

**Engaged Pedagogy on Jesuit Campuses:
Where Do We Go from Here and Why?**

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Introduction

It is a delight to share in the celebration of the Bannan Institute's 25th anniversary. What a wonderful occasion: to pause and reflect on the founding, the development and the future of this great Institute. As part of this celebration, I have been asked to provide a paper on the state of engaged pedagogy (that is, community-based learning or service learning and immersion experiences) on Jesuit campuses nationwide. I have two goals: first, to share with you the results of some research on what we do know about engaged pedagogy on those campuses as of this academic year; and second, to suggest some issues and challenges as we think about where we might go from here.

“Gritty Reality”

I've titled this first part of the paper “Gritty Reality.” Many of us continue to be inspired by the words of the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, spoken here at Santa Clara in 2000 (and I quote):

Students, in the course of their formation, must let the gritty reality of this world into their lives, so they can learn to feel it, think about it critically, respond to its suffering

and engage it constructively. They should learn to perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.

(“The service of faith and the promotion of justice in American Jesuit higher education.” Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., “Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education, Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000).

It seems self-evident that two of the specific ways we actually do that are community-based learning courses (and I’ll use “CBL” throughout this paper to refer to what some call “service-learning” and others call “community-based learning” courses) and immersion experiences. Last fall I had one of our undergraduate women assist me in this project by examining the websites of each of the twenty-eight Jesuit colleges and universities. To facilitate a somewhat systematic attempt, we decided to create a matrix with these categories: first, what kinds of offices were involved in this work; second, whether the school offered CBL courses (and if so, provide examples if she could find some, and indicate, if possible, how many such courses); third, if the school had a transcript notation of some kind for CBL courses; fourth, whether the school offered domestic and/or global immersion programs (not including formal study abroad programs), where these were located, what financing was involved and the total number of such offerings; and finally, if the global opportunities were open to other Jesuit institutions. (Parenthetically, I’d be happy to share the matrix with any and all in order to make sure we have the correct information and to make this information available to wider audiences in the process.)

What did she find? First, not surprisingly, each of our institutions has at least one office of some kind (and often, more than one) that supports CBL and immersion programs. Campus Ministry or University Ministry offices are often involved. Others go by varying names; three examples besides the one we are celebrating today and the one from which I come: the PULSE Program for Service Learning at Boston College; the Donelan Office of

Community Based Learning at the College of the Holy Cross; and the Faith-Justice Institute at Saint Joseph's University.

Second, there is also good news on CBL: all 28 schools offer CBL courses. It was almost impossible, however, to figure out how many courses are offered on a yearly basis (including at my own institution; but that will change as of the coming fall --- more on that shortly) but the range is from just a few to 70 plus. The courses can be found in many different disciplines; for example (in alphabetical order), anthropology, biology, communications, economics, education, finance, history, justice and peace studies, marketing, nursing, religious studies, sociology, Spanish, philosophy, psychology and theology.

When it comes to transcript notation (as of March 31) my student assistant simply could not find the information through the web (although we are still looking). It is with great delight I announce, however, that as of this coming fall, there will be a transcript notation for CBL courses at Georgetown. The Center for Social Justice now has an Advisory Committee of faculty and administrators who will support the development of these kinds of courses and monitor the work. We have an established set of criteria and a specific process for identifying CBL courses and once so identified, the acronym "CBL" will go in the title of each course, and hence, will be on the transcript, on the back of which will be a short statement on the definition of CBL. (Again, I am happy to share more details with anyone who wants them.)

In terms of domestic immersion programs, more good news: every one of our schools offers at least one such program, and some as many as almost 30. (That would be Creighton --- I'm jealous!) Most of these are supported financially by student fees and fundraising. And all 28 schools offer at least one global immersion opportunity, and several schools have as many as seven or eight. Most of the global programs take place in Latin America, but several take

place in Africa (e.g., Ghana or Kenya) or Asia (e.g., India). My student could not find information on all schools about financing these trips, but for those she could, it looks like most of these programs are also supported financially by student fees and fundraising.

