

Who Is A Lasallian Educator? A Personal Saga

By

Shyam J. Kamath

Associate Dean of Graduate Business and Global Programs
Saint Mary's College of California

I was a Lasallian Educator long before I came to Saint Mary's in 2007 but just did not know it. *Nosce te ipsum* became the touchstone of my search for the identity of my pedagogy post my arrival at Saint Mary's. It has been a rewarding quest that culminated in its fulfillment at Saint Mary's. Let me explain.

My education began at a Catholic girl's convent in Vishakhapatnam, India. I went to a girl's school since there was no good local public school to educate me. At this school, I learned about Jesus Christ and his message of peace, love and salvation. I was very much taken up with the parable of the Good Samaritan and remember admiring an illustration of the injured man on the ground being helped by the Samaritan (whom I always thought was Jesus Christ). These and other bible stories became the basis of my ethical and moral upbringing intermixed with stories of the Ramayana and Mahabharata that I was told at home. The ideals of selfless sacrifice, concern for the poor and down-trodden and dedication to one's duty and calling in life grew out of these childhood stories and teachings.

Growing up in India, my teachers always extolled the *guru Kula* system as the ideal system of learning. Literally meaning "of the house of the teacher", this system required the pupil to leave his home at the age of five and live with his guru till he (but not a she) completed his study. The rationale for this system was to produce men who have immersed themselves in their education and are thoroughly pure and moral in their behavior. While I appreciated the transformational ideals of this system, two things did not sit well with me – the notion of the learned teacher separated from the learner and the emphasis on the education of males with little place for a female education (though there were exceptions).

Between the ages of eight and sixteen, my mother continued my spiritual education by taking me on weekends to the Ramakrishna Mission, where the power of faith and rational thought as embodied in the Indian savant, Swami Vivekananda and the vision of a caste-less and class-less Indian society was both inspiring and addictive. I discovered Buddhism at the same time and devoured any books that I could find on the life of Gautama, the Buddha. Mine was an ever-expanding inner dialogue of combining these disparate traditions to understand how one could live a life of goodness and service to mankind. As I came close to my graduation year, the desire to contribute and help those less fortunate than the life that had been granted to me by my genetic lottery led me to join the Gandhi Peace Foundation, with the Mahatma a strong influence on my thinking. I worked in the slums and taught at a village school outside Delhi in Patpadganj, a poor agricultural community near the big city.

At the very impressionable age of sixteen, I read Plato (CWP, 1961) and Aristotle (CWP, 1965) and was thoroughly impressed by the ideal of the peripatetic Socrates or Aristotle as teacher with his pupil who walked side by side in the grounds of the *Lyceum* debating, arguing and educating. While many of the arguments remained hazy and obscure at that impressionable age, nevertheless the exciting issues discussed were exhilarating, exciting and intoxicating. But here too, and too soon, disquiet set in later. The division in to classes with learning focused on the *aristocratoi* was an affront to my young democratic soul, especially given the class and caste-ridden society around me in India. The second half of *The Republic* epitomized the demise of the seductive vision of an education at the *Akademia*. "On the shoulders of giants stand we" should have led to a more liberal understanding of the elite education provided to the propertied and aristocratic class in Ancient Greece but while immensely attracted and

stimulated by the Socratic dialogues (mainly the early ones), I was disappointed at the class and gender-based educational process that was the result.

Then followed some difficult years in Saint Stephen's College, where I worked in street theater in the slums of Delhi and flirted with a revolutionary movement in the attempt to change the life of the wretched of the earth that surrounded me in my everyday existence in India. Nevertheless, the Christian ideal remained nascent even as my teachers focused on a first class liberal arts education. I became a semi-professional actor on the New Delhi stage as I finished up my undergraduate degree in economics with honors. During these undergraduate years, I also learned of other ways of human development which were more benign than revolution in understanding the role of the market, the power of voluntary action and cooperation and key role of education.

At the age of nineteen-and-a-half, I went to business school to learn about management and good governance in two extremely intense years of full-time study. My summer internship was with the Indian Planning Commission, India's central planning agency, where I thought I would serve the poor and the development of India best by working on development plans in the area of public investment project appraisal and management. After obtaining my MBA, I re-joined the Planning Commission as a full-time employee to continue my work in project evaluation and perspective planning. However, disappointment set in early. I realized that there were intractable problems of planning and implementation that actually caused me as a central planner to make the lives of the poor worse by well-intentioned but fundamentally flawed and poorly implemented investments and public sector decisions. I realized that centralized planning and control were fundamentally incompatible with human freedom, distributed knowledge, decentralized management and voluntary action. The stifling bureaucracy did not help either. It was at this juncture that I read intensely about the United States and its formation, creation of opportunity for millions and its very successful development.

However, my desire to contribute through public service still remained. I left the Planning Commission for one of India's largest public sector energy-equipment companies, Bharat Heavy Electricals, where I joined the Chairman and Managing Director's office as a planning manager. What followed was five years of very intensive and rewarding managerial work that changed my path in life. In the beginning, I was involved in setting up, effecting and implementing strategic planning and organizational change processes that fundamentally transformed the company from an also-ran public sector corporation to one of the most dynamic, fast-growing and successful public sector companies that affected the life of millions. I chose to move from the head office in Delhi to one of the manufacturing units in rural south India. There, in addition to continuing my role as a strategic planning manager for the manufacturing unit, I became the project coordinator for \$22 million (in 1975 dollars) boiler house auxiliaries project that taught me a lot about integrated project management tempered by local rural conditions and how the poor needed to be integrated in to all management thinking.

But the life-changing turning point came at this juncture when I started to teach on a regular basis in the company's executive management development center. I also taught engineering management and economics at a leading local engineering college. I wrote my first journal article about intellectual learning and freedom (Kamath, BR, 1977).

It became clear to me through these experiences that education was the means to transform and upgrade the human capabilities that would help the poor and mankind in general improve their own lives. I decided to become a teacher in spite of the fact that I was simultaneously selected to become a

member of the Indian Foreign Service and Indian Administrative Service, where I could have served as a public servant for the development of India.

I applied for and completed another master's degree and a doctorate in economics in Canada with a focus on international and development economics and finance. This was where my sub-conscious "Lasallian educator" transformation took place. As a tutorial leader and apprentice teacher, I recognized the role of quality education through an immersive and engaged pedagogy, dedication to learning and effective communication and discipline. In the classroom and outside, I "walked beside" my students, helping them learn deeply about the subject but also learned about their life goals, aspirations and dreams. My dedication to their learning and success was total and the reward of the "aha" moment immense. I lived and breathed for learning and teaching. Yet, while my teaching evaluations always put me at the top of my cohort, I was the "hardest" teacher in terms of discipline and expectations in the comments on these evaluations. My students thanked me for my dedication to their learning and how much they enjoyed my classes.

At this time, I was hired by Dalhousie University, Canada's oldest university to teach international business and finance. Here my "Lasallian educator" development continued. I experimented with engaged pedagogy, introducing projects in my class that were integrated with the local community. I continued to develop methods of participative learning such as role plays, experiential exercises and mini-case based learning methods in what was called the *CaseRole* method (Kamath, JTIB, 1990).

In the middle of my second year at Dalhousie, I was selected by the Canadian International Agency (CIDA) to travel to China to establish a Masters in Management program at one of the Big Ten universities (Xiamen University) of that country. This visit was transformative since I experimented with new classroom teaching methods, including *CaseRole*, which energized students who had been lectured to through uninspiring teaching methods. I was able to have my students engage in classroom exercises, debates, field visits and intensive discussions. They were engaged completely and became my friends, even though many of them were older than me and from the "lost generation" of Mao's Cultural Revolution. I view these attempts at an engaged and interactive pedagogy as fundamentally Lasallian since the objective was to engage the learner completely in their intellectual and human potential development.

It was at this time that I moved to the United States. I had met Anthony Fisher, a renowned San – Francisco based philanthropist and backer of public policy institutes and intellectual think-tanks and he offered to help me start a public policy institute in India. I moved to the California State University, Hayward in the San Francisco Bay Area where I began teaching undergraduates and graduate students in economics and business on a regular basis even as I participated in and started innovative new interactive global immersion and experiential learning programs such as the Pacific Rim Marketing, the Asian International Marketing and the European International Marketing programs (MacNab and Kamath, JTIB, 1996). These programs required the teacher and student to work closely together on large-scale business projects for international clients where they applied classroom learning to real-world problems while traveling to the countries where the projects were based.

In these programs, my colleagues and I experimented with new experiential and service learning pedagogical methods to develop a new paradigm of immersive experiential learning pedagogy. One of these programs won the national Levy Award for Excellence in Private Education from the Valley Forge Foundation in Valley Forge, PA (see Kamath and MacNab, WMEAC, 1996 and JME, 1998) as well as the Decision Sciences Institute Outstanding Program Runner Up Award (Kamath and MacNab, DL, 1997). At

this time, I also started training business executives from the Soviet Union (then Russia after the break-up of the Soviet Union), China, Korea, Belgium and Thailand and developed MBA programs for launch in countries like the former Soviet Union/Russia (Wiley, Kamath and MacNab, SMEIUS, 1992 and Kamath and Wiley, MECIT, 1997). All these programs used the experiential learning methods developed and involved cross-cultural learning experiences. In 2000, I created a new global immersion and experiential learning MBA program called the Transnational Executive MBA (TEMBA) program, which embodied the principles of practice-based experiential learning, cross-cultural pedagogy and service learning. The program was a great success with two cohorts of 25-30 students twice a year and learning outcomes that were reflected in high scores on independent exit surveys (Kamath, Agrawal and Krickx, JTIB, 2008). Post facto, these can all be viewed as my version of Saint La Salle's "simultaneous method" and engaged pedagogy where the intellectual and moral development of the student was paramount.

My passion for "side-by-side" group learning and teaching at CSUH (now CSU, East Bay) resulted in my developing life-long close bonds with my students. TEMBA students still get together regularly to discuss their lives, learning and shared experiences and I get invited to these get-togethers on a regular basis. In addition, the staff team that ran the program meets periodically as the Global Lunch Club to renew their energy and share the experiences of a close-knit community.

When I arrived at Saint Mary's in 2007, all these proto-Lasallian experiences came together in my teaching and program development efforts. In class, I further developed the intellectual and experiential engagement pedagogy I had developed over the years. I tied these to my program development efforts when I proposed and was successful in starting the Trans-Global Executive MBA program in collaboration with the then Graduate Business faculty in the School of Economics and Business Administration (SEBA). We incorporated experiential Lasallian social justice global consulting projects aimed at helping those below the poverty line in developing countries (Kamath et. al. 2008, 2009, and 2011).

Enrolled T-GEMBA participants work for 10-12 months with non-profits, not-for-profit arms of for-profit corporations, for-profit corporations, NGOs and government agencies to solve complex management problems that created livelihoods for those below the poverty line or improved their lives in six areas: Healthcare, Opportunity (or entrepreneurship), Peace, Education, Infrastructure and Microfinance (in what we called the HOPE-IM model) to offer systemic and integrated solutions to problems of poverty, destitution and lack of empowerment that adversely affected the lives of millions. Program participants work in teams of 4-6 individuals on 3-5 different global projects in each cohort. The projects are focused on one or more of the elements of the HOPE-IM model to enable program participants to apply their learning in the program in the real-world. These projects are done with the help of SEBA faculty advisors who literally work side-by-side with program participants in a collaborative learning mode. The focus is on people (society), ethics, planet (environment) in addition to the traditional concern with profit/performance. The projects embody the five Lasallian principles.

The program has completed or is in the process of completing a total of almost 30 projects in countries as diverse as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, India, the Philippines, Thailand and Zanzibar and is expanding to Indonesia and Vietnam. Program participants have tackled problems covering ambulance services for the poor, child labor, early childhood care and education, village and rural area employment cluster development, microfinance provision, hospital development and financing for the poor, eco-tourism, agricultural supply chain development, integrated farming and seaweed agriculture development among other HOPE-IM areas.

