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While one may think that the teaching statement I provided as part of the dossier for the 2008 Excellence in Teaching Award less than two years ago might need little revision, the truth is that I have been engaged in a great deal of research and reflection since then for two papers I have written (Glennon 2008, 2009). The basic outlines of that statement and the values underlying it still ring true: education is as much about process as product, teachers and students are engaged in a communal enterprise in a search for truth, and I continue to structure that community through learning covenants that seek to promote freedom, responsibility, and mutuality. But further research and reflection into other pedagogical theories have pushed me to rethink certain elements. In particular, I have been exploring experiential learning theories and their relationship to the paradigm of Ignatian pedagogy, which makes sense given that I teach in a Jesuit school. Such exploration has deepened my approach and understanding of the teaching-learning community and my role in it.

Ignatian pedagogy grew out of the characteristics of Jesuit education that have been developed and refined for the past 450 years. The first component of that paradigm is context: “personal care and concern for the individual, which is a hallmark of Jesuit education, requires that the teacher become as conversant as possible with the life experience of the learner” (*Ignatian Pedagogy*

12). The ways that I have attempted considering context in the past have been to stay abreast of research and literature on effective pedagogy and to gather information from students in

class about their interests, learning experiences, and learning styles through brief written questionnaires and essays. While these have been beneficial, they have not always been enough to glean sufficient understanding of the cognitive development of students. This is important because through the learning covenants I am treating students as adults and asking them to move from an other directed to a self-directed learning framework, which is essential for transformative learning (see Freire 1970; Mezirow 2000). While that is an important goal, Robert Kegan, a cognitive developmental theorist, reminds me that I am asking students to make a fundamental shift in the way they see themselves and their world. This can be and has been a painful process for some students in my classes. Kegan rightly suggests that “all of us, as adult educators, need help in discerning how rapidly or gradually this shift in authority should optimally take place for that student, which is a function of how far he or she is along this particular bridge” (Kegan 2000, 66). The Ignatian emphasis on context requires that I understand where my students are in their development and structure my classes in ways that allow them to develop the skills to make the transition as adult learners rather than throwing all of the responsibility on them. Thus I find myself reading more extensively the research on student development (cognitive, ethical, social, spiritual, etc.), conducting individual meetings with most if not all of my students (something I have the luxury of doing), and providing guides and exercises for students to allow them to make the cognitive and developmental shifts needed for success (see Nathan 2005; Walvoord 2008; Lindholm and Astin 2008).

The second component in the Ignatian paradigm is experience, which refers to both the prior experiences in learning and life that students bring with them and to the direct and indirect experiences faculty create for them within and without the classroom (Korth, 282). The task of the educator is to find ways to bring these together so that the student can develop intellectually, affectively, ethically, and spiritually. This emphasis coincides well with my research and work on experiential learning since my days as a Carnegie Scholar. What I discovered with the help of my colleagues is that almost everything we do in the classroom provides some experience for our students, whether reading texts, writing papers, group discussions, field trips, service learning, or even lectures. But not all experience is of the same quality, which is a key focus of the Ignatian paradigm, and mirrors the concern of John Dewey, an early proponent of experiential education: “Hence the central problem of education based upon experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences” (1997, 27–28). In my work in the classroom, developing such quality experiences has involved a great deal of experimentation with active learning strategies (cooperative learning, simulations, role plays, and the like), continuous assessment (both qualitative and quantitative), and honest reflection (on the part of students and me). There have been many failures and successes along the way, both of which have enabled me to develop as a teacher and to see significant growth and formation “of the whole person” among many of my students.

The third and fourth components of the Ignatian paradigm are reflection and action. The premise is that the quality experiences students have in the educational setting will foster deep

reflection within the student on the meaning and value of what they are studying, its relationship to other dimensions of knowledge and the human search for truth, and generate internalized meanings and values that “impel the student to act, to do something consistent with this new conviction” (*Ignatian Pedagogy*, 19). At first look, this paradigm seemed to reverse my understanding of the praxis or action-reflection model common to the critical pedagogy of Freire and others, which has been foundational for my own efforts at educating about and involving students in the work of justice. According to Piaget, “Knowledge is derived from action. . . . To know an object is to act upon it and to transform it” (1979, 28–29). Similarly, Ira Shor contends, “Action is essential to gain knowledge and develop intelligence” (1992, 17). My initial development of a social justice action project in my senior seminar assumed that significant learning about justice is best achieved through concrete action, acting on one’s view of social justice, and reflection on that action, not through abstract reflection alone (Glennon, 2004). Upon further experimentation and reflection, however, I have realized that this is not fully the case. The social justice action project I required of students was an active learning experience upon which students would reflect in the hope that it would generate some internalized meanings and values about social justice that would embolden them to act justly beyond this particular activity should they encounter in justice in their lives. Moreover, while the goal of Jesuit education is to form “men and women for others” who have a commitment to social justice, especially for the poor, this paradigm is not about indoctrination. If these experiences, reflections, and actions lead students to reorient career paths or to engage in volunteer work in their communities, which has and does happen, then so much the better. However, Ignatian pedagogy stresses the freedom of the individual to generate her own sense of meaning and conviction and to discern his own path to action in the world. In a similar vein, I do not dictate what social justice issue students should engage or the actions they should take to address it. Rather, I allow them the freedom to determine which actions are appropriate on the basis of their own values and commitments.

The final component of the Ignatian pedagogy paradigm is evaluation. In the current climate of student learning assessment, evaluation seems to fit right in. A decade ago, I argued that formative assessment was amoral obligation, part of our covenant with students, parents, and the broader community to insure that the promises we make to educate our students to the best of our ability are fulfilled (Glennon, 1999). Ignatian concern for evaluation is about more than mastering the knowledge and skills that are the object of such assessment, however. Evaluation, like each component of Ignatian pedagogy, is about formation; it is “concerned about students’ well-rounded growth as persons for others” (Korth, 283). The purpose of the evaluation is to help students to develop the habits of reflection and discernment necessary to identify areas where they need continued development, which may lead them back to engage in additional experiences, to deepen and refine their reflection, and to encourage further action. The key to such evaluation is the development of an environment of mutual respect and trust between the teacher and the student (and I would add among other students). This view fits well with my own understanding of the teaching-learning community as a covenant community, where freedom, responsibility, and mutuality are fundamental values. Over the past few years, I have increased my efforts to engage students in dialogue about their learning: pushing them to identify individual and course learning objectives and requiring them to write a short paper at the

end of the semester that leads them to reflect on how they met those objectives and the conditions that helped and/or hindered their learning. Where I have not focused much energy is on getting students to make the broader connections between what they are learning in my class and its connection not only with concepts and ideas from other classes but, more importantly, with their formation as whole persons. While I do seek to point out blind spots in the ways that students currently think about significant issues and push them to broaden their perspectives, this paradigm pushes me to engage my students in deeper reflection that includes attitudes, priorities, and actions for others — to get them to think about the ways in which their learning not only benefits them or members of the class, but also the world around them. In conclusion, my exploration of other pedagogical models, particularly the Ignatian paradigm, has helped me to realize anew that one cannot rest on one's laurels when it comes to teaching. The context and experiences of students, professors, and institutions keep changing in our increasingly complex, global world. Such changes call us to stay critically reflective and to find ways to adapt our approaches and methods to this new reality. Yet the Ignatian paradigm also reminds me that, while the methods may change, the underlying values that ground not only what I do but who I am as a teacher have enduring value.

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