How much do our Jesuit colleges and universities collaborate on the global immersion experiences in terms of allowing students from the other schools to participate? Santa Clara (with its Casa de la Solidaridad) certainly does; it appears that the University of San Francisco might as well. Again, according to my student's research, none of the others offer their global immersion trips to students from other Jesuit schools.

So, what can we conclude from the research for this "gritty reality" section? First, our schools do have offices dedicated to providing opportunities to our students for engagement in the serious issues of our day, both domestically (lots of opportunities) and globally (more limited options). Second, while each of our schools provides opportunities of CBL courses and immersion experiences, there is a wide range of such offerings. Third, financing of these opportunities seems heavily drawn from student fees. Fourth, curricular notation on transcripts for CBL courses seems almost non-existent. And finally, collaboration with other Jesuit schools for participation in the global offerings appears to be quite limited.

Where Do We Go From Here?

I would like to offer comments and raise some questions in six areas as I think about where we might go from here: first, context; second, financing of CBL courses and domestic and global immersion opportunities; third, collaboration between and among our Jesuit schools

in global trips; fourth, our partners; fifth, transcript notation for CBL; and sixth, whether to 'require' our students to do have some experience in either CBL or the immersion experiences.

I am conscious of the fact that we are meeting in the year 2008, which is the 40th anniversary year of one (at least for me!) incredible year, namely 1968. Let me just draw your attention to some of the events of 1968. It began, at least symbolically, with the Tet offensive; included such events as the assassinations of both Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy, the presidential campaign and the Democratic national convention in Chicago, and closed (at least symbolically) with the death of Thomas Merton on December 10 --- ironically the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Second, tomorrow (May 3) is the 25th anniversary of the issuance of the American Catholic Bishops' historic pastoral letter, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*.

Why do I mention these anniversaries? To remind us of what we all know, namely, that engaged pedagogy takes place in real contexts of some kind. One such context is clearly historical: simply stated, the world is what it is because of what has gone on before. We must provide our students with some of that history as they participate in our CBL courses and in our domestic and global immersion experiences. It is unfair to the full educational goal of these opportunities to do anything less. There are two other contexts I want to note. First is the mission of Jesuit higher education --- do students have some grasp of both the general Jesuit mission in higher education and the particular mission of the Jesuit college or university they are attending? The second is the Catholic social tradition. As many of you know, 1968 was also the year of the gathering in Medellin, Colombia, of CELAM, the Conference of the Latin American Bishops, and the issuance of their historic texts. As I noted earlier, so many of our schools are providing opportunities in Latin America; what we didn't research was how many

of them frame those experiences at least in part with reference to such Catholic social teachings as the documents from Medellin and beyond. It seems to me that we owe it to our students to help them frame at least some of the CBL and immersion experiences in the context of the rich tradition of social teachings, thinking and tradition of the Catholic Church. How do we make these contexts clear to the students and help them understand how essential it is for us to do so as members of Catholic institutions of higher learning?

The second general area I want to comment on is that of the financing of CBL courses and the immersion experiences, both domestic and global. Just take the one issue of local transportation for CBL courses and, more broadly, for student community service work. The Center for Social Justice has a fleet of vans (19 to be exact; I may not look like it, but I'm a Van Lord!). It costs over \$100,000 a year to run the vans. But as I am fond of saying, the vans are both the literal and metaphorical 'vehicles' for our social justice work, taking students and faculty into those parts of the District of Columbia where the needs are greatest. Some of that money comes from departmental budgets; some from grants and gifts; some is hard-wired into the Center's budget; and some comes from student groups who, in turn, get that money from student fees. What is the proper mix for paying for such transportation? Take that question of financing to the domestic immersion experiences (e.g., Appalachia) and then to the global trips (e.g., Latin America or Africa) and the issue gets magnified: how do we pay and who should pay for such experiences?