The underlying pedagogical paradigm is essentially the same as that taught by Saint La Salle and his beloved Christian Brothers in France over 300 years ago of action-oriented experiential service learning. A series of classes focused on global and responsible business are interspersed with global immersions where participants learn through classes, interactions, exercises, case studies, simulations, organizational visits, cross-cultural immersion, first-hand visits with those below the poverty line and interaction with project principals and personnel. Immersion exercises with overseas counterparts round out the global experience. We are now extending all these elements to all our graduate and undergraduate programs focused on the Lasallian principles and mission.

Reflecting on this personal saga of engaged and principles-focused education, the following Lasallian elements and lessons emerge:

(1) A well-rounded education is essential for the whole person, especially in the area of business management, where intellectual inquiry combines with a humble attitude, dedicated service, a desire to learn and serve, and good manners/attitude. This is the direct outcome of educating well-mannered and civic conscious individuals as laid out by Saint La Salle in his *The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility* (1702/1990) which is a remarkable book about politeness and is also a text in the reading of manuscripts.

(2) Discipline and dedication to one's vocation are stepping stones to a life fully examined (especially in an area like business) as epitomized in the context of elementary, middle and high schools by Saint La Salle in his *The Conduct of the Christian Schools* (1720/1996), a treatise on pedagogic method.

(3) Learning is facilitated by the use of Saint La Salle's *Simultaneous Method* where the different capabilities of the learners are recognized and their learning is done side-by-side as laid out in *De La Salle* (1720/1996).

(4) Teaching is a vocation characterized by total dedication and commitment as evidenced by all of Saint La Salle's writings.

(5) An education, especially in areas like business and economics, needs to be practical and about practice rather than only about theory. Saint La Salle's educational approach was grounded in practice as is evident from the practical education emphasized in Lasallian schools but also the majority of the 80+ Lasallian universities in the world emphasizing programs in vocational subjects such as applied science, architecture, engineering, accounting, business, medicine, nursing, law and the practical arts such as dance, music, theater and the creative arts. His practical educational approach also introduced group cooperative Learning methods to replace the tutorial approach of his time, something very much embedded in my teaching methods and today's Lasallian institutions of secondary and post-secondary education.

(6) A Lasallian education also needs to have broad inquiry-based roots where the goal is *to probe deeply the mystery of existence by cultivating the ways of knowing and the arts of thinking* (see Saint Mary's mission at <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/about-saint-marys-college/our-mission#sthash.NsNJNmek.dpuf>). This is the essence of a Lasallian education where a holistic and inquiry based approach in the liberal arts tradition is the epitome of a good education in any field, including business.

(6) Lifelong engagement is an integral part of a Lasallian education with a pedagogy focused on concern for the poor and social justice. Our programs and methods have to be focused on these issues to engage our students while improving the education and life of those less fortunate than us. This was *the raison d'être* of Saint La Salle's life work.

(7) Faith and dedication are essential to good teaching and learning. While Saint La Salle emphasized the Christian faith in his writings though focusing on lay teachers and not priests, today we recognize the importance of all faiths and even those who deny religious faith as being dedicated to the educational mission. As Lasallian educators, it is dedication to and faith in educating people that drives our excellence in education.

The journey thus far as a Lasallian educator has been rewarding and uplifting. I can only hope that I continue to deliver on Saint La Salle's vision on the road ahead, wherever it may take me.

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Life as a Lasallian Educator

By
Jim Sciuto

We had left at five in the morning. Drove up from Los Angeles, my parents in the front seats, myself in the back seat, meager belongings stuffed in the trunk and piled next to me. Overtired, overanxious, and overwhelmed we made the left turn onto St. Mary's Road and immediately noticed the red and blue balloons and signs telling me I was almost there. Making the left turn onto campus, I was immediately struck by the welcoming and exciting atmosphere; students waving and cheering, all wearing bright and fun matching shirts. We pulled up to Mitty Hall where we were greeted by cheering groups of current students who converged on my parent's car with giant smiles and helping hands. Before we knew it, we were escorted to my hall, given keys and an abundance of paperwork, and had a trail of students diligently delivering to my new home every last item from the car. I was now a member of Saint Mary's.

Little did I know that seventeen years later I would be working at Saint Mary's, helping create that very welcoming and unique community for our new students and families. We throw that word 'community' around a lot at Saint Mary's. It is a word I have always heard associated with Saint Mary's and- whether good times or bad- is a foundation we lean on to describe our campus. An inclusive community; a community of learners; living learning communities; community engagement...we are a campus filled with community! Where did this identity, so closely associated with our campus, come from? What is it that makes this community at Saint Mary's so unique?

The Brothers of the Christian Schools dedicate their lives to a vocation of faith, service, and community. The Christian Brothers call upon their schools to be more than a place of education. The school is only the setting, but the students are the heart of the institution. The core principles of the Lasallian education challenges the school to not simply be satisfied with a quality education, but to engage the whole student through the Lasallian core principles. These principles challenge the institution to positively affect the whole student, not just the mind. The Christian Brothers at Saint Mary's embody this vocation by not only teaching but living in residence halls, mentoring students, sharing their passions and life's work, and continuing a legacy of service and faith. The Christian Brothers do not simply educate; they serve the students to which they are entrusted.

The Brothers of the Christian Schools model what it means to live in community. Within the Alemany and Saint Mary's Communities at Saint Mary's, a wide breadth of opinions, expertise, and passions converge together. Having had the pleasure of sitting in on meals with the Communities, I see a living model of what our Intercollegiate Seminar courses aim to achieve. These lively and engaging dialogues, with participation and insight from each Brother around the table, are a daily example of the sort of community we strive to engage our students within at Saint Mary's. Creating an engaged community is not simply about finding the answers, but about the process and journey to get there. This process- what might be called critical thinking- is echoed as a core strength of our College and a unique trait shared by my fellow alums of the institution.

As a partner in the Lasallian mission I, too, feel called upon to serve our students. This has never been simply a job. I have never felt like I have 'punched' into work, or felt the clock ticking. Much as when I was a student, I feel I am learning something new every day. It is an honor to continue to learn from our students and my colleagues on a daily basis. This campus community of learners inspires, challenges, and engages me each day. We do not always agree and we do not always share the same views, but I know that an opportunity for a lively conversation always awaits. This community thrives on the

opportunities for dialogue and engagement, and the more difficult the conversation the more likely we are to hold it.

Saint John Baptist de La Salle said, "Union in a community is a precious gem, which is why Our Lord so often recommended it to his apostles before he died. If we love this, we love everything. Preserve it with care, therefore, if you want your community to survive." The idea of preserving our community with care is what I feel I am called to do on a daily basis. As a partner in the Lasallian mission, I am called upon to actively ensure that the community and its persons are cared and loved. The core principles, such guiding values, challenge us to help carry the mission of de La Salle forward. Such keywords like inclusivity, social justice and concern are not goals we hope to achieve. We, as Lasallian educators, are called upon to live these principles; not encouraged, nor speak to, nor even teach, but to live and model. That calling, to live a life as a Lasallian educator, is a truly unique and inspirational opportunity for us as partners of the Christian Brothers.

I feel that by being called to preserve this community with care, I am not only impacting the Saint Mary's campus, but the entire Lasallian community. Connections in the Lasallian community are bountiful and endless. My impact on the Lasallian community goes well beyond the entrance to the Moraga campus. Students entrusted to our care (many from Christian Brother secondary schools) have an opportunity to make an impact in the greater community. As a Lasallian educator, it is my responsibility to guide our students in reflecting on their impact in the world. From service work to the business world, the sciences to teaching, students moving on from our community make a greater impact in the world. I believe it is my responsibility as a Lasallian educator to promote an environment that challenges students to be productive and ethical contributors to society. Those contributions begin and are fostered through the engaged community that exists at Saint Mary's. Students welcomed into this community never leave; they physically may move, but the spirit and education that the community provides remains with them forever.

Families of new students often ask me how we get so many students to help at that initial move in; why are they spending hours of time carrying boxes to students' new rooms and still smiling as the sweat drips down their faces. All of these students are volunteers, I reply. They do it because they believe in it- they believe in the community that welcomed them, and they thrive in sharing that experience with new members of the community. For these students, it is a calling to give back. Similarly, my life as a Lasallian educator is a calling. It defines my work, my life philosophy and my education. I cherish the opportunity to contribute to a community that so openly advocates for positive social change, and growth of the body, mind and spirit. I share a special bond with other Lasallian educators and, most critically, the Christian Brothers who are living models for the dedication and devotion it takes to truly fulfill the mission developed so many years ago. We do not simply educate; we care, we love and we nurture. We do this because the special community it creates impacts the world like no other education.

Reflect on the Life of Being a Lasallian Educator

By
Christine Oh

Currently, my vision of myself as a Lasallian educator is being an older sister to the students I serve. And that came from working here at Saint Mary's College and witnessing the interactions of Brothers, faculty and staff with others, and also from the Buttimer experience that working here at Saint Mary's has allowed me to participate in.

I came to Saint Mary's College in August 2002 from Korea. In Korea, we do not have Lasallian schools. I knew that in Japan two "Lasallian" schools are in operation, but I didn't know what that meant because as of 2002 the Christian Brothers hadn't come to Korea yet. So, when I looked at the big statue in front of the Chapel on the August 2002 day that I arrived at Saint Mary's, it was the very first time I encountered the name, "De La Salle." As a student first, and as a staff member later, I have become acquainted with De La Salle and our Lasallian mission. I have read about it, talked about it, studied it and experienced it. And I thought I understood it. But it was not until I participated in the Buttimer 1 program during the summer of 2012 that I finally "got" it — that is — I finally had De La Salle and his mission enter my heart as well as my head.

In our very first Buttimer 1 class, our presenter, Brother Jeffrey, used the words "Saint De La Salle," but challenged us to see the "Human" De La Salle before the "Saint" De La Salle. What is the difference, I asked myself. Is it possible to separate them? What is the point of separating them? As I struggled to answer these questions for myself the process of De La Salle entering my heart as well as my head began.

De La Salle was a visionary leader. His value of "gratuity," doing something for nothing, was something that struck me deeply. God has already provided me, and us, with more than what we need. We need to touch hearts in return. And as I thought about that, I realized that that is what the Brothers I have met here at Saint Mary's have done for me. Ten years ago, I was an international student who barely spoke English and knew nothing about American culture. When I look back, I could have been easily lost. On the contrary, I felt comfortable and cared for. And Saint Mary's became my home away from home very soon. I remember I once said "I don't feel like I came to America. I feel like I just came to Saint Mary's." How did it happen? Wherever I went, I ran into Brothers. I asked Brother Ronald where I could find 5:15 p.m. Mass because he went to the International Student Retreat. Brother Dominic welcomed me with the biggest and sweetest smile when I met him at the APASA meeting. Brother Camillus always told me "Remember that you are a daughter of God." Brother Brendan saw my potential and hired me because he wanted to reach out to our diversity students like me. Brother John invited me to a Christmas party when I had no Christmas party to go to. There are also faculty and staff members who showed me what it means to be a Lasallian educator. I still remember the late Dr. Dennis' last Jan Term class that I happened to be invited to. He took all the students to his home and cooked for them. Hope Rolland, another staff member, volunteered to be my conversation partner because she was surprised by my poor English when I met her at the San Francisco symphony. After that, she helped me as my editor throughout my graduate study. From my graduate school application to my Master's thesis, she proofread every single page of my writings. Until the day she retired, she edited my thesis paper. These people and others have helped me greatly and touched my heart, expecting nothing in return. I am so grateful to have a chance to work with them, "together and by association," in support of the Lasallian mission to provide for the well-being of our students in this world, and in God's eyes. I am doing my best

to treat my students in the same way I was treated by our Brothers, faculty and staff here at Saint Mary's.

Next, Brother Jeffrey showed us a video of Sung Bong Choi, the homeless 22-year-old Korean high school student who sang beautifully on a Korean television show, Korea's Got Talent. I remembered learning about Choi when my American friends sent me his videos as soon as they appeared on YouTube. In one of his videos Choi stated, "If I do well, I can bring the honor to my school." When I saw that, it broke my heart, and I thought to myself, "I wish we had a Lasallian school in Korea for the boys like him." So many memories of young people less fortunate than myself came to me during my very first day of Buttimer class. The process of De La Salle entering my heart as well as my head was continuing.

