semester to an entirely new way, it can be stressful, disconcerting, and existentially challenging, as we all know from the rift created by being educators in this pandemic.

Ignatius's injury required him to pause his life to heal and ask those poignant questions about who he was and what he was called to do. We may not have the luxury of stopping our lives, but it helps now and then to slow down and really sit with what these dramatic life changes have brought to us. These "cannonball" moments have a way of shaping our self-understanding, and they bring us to the point of what really matters. We can see points of how self-knowledge open up with such disruptions.

Questions for Reflection & Prayer:

1. What in Ignatius's story at the Battle of Pamplona resonates with you?
2. What "cannonball" moments have you borne witness to in yourself, family, or friends?
3. As an educator, how do you respond to disruptive moments in your own life in terms of how they shape you in your vocation?
4. As an educator, how do you respond to disruptive moments in our shared experiences? How do they shape you as an educator going forward?
5. How can disruptive moments call us to understand the nature of our humanness?

REFLECTION 2.

FROM THE CASTLE TO THE CARDONER RIVER: IGNATIUS'S TRANSFORMATION AND TEACHING FROM A PLACE OF BEING LOVED

After the battle was over, Ignatius was taken to Loyola castle. His leg was operated on twice more. They were painful processes that nearly killed him. Once stable, he remained bedridden and flat on his back for several months. To pass the time, he began reading about the life of Christ and the actions of the saints. Through his imaginative daydreams, he grew more compelled to perform the deeds of saints rather than those of a chivalrous knight.

One night he had a vision of Our Lady that brought him so much peace that he decided to give himself over to God. This transformation was formalized in a ritual way while at the Benedictine Monastery in Montserrat. There, Ignatius held an all-night vigil to the Black Madonna. He abandoned his sword and dagger, gave away his nobleman's clothes, and donned a pilgrim's robe and staff.

Before continuing his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he went to Manresa to further his prayer, his penitential practice, and his writing. While the first few months were indeed full of consolation, his failings and past mistakes began to plague him. To alleviate these scruples, he intensified his practices of fasting and mortification. At one point, he was so distressed that he nearly died by suicide, but

fearing total abandonment by God and with the support of his friends, he did not follow through.

Ignatius is one of the only saints to speak about this kind of experience. The self-recriminations continued to distress him greatly until one day a shift occurred. He was moved to a deep awareness of how he was loved, accepted, and forgiven by God. This profound moment freed him and gave him a better perspective of the forces that were so tormenting him.

In this new state of openness, Ignatius began experiencing mystical encounters. The most powerful one occurred along the banks of the river Cardoner. His secretary, to whom Ignatius dictated his autobiography, writes:

> He sat down for a moment with his face towards the river which there ran deep. As he sat, the eyes of his understanding began to open. He beheld no vision, but he saw and understood many things, spiritual as well as those concerning faith and learning. This took place with so great an illumination that these things appeared to be something altogether new.

It was a dramatic new way of seeing and experiencing the world. This moment becomes the basis of how Ignatius would seek to "find God in all things."

At times, being an educator is living a life under judgment. Similar to Ignatius, we critique ourselves and our work harshly, fearing it falls short of the mark and will be quickly judged by our colleagues. We are judged by our teaching scores, by our peers who review our articles and books, and by the institutions that review our grant applications. Yet, when the love of God encounters our unlovability, unworthiness, fear, and pain, transformation occurs. The fear and judgment of oneself and others is ameliorated, and a loving, accepting view of self and others becomes our operative lens. We begin to see in a new way our colleagues and students. As we see them through this loving lens, we are less reactive and more adept at teaching, helping, and supporting them.

Questions for Reflection & Prayer:

1. Which moments in this story resonate with you, and why?
2. What "flat-on-your-back" moments have you or someone you know experienced? How have they influenced you as an educator?
3. Have you seen the power of love and forgiveness in yourself or others at work, perhaps in a classroom or with colleagues?
4. What "ah-ha" moments have you had that dramatically changed your self-understanding, and how have they helped you reimagine yourself in your vocation?

REFLECTION 3.

FROM JERUSALEM TO PARIS: IGNATIUS'S EDUCATION AND LESSONS FOR TEACHING

Ignatius begged his way from Barcelona to Jerusalem to make his pilgrimage. He endured hunger, seasickness, robbery, and harsh travels on foot. His hope was to remain there to help other pilgrims, and, like St. Francis, to give witness through acts of love. However, the Franciscans, who were the custodians of pilgrims and the Christian sites, feared Ignatius was overly zealous in his faith. Given the political tensions with the Turks, he was sent back to Spain.