Those questions lead nicely into the third issue, that of collaboration between and among our Jesuit colleges and universities. While no school probably has all the money it needs for its goals, it is the case that some of our schools are more financially resourced than others. What are the implications of that reality? Can those that have 'more' somehow make

their opportunities available to those who have ‘less’? What would that entail in terms of actual money, staff time, and the necessary logistics? And who will help make possible the discussion of these issues so that we might actually imagine collaboration in the creation, implementation, and assessment of these opportunities?

The fourth area, the role of our partners in these efforts, is a pivotal one. I am grateful to the planners of this session to have included Jim Petkiewicz, who is a partner with Santa Clara and with Georgetown (as well as other schools). Without on-the-ground relationships, domestic and global, we could not offer these kinds of transformative educational experiences. How is such a relationship conceived; who is responsible for it; how do we nurture it; what financial arrangements are involved; and how do we continue to grow such partnerships? A personal note: it is because Pecko is a GU alum, whom I met through one of our faculty, that I was eager to work something out with his organization (besides the fact that I liked him!) I had no qualms about it. How can we build on such networks? Can we work with other networks, such as the association of Jesuit schools in Latin America and the Social Ministry Centers of the Society of Jesus as well? How would we do that? Partnerships with those who clearly share our vision and mission seem most appropriate and most compelling.

Transcript notation of CBL is the fifth area. One mechanism for lifting up this kind of engaged pedagogy and helping the institution celebrate it is to provide some kind of information on a student’s academic transcript. The very process of getting a transcript notation of some kind is one of coalition-building, vibrant discussions, drafting and re-drafting of a document on definitions, criteria, and procedures, and working that document through the various bureaucratic offices to get the approval needed to bring about the formalization of the institution’s recognition of this important academic work. All of that can contribute to

educating the campus about this engaged pedagogy, encouraging faculty to consider designing or re-designing a course to include CBL, and suggesting to students that taking such courses is valued and important at this institution. Furthermore, it will communicate to the outside world of other institutions of higher learning as well as to potential employers of our graduates that our institution prizes this engaged pedagogy.

But does that mean we should require CBL and/ or immersion experiences? This final topic is fraught with challenges, to put it positively. My perspective is that we *should* have some kind of requirement around the idea of social justice. How that gets played out at each campus will vary, but I favor that all Jesuit colleges and universities build into the graduation requirements some ‘serious encounter’ with issues of social justice. To me that would mean a ‘menu of options.’ No: one size does not fit all. But there must be some ‘meaningful manifestation’ of the college or university’s commitment to social justice in the graduation requirements. What we believe is essential as academic institutions is found in those requirements. The range could be from formal courses on social justice (that meet some set of standards or criteria) to participation in immersion experiences that require some reflection on the experiences which is then formally documented by relevant offices. In partial defense of a requirement, I draw upon a key witness, Rev. Kolvenbach, who said (in the talk I cited earlier): “Our universities also boast a splendid variety of in-service programs, outreach programs, insertion programs, off-campus contacts and hands-on courses. These should not be too optional or peripheral, but at the core of every Jesuit university’s program of studies.”

Conclusion

I end with three comments. First, a hearty congratulations to the Bannan Institute on its first 25 years of creative work and a hearty wish for many more. Second, as someone from one of the other Jesuit schools, I urge that we take this occasion to think and act together to provide our students with more transformative opportunities through CBL and domestic and global immersions, and that some of them be collaborative across our institutions. And finally, I want to close with this statement from Pope John Paul II's apostolic constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*: "The Christian spirit of service to others for the promotion of social justice is of particular importance for each Catholic university, to be shared by its teachers and developed in its students." (para. 34)

That is why our Jesuit colleges and universities must offer opportunities for engaged pedagogy.