Brother Jeffrey continually challenged us and encouraged us to challenge ourselves, and what we think and believe, throughout the entire program. He left me with this image of Lasallian educators: Teachers who challenge students with compassion.

The process of De La Salle entering my heart as well as my head took place during my Buttimer reading as well. One thing I learned from that reading that struck me deeply was De La Salle's directive that Lasallian educators need to be brothers and sisters to each other before we can be older brothers and sisters to the students we serve. I realized I have been missing the first part. I can say that I have been working hard on the second part. I started to work here in 2005 as a Career Counselor and the Diversity Coordinator at the Career Center. I work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and go to Mass at 5:15 p.m., Monday through Thursday (I even met my husband there at 5:15 p.m. Mass), unless the Career Center has evening events. Every single day, I pray for all the students I saw that day, hoping that I was good enough. And I pray "Dear Lord, if I was not good enough, please fill the rest with your love and grace. They will be fine." Last summer, I realized I cannot be an effective older sister to SMC students without first being a sister to my colleagues (and challenging them with compassion and letting them challenge me with compassion). That will help us build the necessary community among ourselves. I came back to school last Fall semester, more motivated and inspired than ever before, to help build a community among us.

At the same time, as I learned more about De La Salle, I was amazed by his thoughtfulness and effectiveness in practical matters. For example, when he organized class schedules he put religious classes at the end of the day as a way of promoting evangelism of family and selling the school. This kind of thinking seems to me to come only from prayers. De La Salle never forgot about our mission as Christians, while at the same time he was thinking about all the other aspects of education. I have always wondered how I can better live my faith in my everyday life. Working at Saint Mary's has helped me to find specific ways to live a Christian life.

The most amazing thing I learned about De La Salle from my Buttimer reading was how much he suffered to do his work. The pain he endured physically, emotionally and spiritually, from the Church, his family, and even other Brothers, defies words. That he gave up his wealth and canonry (which was all I really knew about him before), was not even a small part of the suffering he had to endure. I wish it had not taken me 10 years, until my participation in Buttimer 1, to learn this, and to meet the human De La Salle.

It was after the very hectic (yet great) first week of Buttimer 1 that I decided to finish reading our text book, *The Work Is Yours*, over the weekend. During that reading I learned that after De La Salle met Nyel

in 1679 and helped him open the first school, that his life was filled with pain and enemies. And the closer De La Salle got to the end of his life, the worse things got for him. On Saturday night, June 30, 2012, as I reached the point of the book where De La Salle's "Dark night of soul" is described, I found myself praying, "Oh, God, please just take him. So, he doesn't have to suffer any more." Two days before De La Salle died, his enemies revoked his faculties. When I read about De La Salle dying on the morning of Good Friday, I found myself crying.

Why did he have to suffer as much as he did? Is it that hard to do God's work? Was it worth it really? Why do people (even other church members) sometimes persecute those who do God's work? Obviously, De La Salle was not treated in the way he deserved. I could not help but let my heart be troubled, until I realized that Jesus was not treated in the way he deserved either.

I was born and raised in Catholic family. When I was young, I understood Jesus' life from the perspective of the resurrection. After three days, he was supposed to be risen from the death. In my mind, nothing was a big deal to our Lord, Jesus, including his death. But as I got older, and realized that without the horrible suffering and death of Jesus there could be no resurrection, I started to see the human Jesus. When I transformed the story of my Lord's salvation this way (upside down), I started to love him. Through my Buttimer experience, De La Salle's life has overlapped with Jesus' life in my mind. When I finished *The Work Is Yours* at 3:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 1, 2012, I couldn't be satisfied with the ending of the book – the picture of the 41st General Chapter with Pope John Paul II, and the story of the Institute of Brothers, as De La Salle's legacy. How can I make the ending of the book more positive? Soon I realized that De La Salle's story didn't end where our text book ended. It continues at the desk where I sit, reading and crying; it continues with others who, like me, have had him enter their hearts as well as their heads and who realize that "Lord, the work is yours," so finally "the work is ours." I, and my fellow 28 Buttimer 1 classmates, have accepted the God's work that De La Salle began 300 years ago, as our own work as well.

My final thoughts came from the memory of my first meeting with the statue of De La Salle in 2002 and my first day of Buttimer class, 10 years later, in 2012. I do not know why Brothers who went to north-east Asia just stopped in Japan. My country, Korea, is right there across the small East Sea. And there are still boys like Sung Bong Choi in Korea. Maybe none of Korean bishops invited Brothers to build Lasallian schools. I still do not know why God brought me here to Saint Mary's College, all the way from Korea, but I believe God has plans for everybody. In my lifetime, if I happen to encounter the possibility to help open a Lasallian school in Korea, I will take it as the God's work for me. And I will do my best, each and every moment, to remember the ending of the book, *The Work is Yours*.

Personally, I am a Career Counselor and was interested in De La Salle's vocational changes. He became a canon before his age of 16. His life was all set. Interestingly enough, he changed his "career" and became a founder of a non-profit organization – Christian Brother's School. What happened to him? In addition to that, working here at Saint Mary's produced one question in my mind. De La Salle built schools to help poor boys on the street. But Saint Mary's is a very expensive school. What happened to De La Salle's mission? After 10 years of my experience here, I can say we still serve students who are financially poor. We also strive to serve those who are spiritually poor. And I saw some students who are good financially and spiritually. As a Career Counselor, I have witnessed that those students chose to serve when they graduated. What happened to De La Salle in the past is still happening right here on our campus in the present tense.

De La Salle lived 300 years ago and he still challenges us today; our attempts to meet those challenges are his legacy too.

Reflections of a Lasallian Educator: A Call to Action

By

Monica D. Fitzgerald, Assistant Professor
Saint Mary's College of California

"Some men see things as they are and ask why; I dream of things that never were and say *why not*." While this quotation is actually from a George Bernard Shaw play, it was made more famous by Robert F. Kennedy, and for most of my life, this idea of being an agent of social change directed by life's path.¹ From a young age, I wanted to change the world. I was raised in a working-class family and my parents were not particularly politically engaged, but they had a strong core belief in the dignity of all people. My mother grew up in Kentucky during desegregation, and told stories of the lasting damage hatred and racism had on her community. She simply could not tolerate any form of discrimination against another human being. That deep sense of respect for all people resonated with me to fight for a just world. I was still in middle school when Edward Kennedy ended his speech at the Democratic Convention in 1980 with the promise, "The hope still lives, the cause endures, and the dream shall never die." While he was reminding America of the legacy of his fallen brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr., for me, it was a call to action. In high school, I encouraged classmates to join political campaigns, brought attention to the fight against apartheid, and organized a not-so-successful "No Nukes" rally at the local college (enthusiastically attended by one other person). Eventually, I became an historian because I believe that through understanding our past we can change our future. I came to view education as the most critical vehicle for social change. When I joined the faculty Saint Mary's College of California, I discovered how much my principles and teaching pedagogy aligned with Lasallian traditions and core principles. Personally and professionally, I have tried to live a life that celebrates diversity, encourages inclusivity, and strives to leave the world a better place. At Saint Mary's, I have found a place that unifies my personal principles and my academic goals; I have found a home, and through Saint Mary's I have truly grown and developed into a Lasallian educator. My teaching pedagogy, community engagement work, and relationships with students are all grounded in a Lasallian approach to teaching and learning.

Being a teacher is a vocation for me; and while my teaching philosophy has always been about galvanizing change, being part of a Lasallian community has provided me a history, language and pedagogy that has helped me fully express and live out my calling. Attending the International Association of Lasallian Universities Institute in 2012, I was stirred by the welcoming address of Superior General Brother Alvaro. When he described passionately the Lasallian mission to raise awareness of social justice issues around the globe, he explained, "Our work cannot appear neutral...We have to take a stand...The important mission of the universities is to keep hope alive." I did not become a teacher to merely deliver content, but to inspire hope. At Saint Mary's, I have been able to teach courses that examine inequities of race, class and gender. By adapting Lasallian pedagogy of student-centered learning and engagement with the world, I have been able to make these issues more than an academic exercise, but have sent students into the community to experience these problems first hand. For students to reflect and integrate their experiential learning with their texts, I use a model developed by our college's Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA). The framework "What, So What, Now What," asks students to deconstruct the problem, explain its significance, and suggest solutions. Thus, they are regularly engaged in discussions about their responsibility to a just world. Students can often become disillusioned focusing on all of the problems of the world, but using this framework, they

¹ George Bernard Shaw, *Back to Methuselah*, Bentano Publishers, 1921. Robert Kennedy quoted it, and Edward Kennedy memorialized it and further paraphrased it at the funeral of Robert Kennedy in 1968.

remain hopeful that we can create change in the world. It is through these exercises that students make some of their first connections about what it means to be Lasallian.

Working at a mission-based school, I have the freedom to not be neutral, but to create classes that focus on social justice and serve as a call to action for my students to create a more just world. A perfect example of this Lasallian approach to education is a field trip my students take to Glide Memorial Church, which serves a very poor community in the Tenderloin of San Francisco, California. Led by activist minister Cecil Williams since 1963, this congregation describes its mission as, “A radically inclusive, just and loving community mobilized to alleviate suffering and break the cycles of poverty and marginalization.”² The similarities between Cecil Williams and John Baptist DeLaSalle are palpable, yet my students initially cannot make that connection. Before their visit, they express trepidations – Glide is in an area of high crime, drugs, and prostitution; they have never been around such poverty, homelessness, or despair. On the Sunday in the fall semester when we make this sojourn, the students first attend Glide’s mass. With its jazz band, multiethnic choir and its liberation theology, students are at first shocked, as it appears unlike any church service they had ever attended. Then they begin to listen, and hear the words “concern for the poor”, “social justice”, “serving the community”, and “love”. Every year I can count on the moment they turn to me, wide-eyed and smile, “I get it.” They witness Lasallian principles in action – concern for the poor and social justice, respect for all persons, and faith in the presence of God, and begin to realize that being Lasallian is not about a college identity, but a way to lead their lives.

After church, we serve anywhere from 700 to 1,000 lunches; students meet, greet, converse, and help men, women and children of all ages and backgrounds. It is an emotional day for students, to put faces to poverty, to hear personal stories of hardship and loss, and to bear witness to the extreme inequities that exist in our communities. For many students, it is a transformative experience as they reenter the classroom with a new-found call to action. One of my students reflected on the idea of the Lasallian principle of inclusive community through her Glide visit:

It suddenly became more than just great words. Imagining a better, peaceful world became possible to me because of the amazing sight that I witnessed. There were people of all backgrounds and faiths gathered together celebrating life on that Sunday morning. I had never witnessed such a diverse, inclusive community and it literally brought tears to my eyes. I realized that Martin Luther King’s *World House* is indeed possible but it is also a choice. Creating that inclusive community isn’t easy...it does take work.³

Through their experiences, students begin to see their responsibility in addressing poverty and inequality; and they begin to see the connections with John Baptist de la Salle and other change-makers in the world. A student commented on how much she learned from the clients at Glide, that “the truly invisible people have the most cracks and bruises; they have the most stories and are the possessors of the greatest strength of all.” Such experiences deepen their learning.

In addition to the experience at Glide, students engage in service learning, which is a pedagogy that links practice to theory, and students serve at local agencies and reflect on how such work relates to their classroom learning.⁴ While service learning is practiced at secular institutions, it is infused with Lasallian

² <http://www.glide.org/>

³ Martin Luther King Jr.’s “World House,” is the first article students read during the semester they go to Glide. It is from his final book *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Beacon Press, 1968.

principles. After her first semester of service learning, one of my students changed her career trajectory to focus on social justice issues in the non-profit sector:

While at Saint Mary's I have been introduced to and have fallen in love with the ideas of social justice and service-learning ... I have learned how to give marginalized groups the dignity and respect they deserve ... I have realized how much I love working behind the scenes to make things happen—researching, organizing, problem solving, impacting large groups of people, caring for the most vulnerable of populations, listening to the silenced and forgotten, living in community with the people whom I serve and making a difference in the lives of a diverse population of people.

Through helping students find their passion to create change, we keep hope alive. Becoming a Lasallian educator has given me the tools and support to foster this type of self-discovery.