When Jerusalem was no longer an option, Ignatius had to find a new path yet again. He felt education would be beneficial for him, especially in the spiritual conversations he was having with people. Now in his thirties, he began taking Latin lessons in a class of young children, a far cry from his training in royal courts. After two years, he was proficient enough to attend the Universities at Alcala and then Salamanca. There, he began gathering others around him for spiritual conversations and discussions of faith. His group though came under suspicion of the Dominican Inquisitors. He was jailed several times until his teachings were deemed in compliance with the Church, yet he still remained under scrutiny.

He ultimately went to Paris to study and have a fresh start. In 1529 he enrolled in College de Sainte-Barbe. He had several faculty

mentors and friends who helped him along the way. His studies included rhetoric, philosophy, theology, and the sciences. He was exposed to some of the new humanism trends of the day. They drew upon the classical writings of antiquity. He learned in the Parisian style, which had classes arranged in a systematic and progressive manner. This method allowed him to earn his bachelor's, licentiate, and doctorate by 1535. He received the title of Master of Arts, which gave him permission to speak about matters of faith and learning.

Another influence on Ignatius was his disappointment in some of the faculty. Their drunken revelries and refusal to preach and teach outside the university to people of the city distressed him. Ignatius was looking to belong to another type of community. Once again, he started gathering a group of like-minded friends around him. Two of his closest friends with whom he shared quarters were Peter Faber and Francis Xavier. Ignatius directed them in the Spiritual Exercises, and they also became interested in more apostolic activity. Once their studies were completed, Ignatius and six of his companions began to look outwards for ways to be of service to others rather than remaining in a self-contained academic institution. They made simple vows to each other in August of 1534.

Ignatius's studies and time being a student offer contemporary educators several insights. For Ignatius, education rooted in a humanistic tradition aided both in understanding and in living a quality life. The studies took up the basic question of what it means to be human. History, literature, philosophy, and the sciences each brought their unique perspectives to this question. Also, Ignatius believed educators were not to be reclusive, but rather to be engaged in the world around them. Investigating languages, cultures, and the created world were all part of the education enterprise. Furthermore, Ignatius was not the typical student. He was older and was a transfer student, and he showed great perseverance.

As educators, we are invited to notice each of our students, especially those on the margins, and to find ways to adapt to what will further their learning. This approach brings further creativity and a deep care for our students.

Questions for Reflection & Prayer:

1. Which ideas from this story resonate most with you? Which are challenging? Why?
2. How do your courses take up the question, "What does it mean to be human?" What are the deeply human questions driving your particular discipline or class?
3. As educators, how do you engage with our local community in sharing your wisdom and knowledge while also learning from those communities?
4. How can you respond to different student populations, and what are the benefits of doing so?
5. What else in Ignatius's journey resonates with you?

REFLECTION 4.

VENICE AND ROME: IGNATIUS'S MINISTRY OF CONSOLATION AND TEACHING WITH AN EYE TO THE WORLD

Once Ignatius and his companions finished their studies, they wanted to help people. Their intention was to go to the Holy Land as Ignatius had longed to do. Given the conflicts with the Ottoman Empire, however, they decided to wait a year. If the trip was not possible, they would give themselves over to the pope. They felt that he would know where the world's greatest needs were and that he would mission them there to serve.

As they waited for the conflict to lessen so that safe sea travel could happen again, they spent their time in ministry, mainly in the regions of Venice and Rome. They took up the name "Companions of Jesus" since they wanted to closely identify with him and his work. These efforts happened in a variety of ways. Preaching was an important dimension and an avenue of sharing their education. It was rare to preach in the squares and marketplaces, but Ignatius and his companions would throw their hats in the air and create a spectacle. They often taught the crowds watching about the faith and the spiritual life to help people live more fulfilled lives.

Their ministries were a source of consolation for many, especially those on the margins of society. They took care of orphans whose

parents had died from the plague or the harsh winter. They helped prostitutes find new lives, and they worked as orderlies in hospitals, bathing and feeding patients who were discarded by society. They were committed to working with the poor, the vulnerable, and the ostracized. Through their work, Ignatius and his friends wanted the people they were with to experience the love of God. Together, they experienced a nearness of Jesus as they ministered to the poor and outcast of their time. It became a great joy for them.

Through Ignatius and his companions, we recognize that knowledge should serve people. They did not remove themselves from the struggles and pains of the world; rather, Ignatius's group immersed themselves into this reality. They paid attention to where the pain was happening in the world and moved to respond to it.

In a similar way, we as educators can read the signs of our times and respond. Justice is a part of Jesuit education. Jesuit Dean Brackley, who spent much of his ministry with the poor of El Salvador, often suggested students need to be mugged by the gritty reality of our world. By taking in this reality, students are invited to grow in compassion and have a deeper commitment to participate in finding creative solutions. Education done this way fosters compassion, competency, and commitment to the common good. In a similar way, it is important to recognize how the suffering world shapes us as educators. We need to ask the key question, "Where and with whom does my heart lie, and why?" This question helps us explore the purpose of education in that it humanizes us.