Having students develop their own call to action is a central goal in my teaching. In a 2008 lecture Reverend J. Michael Miller gave for the Henning Institute and The Bishop John S. Cummings Institute lecture series entitled, "What Makes a Catholic Higher Education Distinctive," Miller explained, "In our Catholic tradition, learning is aimed at awakening in all students a genuine passion for justice and a desire to be moral and responsible citizens of the world." As Miller described, these are all important aspects of the Catholic education tradition, which he explained is "a study of serious contemporary problems in areas such as the dignity of human life, the promotion of justice for all, quality of family life, the protection of nature, the search for peace and political stability."⁵ This Catholic and Lasallian ethos extends into all of my classes from environmental responsibility and democracy to early American history.

In this Lasallian student-centered approach to teaching and learning, I encourage students to critically examine the issues of the day and their roles as change-makers. Such goals are at the heart of a Lasallian education. In her end of year assessment, a student wrote:

What I have learned through my service learning is that to never judge a book by its cover. My mother has been telling me that for years, ever since I was a young girl, but I never thought of it as a moral obligation until the service at Glide....It was very hard for me to understand the pain and suffering the clients must feel when they are struggling to fulfill a basic human need....The service learning also taught me not to accept things for how they appear. And that if you are outraged or upset about the condition of humanity, you can take small steps to change that particular aspect of the human condition. Being that, if there is something that upsets you on a deep personal level, you can actually change the community around you. I learned this with every facet of my service learning.

Saint Mary's has recently been named as one of the top forty colleges that change lives.⁶ Our Lasallian emphasis on community engagement is being recognized nationally. By teaching at Saint Mary's, I have learned and embraced the pedagogy of service learning, which enables me to link practice to theory, and have students not only study poverty, but serve the poor. In a 2010 Convocation Address at Saint Mary's, Brother Carlos Alvaro explained, "I am convinced that the educator who assumes his vocation

⁴ For more information on service learning, see Susan Benigni Cipolli, *Service Learning and Social Justice: Engaging Students in Social Change*, Roman & Littlefield, 2008; Andrew Furco and Shelly H. Billig, eds., *Service Learning: The Essence of the Pedagogy*, Information Age Publishing, 2001.

⁵ Lecture delivered April 5, 2008.

⁶ Lauren Pope and Hilary Masell Oswald, *Colleges that Change Lives: 40 Colleges that will Change the Way You Think about Colleges*, Penguin Books, 2013.

with integrity and dedication must also do it from the conviction that there is goodness, potential, and the ability to fight for a better world in every young person, in every child, in every adult with whom we share our lives as teachers.” Through their service learning, students are actually actively creating that better world.

In their senior year, students in my program create a portfolio of their college career, and at the core of their experience is the impact of service learning. Service changes their lives, and their future paths. A student described one such experience as she worked in a homeless shelter:

I have been able to make the community better by bettering an individual, who then oftentimes pays it forward. One day near the end of the month, a woman approached me in the front lobby of the dining room at St. Anthony’s and asked if we knew anyone who had a pair of walking shoes that she could have. She explained to me that the shopping cart that carried all of her belongings was stolen and she was left with just the clothes on her body. I went downstairs to the emergency closet to get her a pair of shoes and when I came up with the tennis shoes, a huge smile spread across her face and she it was her birthday and I had just made it so much better....As she was leaving, she gave me the warmest, most tender, enthusiastic, genuine, grateful hug that I have ever had. After this conversation and a number of other interactions with individuals lacking in material or monetary possessions, I started to realize how privileged I am and how much I have grown and journeyed in such impactful personal, interpersonal, communal, spiritual, and mental ways.

Another student worked at a transitional home for mothers and children, and not only helped motivate her clients, but she inspired herself to become a more compassionate teacher:

The most important and valuable experience ...was visiting with the mothers and children living in the house. While talking with the mothers I learned how difficult it was to find job openings, be hired, and keep a job while living in poverty. Working there made me reflect on the reality that some of the children transitioning out of homelessness could be in my future classroom. A big part of helping the women at the house was to make them feel important and make each woman realize their important roles in life such as working to help support themselves and their children.

Through their service work at low-income schools, other students found their own vocations:

I want to live a life committed to service which is why I have decided to pursue a teaching degree....Now that I know what it means to be Lasallian, there is nothing more Lasallian, in my opinion, than becoming a teacher. De la Salle believed in creating access to education to all children regardless of background and cultural factors. He believed that every child can learn. The Lasallian motto is “Enter to Learn, Leave to serve.” Teachers serve the communities they work in, educating children on how to become productive, responsible citizens of the world.

A student who worked at a low-income school in Oakland, reflected:

Just after my first week there, I was helping out a student with a math problem and suddenly the student starts to cry. I asked what was wrong and he just looked up at me and asked if I knew where his dad was and if he was coming back. My heart melted and I froze. It was at that moment that I knew I wanted to be a teacher who could make a change. I know I cannot bring that student’s father back but I do know that I can provide students with the opportunity to have a safe place to go for at least eight hours of the day.

This Lasallian pedagogical approach to student learning has a tremendous butterfly effect. A senior student commented on the idea of service, “If we teach children this lesson, it will resonate within them that they should do good not for themselves, but for the betterment of the world.” We energize our

students to go out and change the world, and they, in turn, inspire others. Many of my students intend to become elementary school teachers, so I feel a special Lasallian connection teaching teachers.

Saint Mary's has nurtured my desires to develop meaningful relationships with my students. In *Meditation 180.3*, John Baptist de la Salle writes, "You can perform miracles by touching the hearts of those entrusted to your care." Reaching students personally, spiritually and academically are paramount to my goals as a teacher. I have been able to adopt de la Salle's methods in my own classroom by empowering students to take responsibility for helping one another in small group work, leading discussions, and creating a class culture in which we are all equal and respected. De la Salle called us to be advocates for our students. I consider it sacred. A true education is not about filling their heads with facts, but about enabling them to fill their own hearts and minds, to find their zeal. We cannot do that if we do not build relationships with our students. I have seen my students grow in confidence and stand up for themselves and what they believe is right. This type of intensive work can only be fostered in an institution that seeks to address the needs of the whole person.

When students are mentored and supported, they feel empowered to take action. I am especially proud of a group of my students who took what they learned in our senior capstone class about power and privilege and created a campus wide workshop, "Yes I Can: Exploring the Label of (Dis)ability." They designed activities based on their intellectual questions about difference and privilege, and called attention to the struggles differently abled people have on our own campus and the wider world. This kind of action-based learning is central to Lasallian pedagogy.

At the end of my first year at Saint Mary's, I sat in the pew in my regalia at my first Convocation as Brother Carlos Alvaro delivered his address and declared that "being a teacher is an act of revolution." Chills ran through me, as I looked around the breath-taking chapel, and realized, yes, I am Lasallian. Since that first year, I have immersed myself more and more in Lasallian history and pedagogy so that I can keep hope alive. For Lasallian educators, hope is more than an idea, it is a call to action.

My Journey as a Lasallian Educator

By

Rebecca A. Proehl, Ph.D.

Professor, Educational Leadership

Saint Mary's College of California

As with many religious orders, the De La Salle Christian Brothers are facing dwindling numbers of Brothers while the need for their work – educating the impoverished - is increasing. To address this challenge, the order has actively partnered with lay associates to carry forward the Lasallian (or Christian Brother) tradition, which is a call “by God to the educational service of the poor ... acknowledging that God calls us to bring creative and generous responses to the world of the poor today, through fidelity to our founding charism” (De La Salle Brothers, n.d.).

In 2000, the Superior-General identified an approach to help lay associates fully understand and embrace the call to educate the poor. “We need to welcome enthusiastically those who wish to become Lasallian associates and help them create new and original ways of living the Lasallian charism” (Botana, n.d., p. 1). He further suggested that Brothers and lay associates alike need to “listen to, meditate upon, tell, and celebrate our founding story, the story of how we came to be and how we began to experience and perceive ourselves as original, different, and distinct” (Botana, n.d., p. 1).

When I first came to Saint Mary's College (SMC) as a faculty member, I knew very little about De La Salle, and I had never heard the term Lasallian educator. I was hired for my experience and competence in my area of expertise rather than because I bonded with the Lasallian mission. I came to teach at SMC later in my career with years of experience teaching graduate students. I arrived with a set of assumptions that I imagined would serve me well as it had done in my previous teaching. These included viewing my adult students as self-directed learners who knew what they wanted to learn and how to do so, seeing my role primarily as that of a subject-matter expert, and believing in the value of content-based assignments that had direct relevance for my adult students' *work* lives. I had established a rather tidy set of boundaries around how I interacted with my students and how I saw my role.

After many years of teaching at Saint Mary's College, I am now more knowledgeable about the Lasallian mission. I have attended numerous mission formation programs such as Soup and Substances sessions at the College, the Lasallian Social Justice Institute in El Paso and Juarez, MX, and the International Association of Lasallian Universities Institute in Rome. After participating in these activities and engaging in deep conversations about what it means to be a Lasallian educator, the way I view my role has radically changed, and I believe for the better. I now understand and have come to believe that the Lasallian educator is called to the vocation as educator. In the words of Quebengco (2006), “To teach in a Lasallian school should be viewed, not just as means of livelihood, a profession, but above all a vocation...” (p. 99). As such, Lasallian teachers take their responsibilities for their students and their development quite seriously, always recognizing each student's individuality and intrinsic dignity. De La Salle intentionally used the term “brother” rather than “master” (the term used for educators at that time), and he stressed that the brother [or teacher] must *accompany* the student on his [or her] educational journey. He chose this term to “characterize the kind of educational relationship of teacher to student that he envisioned, that of firmness and gentleness of a big brother to a younger brother” (Mouton, 2011, n.p.).

The example of the Lasallian educator has deeply influenced my pedagogical approach. Though I still respect the knowledge and skills my students bring to their studies, I no longer view them simply as self-

directed learners who are capable of managing their educational experience. I now know that my doctoral students, just as undergraduate students, can easily fall behind in their studies, become overwhelmed and discouraged, and lose sight of their goals. I also know that students who come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds or who speak English-as-second language are greatly challenged by graduate study – though they may be outstanding practitioners. Keeping this in mind, today I consistently reach out to my students to offer encouragement and support, a sympathetic ear, an extra tutorial session, or a session in the library. I have set up dissertation support groups to keep students who are no longer attending classes in touch with their peers and me. I know which of my students are in danger of falling through the cracks, and I do all I can to prevent that from happening. I certainly am not always successful but it is not for the lack of trying.

I have also come to realize that graduate education can (and should) encompass more than cognitive skills alone. The Lasallian educator, as I understand it, is concerned with students' total development including their emotional, spiritual, and physical development. Related, teachers during De La Salle's time were charged with helping students develop those values that were appropriate for a Christian. In more contemporary times, the Christian Brothers and their lay partners provide a holistic, values-based education that integrates Catholic thought and tradition with other traditions and cultures.

In my own teaching, I too have come to be concerned about my students' total development in sharp contrast to my previous teaching experiences with adult professionals. I want my students to be touched by their educational journey, inspired to be advocates for social justice, and willing to be risk-takers for innovation. As such, my teaching practices have changed dramatically to include affective dimensions of instruction as well as cognitive. For example, I use videos and movies that touch the heart, involve students in community-based research projects, and have assignments where students examine educational innovations that address social injustice. I have also designed an elective course called Innovations in Education where students develop and implement a social justice innovation about which they have great passion but have not had the time, courage, or energy to create. I would not have offered such a course in my previous institutions because frankly I would not have thought of it. It is because of my commitment to the Lasallian mission that I now want my doctoral students to take their skills, knowledge, and personal commitment to develop programs that extend the Lasallian mission into new venues.

Similarly I have come to realize that *deep learning* occurs when students are engaged in cycles of action and reflection and are deeply engrossed in the subjects they are studying rather than passively listening to my lectures. I integrate theory with the practical issues and concerns that my students face in their daily working lives. I still give lectures in my courses but they are preceded or followed by an experience where students have to grapple with the material, make the information their own, and are called to some type of action. For example, I give students a case study called the Case of Mr. Singh before presenting material on how national culture affects one's values and attitudes. The students are generally harsh on Mr. Singh, and most are ready to fire him on the spot. After my presentation, I have them return to their small groups to discuss the case again with a different level of knowledge. For many, their perspectives are changed, as are their recommendations for how to deal with Mr. Singh. The discussion does not end there; I additionally ask them to examine how and why their beliefs changed. I further challenge them to explore how their new insights can be transferred into their work setting – especially while facing colleagues who hold radically different values and attitudes. I often ask them to put their reflections in writing because many students learn best what they feel and believe by writing about their experiences. In my former life, I often used case studies but I did not challenge my students to reflect on their values and attitudes and commit their thinking in writing. Additionally I did not have

writing assignments that involved personal reflection though now that seems like a most reasonable and worthwhile assignment.

Interestingly, though I now focus more on the affective domain in my teaching, I also am a more rigorous instructor, challenging students to reach beyond what they believe they are capable. I have been inspired by the educational approach of many Lasallian schools especially in developing countries that only admit the poorest students while still maintaining high academic standards. The five Lasallian Principles that are practiced at our College have also influenced me including the focus on quality education where “students, staff and faculty think critically and examine our world in light of faith”.

While the Ed.D. Program admits students who are strong academically, many still have doubts about their ability to successfully complete a doctoral program especially the dissertation. Taking a lesson from the Lasallian schools working with the poorest students, I do all I can to set a high bar and motivate my students to reach that bar. I often receive feedback from them, stating they appreciate the high standards that I hold (though they may not enjoy the emphasis on excelling at the time). Of course, this means that I must do my part to support the students to achieve their best work. My feedback and analysis of their work must be in-depth and extensive while still communicating that I believe they can accomplish the highest levels of educational quality. Additionally I must interact with the students so they are not intimidated, but are energized to increase their level of commitment. I must admit that I am not always successful at this because of what I perceive as a lack of effort frustrates me. But there are success stories. I had to chuckle when one student wrote about his reaction to receiving his grade in my class:

Without a doubt, the proudest moment of my academic career (now spanning 26 years of formal schooling) was when I received an A- on a major paper in one of Professor Proehl's class... When I received the email confirming my grade on the assignment, I was at my niece's soccer game. Surely, the rest of the fans in the stands were wondering why this tall guy suddenly stood up and put his hands in the air, victorious, especially when nothing particularly interesting was happening on the field at the time. But I knew, of course, that I had just scored one of the most important goals of my life.

In addition to influencing how I teach and relate to my students, my research projects and scholarly interests have changed over time. I have conducted research on the Lasallian Social Justice Institute's impact on the participants and on their organizations when they returned to work, and I am currently planning a study on Lasallian Pedagogy. I have worked on collaborative research projects, for example, with the teaching staff at a small, urban Catholic school, serving minority youth in Stockton and with the staff at the Family Literacy Program in North Richmond, assessing the program's impact on immigrant children's school success. I am committed to conducting research that is aligned with the Lasallian mission and am inspired by Brother Gerard Rummery's invitation to investigate contemporary Lasallian topics such as examining such programs as the San Miguel schools, the many programs on behalf of street children, or the mixed communities of volunteers and brothers (Rummery, 2006, p. 168-169).

Finally, as I have learned more about John Baptiste De La Salle, I began to think differently about the Ed.D. program in which I teach. For example, De La Salle was an educational innovator, challenging the way education was practiced during his era, and the Christian Brothers who have followed him continued this trend. Additionally he focused his attention on the poor, and today while continuing that focus, Lasallian schools have extended their mission to address issues of poverty, social injustice, and alienation. Contemporary Lasallians in higher education suggest that,

The Lasallian vision ... should compel us to create anew an innovative Infrastructure in which our faculties, our research, our curricula empower us not only to teach the poor directly but also to help our students (even our most advantaged) learn and possess the 'tools' to change both the world and the systemic and structural forces that create the poor within the world "(De Thomasis, 2006, p. 60).

My Ed.D. faculty colleagues and I have grappled with how to address these challenges that stem from the present-day Lasallian mission and which are so appropriate for an educational leadership program. This has been a long journey, as any academic would well understand, but over time, we have come to a shared understanding of what we want our program to stand for by integrating the Lasallian emphasis on innovation and social justice. For example, we encourage our students and faculty to focus on research, which addresses both the causes of inequities—in services, in institutional policies and practices, and in cultural norms and expectations—and the effects that these inequities have on students, parents, and teachers. We have incorporated three research cycles throughout the curriculum that introduce students to different forms of action research, designed to bring about transformative change. Each cycle is woven across five different courses, creating a synthesizing experience while students study different subject matter. For example, our students learn about quantitative and qualitative research by conducting community-based research with local schools and community-based organizations. The faculty and students work collaboratively with the community partners such as Urban Montessori, a new public charter school in Oakland, to address the organization's pressing needs, namely, bringing a Montessori education to a diverse group of students. The research cycle culminates with a final presentation of the research findings at the site itself.

This shift in focus, which integrates multiple research cycles into the curriculum, concentrating heavily on poverty and its causes, is a *radical* shift from our previous emphasis. We are emboldened to do so, in part, because of the call by the Superior-General of the Christian Brothers, asking that "Brothers and Lasallian partners continue to take part in building a more just and sharing world [where] they support and participate in programs, movements, structures, and educational initiatives that respond effectively to all forms of poverty, new and old."

My thinking about my relationship with my faculty colleagues, staff, and students has also been influenced by what I have learned about De La Salle. The founder of the Christian Brothers formed a community of teachers who "together and by association" developed the schools and their pedagogical models. Teaching in community continues to be central to the Lasallian charism, and collegiality in all decision-making processes is vital to the success of the community. When I attended the International Lasallian Leadership Institute in Rome, I was struck by one of the speakers who made a distinction between communities and organizations. He said that we cannot have a Lasallian school without a community, no matter how well organized we are. He also stated that we should not confuse the term "community" with "organization" -- we *belong* to a community but we *work* in an organization. In order for Lasallian schools to thrive, according to our speaker, members must believe they are part of a community with a shared vision and common set of values.

It is rather easy to see how a community of brothers can live "together and in association;" it becomes more challenging when thinking about laypersons. Botano, in exploring how the central concept of association applies to lay partners, helps explain, "The process of the shared mission gives rise to the Lasallian association and is the hinge upon which the whole process turns...It is a bond of solidarity between persons for a mission and for that matter makes them interdependent" (as cited in Quebengco, 2006, pp. 106 – 107).

In light of this distinction, our Ed.D. faculty, guided by our shared vision, strives to work together and learn from each other in order to become a community of learners. In institutions of higher education where individuality and autonomy are highly valued, it is often difficult to achieve this level of community; as a faculty, we often struggle with the competing goals of seeking autonomy while also searching for community. But more so than any department in which I have ever worked, our faculty is committed to serving our students. I like to think that our goal is “not collegiality or friendship among associates...neither is it membership in an “elite” group, but [our goal is] to share the mission, deepen [our] commitment to it, and convert this into a lifelong journey” (Quebengco, 2006, p. 107).

As we endeavor to achieve our educational mission, we meet frequently to design our curriculum, discuss our students, plan program events, assess student-learning outcomes, and engage in ongoing professional development. We also consistently reach out to bring our students and alumni into a relationship with each other and with us through program-sponsored events and social gatherings. Additionally, I always emphasize that our faculty and students are part of a large and growing international network of Lasallian schools, thus extending the boundaries of our Lasallian community to the world-at-large. There is no doubt in my mind that the emphasis we place on community – imperfect as it is – is a direct response to being part of a Lasallian college.

In closing, I came to Saint Mary’s College because of its reputation for academic quality, I was afforded an opportunity to teach adult students, the campus itself was beautiful, the College was well-established, and I desperately wanted to leave my other position. None of the reasons had anything to do with the Catholic or Lasallian nature of the College. Over time, I have long forgotten my other job, the emphasis on academic quality has become second nature, and I am not even aware at times of the beautiful campus. What has emerged as the constant in my work at Saint Mary’s has been my evolution as a Lasallian educator. My journey has not been a linear one; there have been many ups and downs. I have experienced numerous disappointments when not acting in accord with my personal values or when College decisions were made that did not seem aligned with espoused Lasallian values. I often become frustrated with my faculty colleagues, discouraged by my students’ performance, or stymied by bureaucratic constraints. But what does inspire and encourage me is my ongoing commitment to the Lasallian mission and my heart-felt aspiration that my students will be transformed by their experience at Saint Mary’s – much as I have been transformed.

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Reflections on Being a Lasallian Educator

By

Dr. Suzy Thomas,
Graduate Counseling Program
Kalmanovitz School of Education

An essay in response to the question: How has teaching at Saint Mary's College shaped your vision as a teacher and influenced your pedagogy?

I have been an educator for 25 years, beginning as a classroom teacher at an alternative school in Berkeley. My teaching career started with a creative writing course titled "Writing: Process and Product" for students in middle and high school. I designed an original curriculum that arose out of an interactive process with the students, in which I sought feedback from them and revised the course in response to my own perceptions of what was working well and the students' comments and reactions. At the time, I had not studied the philosophy of St. John Baptist de la Salle, and so I did not know that my own approach mirrored those principles in several important ways. I was naturally drawn toward creating an inclusive, accessible, student-centered classroom intended to cultivate critical thinking among students and lifelong learning for myself. It made sense to me that education should be practical and relevant, not ethereal, arbitrary, or intimidating. Even then, my orientation toward teaching was to be of service, to be genuine and connect with the students, and to help them engage in meaningful inquiry with themselves, with each other, and with the literature they were reading and the writing they were doing. I wanted them to be affected by the material, transformed by their own writing, moved by the work of their peers. I wanted them to perceive literature and poetry as applicable to their own lives. I approached my teaching with creativity and risk-taking—asking them to sit on the floor and play with clay and postcards, taking them outside to write about whatever they noticed, forming peer response groups so that I was not the only one evaluating their work. I grew as I learned how to play with the process and patiently wait for the product, to allow myself to revise an approach in the moment if what I was doing was not working, and always to be aware of the needs of the students. So, in many ways, the principles of Lasallian education were already in me. When I began teaching at Saint Mary's College, I knew immediately I was in the right place and that I would be able to do the teaching I wanted to do and to grow along the way.

My teaching has been shaped by many factors, and chief among them is the College Mission. The Mission resonated with me right away, because of my orientation toward service, my concern for social justice, and my love of liberal arts and learning. But when I first began to study the Mission in preparation for review during the tenure process, I felt baffled by the task of explaining what seemed to me to be "lofty ideals" such as probing "deeply the mystery of existence" and being "motivated by faith and zeal." Intuitively, I knew that these concepts mattered to me and reflected my teaching values, but I wanted to find a way to express my connection with them that would be concrete and tangible.

Connections between

theory and practice have become a thread in my scholarship, but started as almost a "bone of contention" for me as an undergraduate and doctoral student, when I felt frustrated by the fact that most of my professors seemed out of touch with the present day and unwilling to adapt or revise lectures that they had been delivering in the same way for years. I decided early on that I would always make an effort to maintain currency in my field, to be humble and open to new learning, and to push against the tide of burnout that can creep in when one is not exposed to new ideas or willing to be challenged to grow and change. This interplay between theory and practice eventually became a formal

part of my research agenda, and continues to support my professional health as I progress in my teaching career.

In addition to the Mission itself as a guiding force in the development of my vision as an educator, the process of writing the Form A during my pre-tenure years at Saint Mary's College was instrumental in helping me to formally define my teaching philosophy and to appreciate the connections between my teaching and Lasallian principles. Many people experience the tenure process as a grueling task to be dreaded and survived. For me, it was an intellectually challenging and stimulating period of time, in which I became more conscious about the reasons why Saint Mary's College had felt like a perfect fit for me from the beginning. I experienced the process as a dynamic interaction between me and my colleagues—and, most importantly, between me and my students as I thought more intentionally about my teaching and sought to improve my technique. This was a form of reflective practice in and of itself, something I value in my work and life, and something I appreciate about the culture of Saint Mary's College—that we are given time and space and support for reflection in order to mature as teachers and scholars. I have worked hard to nurture a scholarship agenda that is intrinsically connected to my teaching, and to discover new teaching practices through my own scholarly endeavors in return. The fact that all three strands of teaching, scholarship, and service are equally valued at Saint Mary's College has afforded me the freedom and support to pursue both enduring and new lines of inquiry during my career.