Questions for Reflection and Prayer:

1. What in Ignatius's experiences of service resonates with you?
2. What are the pressing signs of the times to which your discipline is responding today?
3. When has the "gritty" reality of the world broken into your classroom and broken your and your students' hearts open?
4. In what ways are your teaching and research of service to people and the common good?

5. In what ways do people beyond the classroom teach you and your students? How are you open to them individually and collectively?

REFLECTION 5.

FINAL YEARS IN ROME: IGNATIUS AS LEADER AND TEACHERS AS LEADERS

Ignatius and his companions realized that going to the Holy Land was not going to happen, so he made his way to Rome to place their work under the direction of the pope. On his way, he stopped at a small chapel in La Storta, just outside Rome. While at prayer, he had a vision of himself placed with Mary and Jesus, who was carrying his cross. He heard how he would be of great service to them and would find favor in Rome. After presenting himself and his company to Pope Paul III, the Society of Jesus was established on September 27, 1540. With much reluctance, he accepted being their first leader. The vision at Cardoner of finding God in all things and the deep desire to help people continued to inform him as a leader.

While in Rome, Ignatius's time and energy were devoted to discerning the direction of the Society. A major effort was writing the Constitutions for the governance of the new order. It provided guidance for the formation of members, direction of ministries, instructions on community life, direction on corporate poverty (a desire for dependence on God) and the organization of leadership. To help prepare new Jesuits, he codified the Spiritual Exercises to help new Jesuits be centered on God, be animated by their deep

desires, and live authentically their mission in the context of the community.

Ignatius also showed great care for his members. To support the members in their unique circumstances, Ignatius wrote over 7,000 letters. He wanted to remain aware and to encourage them in their work. This personalized care and attention was a key value for him while he continued to direct the ministry efforts of the Society in assisting the poor and marginalized.

Additionally, shortly after the Jesuits were founded, they began getting requests for the founding of schools. Ignatius recognized the value of such a vital ministry, especially since he himself benefitted from formal education at different parts of his life. Since schools were places to lift people up and transform a society, education quickly became their leading apostolate. His previous courtly life helped him navigate the political forces of the day and expand the Society across Europe and the globe—an older version of "working the room" and networking, perhaps.

The legacy of his leadership was a strong foundation for future generations of Jesuits and their collaborators to continue the work of helping people for centuries to come.

Ignatius's leadership style offers wisdom to academic administrators today. A first key dimension is recognizing that his leadership is rooted in love. Ignatius showed a real concern for the members of the Society. Through his correspondence he knew their situations, stresses, and struggles. This awareness calls forth an openness and a listening stance of administrators. It is an investment of time and energy to listen and truly be present to the faculty, staff, students, and larger community. The quality of listening is that of entering another's reality to be touched by it. With a greater appreciation of needs, leaders have more information to discern more deeply the policies and procedures that reflect the life of an institution. Second, Ignatius was a visionary and Spirit-led leader. He saw religious life as more than staying in a church and education as more than a reclusive affair. He saw education as transformational. As leaders in Jesuit schools, it is important to see opportunities that affect the common good and that will lift the largest number of people. This visionary

mindset and attunement with the signs of the times will assist in discerning institutional directions and strategic initiatives. Finally, Ignatius was a unifying leader of a global institution. Through the process of becoming a Jesuit, members felt a sense of belonging and ownership of the mission. The members saw their deep desires at the service of the mission. The notion of Cura Apostolica, care for the common work, is a hallmark of the Society. In a similar way, academic administrators can serve as a unifying force, creating a sense of shared work and belonging to each other. By providing opportunities for ongoing education, professional development, and a greater appreciation of the unit's part of the larger vision, leaders can create shared understanding and commonness of purpose. These leaders can draw forth all members' gifts to be of service to the common work as all have a stake in its success.

Questions for Reflection & Prayer:

1. What in Ignatius's leadership approach resonates with you?
2. In what ways do we enter into and allow the realities of our faculty, staff, and students to speak to us? How does that appreciation inform our policies and procedures?
3. What new opportunities do we see that would have far-reaching effects on the lives of people and the common good? How can our institution find ways to capitalize on these opportunities?
4. What ways do we create a sense of belonging to each other and collectively working for a shared vision?

NOTES

3. READING OVER PANDEMIC TIME

1. I wish to express my gratitude to the editors of this volume. I am also deeply grateful to the students in my children's literature courses in Spring 2020 and 2021 and to capstone students and members of my graduate seminar in Fall 2020 for their exceptional dedication and grace.

4. TEACHING RACE WHILE BEING A RACIALIZED SUBJECT

1. I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Michael Roeschlein for his invaluable help in editing this essay.

19. EDUCATING FOR LIBERATION

1. Dr. Anthony Peressini, Jennifer Marra, Sarah Kizuk, Jorge Montiel, Jennifer Fenton.