During my tenure review process, I outlined 10 principles that guide my teaching, in an effort to explicitly describe my understanding of the Mission in concrete terms. These principles continue to influence my practice and reinforce the impact of the Mission and the R&T process on my teaching. My guiding principles include the following:

Be Student-Centered. This is the most important teaching principle that I follow, and a key piece of Lasallian principles. Being student-centered means meeting students where they are, encouraging them to grow and develop internally and interpersonally, spending time together, listening to them, and getting to know them. Being student-centered means caring about students and dedicating time to them. It means laughing with them, hearing their life stories, and watching them evolve over time as professionals. It means that my work is indeed “motivated by faith and zeal.”

Be Yourself. Another key piece of my teaching philosophy is to be myself with my students. Students appreciate my honesty, my follow-through, my willingness to admit what I do not know and consult with others, and my sense of humor. I could not be myself with students if I felt unable to laugh with them or to encourage them to laugh.

Be a Good Role Model. Teaching is modeling, and in a counseling program, this manifests itself in some unique ways. Some general ethical guidelines in the field of counseling include displaying a “one-down” approach to de-emphasize power; using self-disclosure only when it would benefit the client or promote clarity; displaying genuineness, empathy and a nonjudgmental attitude; listening carefully, verbally and nonverbally; confronting clients by “surfacing discrepancies” in their behaviors to encourage growth and awareness; and, above all, always keeping the principle of “client welfare” in mind, which means preventing harm and promoting healing. These are only a few of the principles of ethical counseling practice, but they represent good examples of some of the modeling I engage in regularly in the classroom.

Be Curious. I am curious about my students and their interests. I want to know what is important to them, what they are uncertain about, and what they disagree with. I feel strongly about fostering a classroom climate where students feel confident that any question is worth asking. I am open to the idea that the students may discover issues that have not occurred to me and that these can inform the class curriculum.

Be Organized. It is important to have a good syllabus and solid materials to use in every class, and to be able to manage the class and the time spent on lectures and activities. I attempt to balance the need for structure in a class with the goal of allowing for unexpected topics or questions, and it takes good time management and classroom management skills to achieve this balance.

Be Excited About What You Teach. As I mentioned, I truly love my field of work and what I am able to achieve in it; I think it is important to convey my enthusiasm and “zeal” to my students, and I do this regularly in lectures and in the discussion questions I pose. I tell students how much I value counseling theory, for example, because it provides the “how” behind the “what” in our work. Being excited about what I teach means that I am self-motivated to remain current in my field, to increase my own knowledge and to update my class materials. My enthusiasm about the work I do helps me to make the class material accessible to students.

Be Involved. In order for me to be competent in my field, I must maintain awareness of current trends and issues. Reading professional journals, attending and presenting at conferences, and being involved in professional organizations are some of the ways I keep my teaching fresh and accurate. I am professionally and even personally enriched by my involvement in the greater counseling community.

Be Flexible. One way to be flexible is to be willing to be wrong or to have students disagree, and to handle this with openness, genuine curiosity, and humility. It is important to be flexible in methods of instruction in order to respect different learning styles. I use multiple approaches in all of my classes, and I vary the evaluation methods to correspond with the type of material being presented. With regard to teaching styles, I combine lecture, discussion, and activities in all of my courses.

Be Clear. It is important to be clear with students about expectations, instructions and directions, as well as learning goals and outcomes for each course. It is not enough to have these listed on the syllabus, though that is a given; these items must also be communicated to the students regularly and in verbal and written formats.

Be of Service. Service is an integral part of all three aspects of the Mission of the College, in that we are called upon to be of service to our students and to those less fortunate or in need. It is my job to be helpful to my students, to advise them on the practical aspects of meeting their graduation requirements and the larger issues that arise in graduate school. I am also committed to “demystifying the process” wherever possible. There is often little help in graduate school, as if the process of suffering through it alone is the only way to grow. This is not the case at Saint Mary’s College, and that is one more reason why I am especially pleased to teach here. We are known for going out of our way to support and care for our students, who are “given to (our) care by God,” as stated in the Mission. As I mentioned above, something I value about the experience of teaching at Saint Mary’s College is the encouragement and support for reflective practice. This has been a great source of satisfaction for me over the years, and has fostered within me a commitment to renewal in the form of regular course revision, a wide range of professional development activities that help me to maintain excitement about my teaching, and the willingness to be involved in designing new courses. I have a lively agenda of scholarly interests and pursuits that inspires and challenges me professionally, focusing primarily on professional development for counselors and school-based reform. I value time spent in reflection between semesters, that allows for inspiration to emerge in order for me to make a new connection, take a new risk, change something about a class, or begin a new scholarship project. Another primary factor that has shaped my identity as a Lasallian educator is the collaboration I have experienced and sought out with colleagues. I have collaborated with colleagues at Saint Mary’s College, in other educational institutions, and in community contexts, to submit proposals to present at professional conferences, on various writing and research projects, and in the development of new professional organizations and events within my field. I also engage in collaboration in the form of service as a faculty mentor to part-time and junior faculty members. Mentoring is both a strand of my scholarship and a personal commitment of mine. During my time at Saint Mary’s College, I have

mentored several full-time faculty and numerous part-time faculty with guidance on curriculum, consultation about student issues, assistance with professional development activities, and lots of encouragement and support. I grew up in a family that valued and regularly participated in service through volunteer work, charitable donations, and involvement in political campaigns. For me, working as an educator is a vocation, and I am drawn naturally to service.

The service component of working at Saint Mary's College informs and enhances my teaching in a number of ways. Within the Graduate Counseling Program (GCP), service helps me to have a clearer "curriculum map" for all of the courses offered across our specializations, so that when I am reevaluating my own courses, I can do so intentionally and strategically. Service within the Kalmanovitz School of Education (KSOE) encourages collaborations—such as the research poster presentations that my students make in the spring to K-12 teachers attending a professional development workshop—and broadens my identity as an educator. Service across the campus not only allows me to feel more connected to the College, but also permits me to utilize more of my skills and support my interests in social justice—for example, my training as a facilitator for Campus of Difference led to my involvement in the design of a special session in Spanish for staff, which allowed me to spend time speaking Spanish with key members on our campus about their perceptions of respect and diversity at Saint Mary's College.

In the wider community, my service activities have a tangible impact on my ability to remain current in my field and avoid the type of disconnection and burnout I had witnessed in some of my professors. I have been facilitating a group of school counselor alumni for 12 years, and I gain a lot of pertinent information about new trends in K-12 schools from the members of this group. In my most recent project, the Action Research Network of the Americas (ARNA), I have been involved in the creation of an international group of educators and the preparation for our inaugural conference, which will take place May 1-2 in San Francisco. It feels very congruent to me to work in a field that is service-oriented, and an institution that is also service-oriented.

Of course, the students themselves are probably the most important influence on the development of my teaching at Saint Mary's College, and my ability to internalize and live in the ideals of the Mission. Our graduate students vary in age and experience and have made a conscious decision to pursue studies in the field of counseling. Most enter graduate school with a lifetime of learning within a more passive "transmission model," so I am careful about what I tell them when it is my own opinion. I do not want to "shape" their opinions simply based upon my own; instead, I want to give them good, solid information from various sources and to cultivate within them the tools for actively engaging with the material. In this way, I attempt to model the aims and ideals of the College's Mission Statement by helping students "to probe deeply the mystery of existence by cultivating the ways of knowing and the arts of thinking," integrating fundamental principles on a personal and professional level. I love seeing students discover their own compelling areas of inquiry and become passionate about issues. I enjoy the freedom of working in an institution where the pursuit of truth and knowledge is honored and where I can offer a variety of perspectives to my students and expect a variety of perspectives from them as well.

I am passionate about raising awareness among students regarding justice, equality, and diversity in all its forms. I regularly engage students in dialogue and group discussions on these topics in every course—in formal assignments and "teachable moments" that emerge spontaneously. In return, students report that my courses are challenging and engaging. They state that I encourage them to learn and inspire them to think deeply, to take risks to express diverse points of view in class. They find me to be enthusiastic and passionate about the subject matter and able to make what could be "dry" material fun and interesting, so that they leave class wanting to learn more. Students say that they feel safe and supported in my classroom, that I am kind, open, patient, available, accessible, prompt, and

responsive—and that it is clear that I care about them. These are the values I hold dearest about being a teacher, and it is rewarding to see these values reflected in student responses about my teaching. My lived experience at Saint Mary's College since my part-time days in 1998 has helped me to formalize what I knew as a K-12 classroom teacher, to take the "lofty ideals" of the Mission and embody them concretely in my life as an educator. This is indeed the right place for me, and I am eager to learn more.

Am I a Lasallian Educator?: Lessons from Hmo. José Cervantes

By
Dr. Raina J. León

I am a graduate of a Lasallian high school, West Catholic High School of Philadelphia. While a student there, I knew what it was to be dedicated to service and learning. I was a part of so many organizations that I believe that, at one time, I might have held a record for involvement at the school. As all students at the high school, I did community service, generally in supporting youth programs. I was even a part of a youth philanthropy group, granting funds to area nonprofit agencies. Still, with four years of experience as a student at West Catholic, I do not believe I truly understood what it is to be Lasallian. Now, I am on the other side of education, guiding others on learning journeys while still growing and continuing to grapple with defining the Lasallian educator and myself in relation to that identity. This past summer, while at the International Association of Lasallian Universities (2012) conference in Rome, I deepened my developing understanding of these concepts most especially through the presentation by the recently departed Hmo. José Cervantes. I recorded the session and took notes while he led about 60 educators from around the world to consider Lasallian pedagogy and how it might be enacted at the university level. Over the months since that conference and especially since Hmo. José's passing, I have returned more and more often to the questions that he raised there. In this essay, I will share with you some of the most powerful quotations from that experience in the hope that you, too, might be touched by his legacy and vision.

"Only he who has faith in himself and in his students can be an educator"

I write this essay in my second year as a professor of education. While I have incredible faith in my students and a dedication to supporting them as they develop their own skills as educators, I often have self-doubts. Am I providing them with the resources and support that they need at the time when it is needed? Will my students value my insight and advice? As a young, woman of color, how much will be discounted because of my multiple identities? Have I shown them the commitment to this vocation that I expect of them as future educators? I struggle to have faith in the quality of my instruction and facilitation of discussion of my students.

The quality that makes me an educator is not an inherited faith that has gone unquestioned; it has been and continues to be challenged and yet persists in growth. As a teacher educator, I believe in modeling best education practices in the field. My students see my lesson plans for each session. They see my process as I refine my lessons each semester. They participate in my refining of rubrics for graded assignments. Each semester, I try to improve upon at least one area of my instruction, including my ability to step aside and let my students be the leaders they already are.

"If you do not know people, you cannot help them."

Teaching is not a one-sided event. Performing for my students my play on instruction as "the sage on the stage" is not working with them in the spirit of gaining an enriched education. This requires me as teacher-student with my student-teachers to build an inclusive community. We need to know and be open about our strengths and our weaknesses, using the former to scaffold the latter. We have to tell stories and really listen to them. Years ago, I remember saying to a friend that a person is not real to me until I have seen them cry. These days I would not say that I need tears to feel closeness and caring, but I do need stories. They open the heart, creating pathways of commonalities, schema upon which to build new frames for knowledge. I believe that the Lasallian educator cares enough about others to seek to know. To Hmo. José's quotation I would add that if your students do not know you, you do not

have a classroom community in which they can learn and you can grow. Lasallian educators share parts of themselves to develop authentic, appropriate and enriching relationships with students.

De La Salle invites the teacher to walk a personal journey, going beyond necessity to fulfill his/her duty as a mission.

There is no recipe for how to become a Lasallian educator. At IALU, Hmo. José noted that, the Lasallian teacher “is a professional; lives his educational mission with a salvific intentionality; is a mature, calm, quiet person who speaks little and wisely; is the ‘guardian angel’ of his students and a minister and ambassador of Jesus Christ; dispenses His mysteries; lives the ‘Jacob’s Ladder’; knows, loves and imitates De La Salle; lives her spirituality and participates in her charism (define); considers herself the heir and follow of the inspiration and the mission of the founder; works in association and with a sense of community; challenges his/her pupils; lives the spirit of the institution (that of faith and zeal); and is consistent as a model and reference for the students.” How does one develop all of these characteristics? Even with these defined traits, there is more that is unnamed about the Lasallian educator. What of the sacrifice inherent in giving in oneself to others? What of engaging students in dialogue on equal terms and subverting power hierarchies so that students can be leaders in their own education, speakers of their own stories? What of the zeal to speak for the welfare of students that goes beyond educating them and into political and social advocacy? My personal journey challenges me to explore these questions in expanding my educational practice.

Lasallian pedagogy is an expression of a charism.

What exists universally is a common source of inspiration, a common visible charism.

As long as you are alive, you have a charism; I exist, because I have a charism.

Throughout Hmo. José’s presentation, he explored “charism”. It was a word that I have heard tossed around in many Lasallian circles. Charism, gift of God, is, as I would define it, is that you are meant to do. It is your way of being and acting within the world.

Despite my doubts, I am an educator. I was one long before I made the decision to become an English teacher to teach multicultural, contemporary literature and thereby have an impact on fostering conversations between cultures, supporting the development of empathetic, global citizens, and challenging systems of oppression. That decision started me on the educational journey that led me here.

The role of the teacher educator is sacred. This is my vocation; this is the home of my zeal. Each day I try to become a better educator for the benefit of my students and theirs. I know I am one of the many who guide those who will shape the future by educating our children, as ALL children are OUR children. The world of peace and justice I hope to see may come through those children after learning lessons from teachers that I or other teacher educators have taught. This charism is sacred, special, and not to be treated lightly. Perhaps St. John Baptist De La Salle and Hmo. José Cervantes would agree. I hope so as I strive to become the Lasallian educator each envisioned in different times and places and yet with the same clarity. I know, too, that I have been transformed.

Understanding the Catholic, Lasallian, and Liberal Arts Traditions

By

Elise Y. Wong

Cataloging and Reference Librarian

Saint Mary's College of California

On August 15, 2012, Brother Ron's last annual staff day, he shared with the staff that the upcoming sesquicentennial year is an occasion not only to celebrate, but to reflect on the meaning of the College's traditions and mission. Brother Ron's memorable presidential reflections prompted me to reflect how my work and activities here at Saint Mary's College of California since December 2009 have supported the traditions and mission of College. My first step is to take a closer look at the College's three-prong (Catholic, Lasallian, and liberal arts) traditions, and how these traditions are integral parts of the College's mission. I believe that it is only through the perpetual effort of understanding the College's educational philosophies and mission that my future plans and goals in the College can be properly guided and actualized throughout my spiritual journey and professional growth.

How is the Catholic tradition an integral part of the College's mission?

The College's Catholic tradition emphasizes the fostering of the dignity, integrity, and morality of the human person from Christian theological perspectives. The Catholic tradition manifests the divine goodness, extends the love of humankind towards one another, and embraces individuals coming from all religious and spiritual backgrounds. The longevity of the Catholic tradition is extended through a pedagogy that strives to integrate both intellectual and spiritual journeys in the quest for truth. While the mission of the College is built on the steadfast principles of Catholic values, the College cultivates a learning environment that promotes engaging and stimulating discourses in seeking the unity of faith and reason. Even though we are not all Catholics, we all benefit from the Catholic tradition. The bond of community is strengthened in the presence of God through the immersion of diverse spiritual and religious experiences that celebrate the sacramental lives of the learned individuals who are committed to reach out and touch the hearts and souls of the others.

How is the Lasallian tradition an integral part of the College's mission?

The College's Lasallian tradition is defined by its five core principles: faith in the presence of God; quality education; concern for the poor and social justice; respect for all persons; and inclusive community. As an extension of the Catholic mission and the teachings of St. John Baptist de La Salle, the Lasallian tradition is dedicated to inspire lives through educating the poor and transforming individuals to become practitioners of social justice for the society and common good.

The Lasallian principles foster a safe and an inclusive community among the Faculty, staff, and students. Mutual understanding and respect for all persons is preserved through sensitivity and inclusion of the cultural, social, and economic diversities in the campus community. Immersed in a service oriented environment where Lasallian teachings and practices are established as the core foundations, individuals equipped with the will to learn are being prepared to become the future Lasallian educators and leaders of the community. Through the education we receive, we develop leadership qualities and a sense of social responsibility within us, and contribute in whatever small ways to right social, ethical and environmental injustice. As we are learning ways to help the disadvantaged and underprivileged coming from varied social, cultural, economic backgrounds, we become aware of regional and global concerns and more determined to change the world.

How is the liberal arts tradition an integral part of the College's mission?

Like the Catholic and Lasallian traditions, the philosophy of the liberal arts tradition is centered on the cultivation of the moral virtues within oneself and the student-centered community. In the process of becoming a learned scholar and reflective thinker, one nurtures the passion for lifelong learning and to acquire knowledge and wisdom, as well as the intellectual skills to apply that knowledge into practical learning experience.

The mission of a liberal arts college is to educate individuals to become spiritual, compassionate and responsible leaders. At the heart of the liberal arts tradition lays the core foundation of the Collegiate Seminar. Drawing from the Great Books from various ages and cultures, the liberal arts curriculum integrates branches of knowledge from arts, sciences, education, and business to inspire and lead learners to live a balanced and enriching spiritual and humanistic life.

The core curriculum is a practical adaptation of the liberal arts tradition. Combining theory and practice, the learning goals in the three categories—habits of mind, pathways to knowledge, and engaging the world, are the essential ingredients needed to foster scholarship and leadership qualities in our students, to prepare them to become the reflective thinkers, responsible citizens, and democratic leaders of the 21st century.

In what ways can I support the College's Catholic, Lasallian, and liberal arts tradition?

It is important to remember that the weight of the College's mission is supported by the three-prong traditions. It seems logical to start my examination with the Catholic tradition, proceed to the Lasallian tradition, and complete the cycle with the liberal arts tradition. The College's Website provided many resources that helped me explore the three traditions. I came across three sources that have inspired and guided my will to put the traditions into practice.

"Love and knowledge: the Heart of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition" by Dale Lauderville is an essay about the challenges of the Catholic intellectual tradition in shaping the changing trends of society and higher education today. Father Lauderville observed that Catholic thinkers are entrusted with the mission to use love and knowledge as driving forces to reconcile the tension between faith and reason. In a Catholic higher education environment sustained by the three aspects of love (agape, eros, and philia), the pursuit of knowledge and the shared concern for the common good are conveyed through dialogue and communication. Students as embodied thinkers are guided to explore the metaphysical mysteries of human existence as well as the dynamic social relations of being in the world through critical or methodical inquiry.

Sharing the Lasallian Mission: six orientation/Lasallian formation seminars for faculty, staff, students, parents is a series of oral interviews with the Saint Mary's College Professors of the Year 1992-2004. Saint Mary's College provides a passionate and diverse environment for the lifelong learners coming from various religious traditions. The campus is a safe zone for interfaith dialogues, intellectual partnership, and every other form of engagement within the grounds of peace, tolerance, and mutual respect. In this student-centered learning community, faculty, staff, and students work collectively towards promoting the Lasallian pedagogy of social justice and fostering responsible leaders who are committed to make a difference in the world.

Brother Mel's memoir, *Years of Yearning*, enables me to gain insights into an important time in Saint Mary's history. I was struck by how much of the College's strengths and challenges were shaped by the mission to defend its liberal arts tradition. The 60s was the best and worst of times. During his 28 years

of reign, Brother Mel not only successfully contended with the external climates affecting the College's stability, he managed to reconcile the various voices within the College regarding administrative matters. Under his leadership, the 4-1-4 calendar was implemented. Women were admitted for the first time to Saint Mary's College. Despite the financial challenges, Brother Mel raised funds for new facilities and residence halls. New programs were introduced. As the President of College, Brother Mel demonstrated tremendous wisdom and courage as he overcame the never-ending challenges by leading the College through several WASC accreditation visits. His everlasting legacy will continue to be reflected in the College's mission and its spiritual transformation in the years to come.

The campus offers many opportunities for staff to participate in activities that support the Catholic, Lasallian, and liberal arts traditions. Among the events sponsored by Office of Mission, Mission and Ministry Center, CILSA, Intercultural Center, and Human Resources, my favorites are the annual De La Salle week, the Soup and Substance meetings, and the professional development workshops. For the library staff, the 2012 De La Salle week was particularly exciting due to our participation in the post-it project. The library invited the community to contribute their thoughts and reflections on "What 'Together and by Association' means to us" on a post-it board that constituted a colorful image of a Lasallian five point star. Meeting the Brothers and attending the Soup and Substance special presentation were the highlights for me. It was eye-opening to meet with the Brothers who dedicated themselves to teaching disadvantaged youth and to listen to their stories and first-hand experiences at the St. Mary's Boys' School in Nyeri, Kenya.

The annual staff in-service day is an important themed event that marks the beginning of the new academic year with anticipations of continuing and new directions as indicated in the State of the College Address given in the previous year. The staff day is also an occasion for the staff to remember their role as Lasallian educators. I always appreciate the community time we share at the staff appreciation luncheons. The special short films presentations on Catholic involvement in social and environmental issues always leave the staff something to reflect on. As always, I look forward to the Soup and Substance gatherings and sharing my thoughts on the new readings of the year.

The Campus of Difference workshop was the first order of business on my list within six months of my arrival at Saint Mary's as a new staff. It was my first encounter of getting to know the cultural and social climate of the College. I was so impressed with the training that I continued to participate in several follow-up workshops sponsored by GSA (Gay Straight Alliance), Intercultural Center, Human Resources, CCIE (College Committee of Inclusive Excellence), and Staff Council, such as, the safe-zone workshops, and a series of staff workshops on cultural diversity, communication skills, and leadership development. The participants who attended these workshops with genuine openness and friendship bonded with one another. After we left the workshops, our positive learning experiences enable us to appreciate the fact that we as a group of dedicated individuals love working in the College together.

Gaelebration events were prepared campus-wide to kick off the Year of the Gael. In the spirit of celebrating the College's sesquicentennial year in 2013, the library was proud to host a current faculty scholarship exhibit (along with their citations and bibliographies) that showcased faculty's distinguished publications and artistic accomplishments. Out of the many spectacular events throughout the Year of the Gael, the great(est) conversations symposia series are definitely not to be missed. As part of the audience, I am confident to state that the crowd never ceases to be in awe of these scholars who share their passion in the Catholic intellectual tradition, Lasallian education, and the liberal arts commitment in promoting the common good. It is indeed a great honor for me to be part of the Saint Mary's College history during this special year. Happy 150th Birthday Saint Mary's and many more to come!

Resources

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Teaching and Learning at Saint Mary's College

By

Jennifer D Heung PhD

Department of Anthropology

I always knew I wanted to teach. I come from a family of teachers, with my grandfather who served as the principal of his village school in Guangzhou, China and both my parents who taught in Hong Kong. It is not unusual to still have distant relatives and family friends come up to me to reminisce about the time they were a student in my grandfather's class and my mother still gets letters from her former students, despite having migrated to the US over 30 years ago. At an early age, I got the sense that teaching was a valuable endeavor and it did not take long for me to realize that I also wanted to be a teacher. It was a path taken by many in my family and I was proud to follow in the tradition.

The day I received my doctorate in cultural anthropology, my grandfather was so proud, as if it was his own achievement, and coming from a culture that has a more collective orientation, in some ways it was. It would have been impossible for me to complete my PhD or even discover my love for anthropology without my grandfather being brave enough to leave his entire family and his Chinese medical practice to come to the US as a paper son. In many ways, so many of us are just a small link in a long line of decisions made by those before us.

It is important for me to reflect upon my own family's history and its impact on me as I contemplate how teaching at Saint Mary's College has shaped my vision as a teacher and also because it is difficult to understand one's current condition without appreciating and acknowledging your own past. The "whole person," as referred to in Lasallian pedagogy, comes with a history, a genealogy, and a specific cultural context. Without a doubt, my family has shaped my ideas of what it means to be a teacher since I had grown up around so many teachers who were always willing to help me, but I have also been blessed with several important mentors, who were pivotal in my development as an academic as well as an individual. But certainly, in the past 10 years, the social and cultural space of Saint Mary's College has played an important role in the continuing evolution of my teaching philosophy and pedagogy. Saint Mary's and the Lasallian tradition it follows corresponds quite well with many important tenants of anthropology and with the blending of these two, it has allowed me to focus on important aspects of teaching in compelling ways. In this pedagogical reflection I will discuss how focusing on the "whole person," continued spiritual exploration, and community building beyond the classroom has become vital motivations behind my teaching and approach to pedagogy.

Educating the Whole Person and Mutual Respect

Perhaps De La Salle's most fundamental contribution to education is his conviction that at the root of true teaching must lie an authentic love for the students and for the vocation of teaching. He grasped that a truly effective teacher-student relationship must be based on practical affection and mutual respect" (The Brothers of the Christian Schools 2009:20).

My introduction to anthropology changed my life. Growing up in a bicultural environment, I oftentimes had to negotiate and translate various expectations of the dominant society and that of my immigrant family. When I took my first anthropology course, it was the first academic discipline that accurately described my own life experiences and gave me a way to understand and make sense of the two cultural worlds I existed in. It was a liberating and empowering experience. Perhaps, more importantly,

studying anthropology suggested an exciting path for broader engagement with the world around me. This personal experience of empowerment, through anthropology, has strongly shaped my research interests and approach to teaching. Ultimately, for me, being an anthropologist requires social engagement and sensitivity to cultural difference, priorities which are strongly shared by the goals of Saint Mary's College and its Lasallian tradition.

As I began teaching, I was always aware of how relating personal experiences made the learning process more powerful. Especially as an anthropologist, valuing personal experiences and giving a voice to the underrepresented is central to how we approach our research. These goals are intrinsically linked to Saint Mary's Lasallian tradition which seeks to create a community based on "mutual understanding and respect." Furthermore, it was uplifting to be part of an educational community which explicitly links its mission to "defend[ing] the goodness, dignity and freedom of each person; and fosters sensitivity to social and ethical concerns."⁷ Moreover the explicit attention to these ideals allows one to be more cognizant as one teaches each day.

Each classroom has its own culture. Instructors need to identify the different cultural patterns and values that inform this space. Once I saw how anthropological concepts and ideas worked as analytical tools for understanding the social and cultural worlds we live in, I applied these tools to the classroom. Being aware of different cultural backgrounds of students and the different perspectives they may have prior to entering the classroom helps you to be a better teacher. In my teaching, I seek to reveal cultural assumptions to students about everyday issues so that they can begin to see how different cultures can have diverse ways of understanding the same concept. Central to my teaching philosophy is the belief that education should be a constant dialogue between instructor and students. In other words, learning is a dynamic process where students bring their own experiences to bear on specific concepts and topics introduced by the instructor. When students take an active role in influencing and shaping their own education, the learning of concepts and skills has more significance and students are more actively engaged in the learning process. Creating – and maintaining – a dialogue with my students means a constant balance on my part between giving student enough responsibilities to direct their own learning and providing sufficient guidance and structure for students to work in. The process of teaching cultivates students' own awareness of themselves and others. In addition, I also learn about my own teaching practice. Part of the reason why I love teaching is because as my students learn to draw kinship charts or engage in difficult discussions about race and gender, I also discover new ways to introduce important concepts, present difficult material, and perhaps most importantly, ask questions about my own teaching.

In particular the holistic approach advocated by anthropology, which utilizes an integrated perspective to understanding the human experience is very similar to Lasallian pedagogical principles which focus on the "whole person" in the educational process. Through the examination of all aspects of culture such as the political, economic, and social allows one to understand the different factors that can make up any given "perspective" and in turn cultivates an authentic teacher-student relationship that is truly based on mutual understanding. Acknowledging and being aware of cultural difference is a form of respect for others and is a means to work towards creating a truly inclusive community. I feel that my teaching philosophy, which is strongly linked to an anthropological perspective, is enhanced by Saint Mary's College Lasallian tradition that emphasizes critical thinking, questioning of fundamental beliefs and the need to make students socially aware individuals conscious of their place in the larger global community.

⁷ SMC Faculty Handbook pg.1

Spiritual Exploration

The Brother's school became places where the young were able to develop intellectually, socially, and spiritually, where they were able to determine where and how to advance in their capacities... (The Brothers of the Christian Schools 2009:20).

Working at a faith based institution is a unique experience. While the spiritual life of the College is not prescriptive, it is an integral part of the language, programming, and structure of the institution. We also have several Christian Brothers who still teach in the curriculum and their presence on campus is important as it serves as a reminder of the core motivations of some of our community members. I found this spiritual aspect of the campus quite compelling because it allowed me to delve deeper into my own spiritual explorations and I have been grateful for the space that is created at Saint Mary's College which encourages the exploration of spirituality.

Individuals at Saint Mary's College are open to many different kinds of spiritual explorations since ultimately these various forms of inquiries center around larger issues about the meaning of life and human existence. As an undergraduate, one of the most spiritually transformative experiences I had at the College was a mediation class with Brother Camilus. I had dabbled with different forms of meditation and had been an amateur mediator for several years, but this was the first formal introduction to the practice. It was powerful to me that a part of my college curriculum acknowledged and validated different forms of spirituality and I would discover other meditative practices later in life.

As an active Vipassana practitioner today, I still find time to join Brother Camilus who still leads meditation sessions. It has been wonderful to find many areas on campus where one can develop ways to be "present" in a daily practice and working at an institution where the spiritual aspects of a person is discussed, attended to, and developed makes it easier for me to delve deeper into my own spiritual practice. The openness to inter-faith dialogue is refreshing and energizing as we are able to see the strength in our diversity as well as the commonality in our needs for faith.

In...[De la Salle's] writings for the Brothers, he pointed out again and again how such a relationship is enacted day by day. Some examples: " Examine before God how you are acting in your ministry and whether you are failing in any of your responsibilities. Come to know yourself just as you are" (The Brothers of the Christian Schools 2009:20).

In relation to my own meditative practice of mindfulness, the phrase "come to know yourself just as you are" resonates quite strongly. Vipassana meditation techniques focus specifically on self-observation and through this direct experience, the nature of how one learns or not as the case may be is understood. In terms of teaching, nothing could be more useful than cultivating a sense of how one learns. Students who are able to reflect upon their own learning process are then able to discover how they learn and how they can improve the educational process for themselves. Becoming aware of how you learn can be an empowering endeavor as you realize the active role you can play. Learning to "know yourself" is a process and I believe it takes place as part of a constant dialogue between the students and the instructor. In other words, learning is a dynamic process where students bring their own reflections to bear on specific concepts and topics introduced by the instructor. When students take an active role in influencing and shaping their own education, the learning of concepts and skills has more significance and students are more actively engaged in the learning process. Creating – and maintaining – a dialogue with my students means a constant balance on my part between giving student enough responsibilities to direct their own learning and providing sufficient guidance and structure for students to work in.

A daily practice of meditation, where one pauses to cultivate self-awareness, is easily integrated into teaching and learning. I often encourage students to stop and reflect upon what they have learned or what they are having difficulties with. This is not only a sound pedagogical approach since an instructor receives valuable feedback about teaching effectiveness, but perhaps importantly, it highlights the actual *process* of teaching. The point I am trying to make here is that it is not always about the *content* or *what* is being taught, but self-awareness is about seeing the *process* by which learning takes place. Self-awareness is central to a mindful approach, where each situation is met with “right where you are” in terms of your current limitations and skills, which can change daily. As noted in many Eastern spiritual texts, “change is the only constant” and this certainly applies to pedagogy. An instructor’s own skills are different each day as well as the context of where students are during a particular class. Acknowledging this is part of honoring where we are at any given moment. As we remind ourselves that we are “whole” individuals, this means realizing that during the teaching process not everyone is going to be paying attention, read every single word from the assigned article *and* looked up each unfamiliar word. Knowing that each student, instructor, and even each teaching moment can be filled with imperfections is how one acknowledges the whole person. This practice of “knowing where you are” is both about the process of teaching and self-reflection. Honoring where I am and where the students are at any given moment is a practice, which I have inherited from my many years of spiritual meditation and readily integrate my own pedagogy and Lasallian principles.

COMMUNITY BUILDING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The Brothers’ vocation is a vocation to educational ministry, not to sacramental ministry. It is a lay vocation that has more in common with the people in the pew than with the pastor in the parish. ...Their ministry lay in their encounter, as teachers, with students and parents. And the value of the teaching encounter is what Lasallian educators today still use as a touchstone. This lay character allows for, encourages, and empowers the sense of companionship, the down-to-earthness, that characterizes the relationships found within a Lasallian school. There is a care for one another like that of an extended family. There is a sense of solidarity among all Lasallians, who know from daily experience the many modalities of the lay vocations that have sprung from the spiritual inspiration of John Baptist de La Salle. (La Salle Magazine 2006:9)

The metaphor of an extended family above is compelling to me as someone who grew up in an extended family with three generations under one roof. I was fortunate to have grown up with my grandparents and parents felt blessed to have two generations of elders who played a central part of my everyday life. This sentiment resonates with me and Lasallian pedagogy. Not only is the whole person attended to in the educational process, but in cultivating an awareness of the process of learning, one realizes learning is a lifelong process that never really stops – for the student or the instructor. This becomes apparent when students start to notice that nearly all aspects of their lives can be areas of discovery and learning. Everyday experiences can be framed by and linked back to classroom ideas, topics, and concepts. In essence, upon discovering that learning can take place almost anywhere, we realize that we all share in a community of learning. The educational process is no longer limited to just the classroom and what can be “recognizable” features of learning within that space. The “whole person” does not exist merely in the classroom, but in many different social, cultural, and economic spheres. Being able to cultivate this type of awareness of the larger community we all belong to as life-learner reflects a type of Lasallian pedagogy that has a strong impact on transformative student learning.

The companionship that is developed between students, professors, Brothers, and other community members is undeniable at Saint Mary's. Upon accepting a tenure-track job at the College, I was struck by a number of my close friends from my undergraduate time who were almost more excited about the prospect than I was. "You're living the dream!" was one response I received when I excitedly informed him of my job offer. I believe this sentiment speaks to the quality of relationship built within the learning community at our institution and the fondness one has for the type of community that is fostered here. Given the tenants of Lasallian pedagogy, it makes perfect sense that a larger learning community is central to the experience.

Concluding Thoughts

"Teach by example. Put into practice what you want your students to believe."

- From John Baptist de La Salle's *Meditations*.

I teach with intentionality and how I approach my teaching reflects, in part, my commitment to Lasallian pedagogy to develop the "full student" and to attend to the many dimensions of the human person. My work as an anthropologist also enhances these values and compliments them. The dimensions of the intellectual, spiritual and community needs of an individual all work in conjunction to bring into focus the many cultural aspects such as race, class, gender, and sexuality that make up the human experience. A learning moment can lead to transformative change, a real life change when a student has a moment that never lets her see the world the same way again. These types of changes are intrinsically linked to the education process. They only happen when you are engaged in dialogue, not lectures or rote memorization of facts and take into account different perspectives. In my teaching, I focus on the material but also remind students that learning means more than a letter grade. Rather, there is as much value in enjoying a specific reading as there is in getting an A on a quiz; both experiences are integral to of the student's spiritual and intellectual journey. We seek more than mere facts and instead, as the College's mission statement suggests, we ask difficult but important questions, even if they are uncomfortable to deal with and we do so in community and with mindfulness. The more I teach and the more I see my students transform from hesitant but interested students into confident and engaged learners, the more confidence I have in my role as pedagogue. As a part of the Lasallian tradition, I see myself as part of the learning process and continue to critically reflect upon on my learning and teaching processes along side my students as we all participate in a learning community that seeks to nurture each of us holistically.

The Brothers of Christian Schools

2009

La Salle Magazine

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