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Cover Page Footnote

I am very grateful to the participating teachers at The NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo who worked with open minds, intellect and enthusiasm. Many thanks to the President of NativityMiguel, Nancy Langer, and the Dean of Instruction, Susan Cain. As well, gratitude to Dr. E. Roger Stephenson and Dr. Candalene McCombs, and Rev. Patrick Lynch, Professors Emeriti, for their expertise and support.

Professional Development: Ignatian Principles at Work with Teachers of Underserved Students

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Abstract

This article describes a professional development project for teachers in an underserved urban school in Buffalo, NY, centered on Ignatian Spirituality and the Jesuit, Catholic identity. During a time when the number of Jesuit priests has diminished, our universities look to academic departments, programs, and other areas of campuses to engage their staffs and students in the teachings of St. Ignatius and the Jesuit tradition. Our professional partnerships with local underserved schools at Canisius College are based upon Ignatian principles to benefit the critical needs of teachers, students and staff. Participating teachers in this project addressed three interrelated areas of their teaching that they identified as most challenging: (1) teaching diverse learners in the 21st century; (2) engaging students in their learning; and (3) managing and teaching students at once. Our work with these three topics is summarized here. A sampling of documents used in our workshops and a bibliography containing a theoretical framework for professional development and learning are offered as well. During our workshops, teacher-participants realized their powerful commitment to *cura personalis*, the individual student, as a part of their daily work.

Introduction

Much is written today about the importance of continuing and centralizing the Jesuit mission across our campuses of higher learning. Mission, service, and social justice are no longer responsibilities that fall solely on Jesuit priests and offices of ministry. This article reports on a professional development (PD) project rooted in St. Ignatius' theories of Jesuit learning, which serves to address our Canisius College mission. It follows a previous pilot PD project I conducted at a high-needs middle school in which the five components of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm—*Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation*—were used to identify effective teaching strategies that meet at-risk students' needs. The findings and analysis of that project are published in *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* in 2013.¹ This piece furthers the study of three contemporary issues: A Jesuit school with few Jesuits, the mission priority examen process, and the university's initiatives to create community partnerships.

The Jesuit Mission and Ignatian Pedagogy

Let us first turn to the Jesuit mission at Canisius College and our commitment to it. As the number of Jesuit priests at our universities continues to decline, there is a significant need to maintain the teachings and traditions of St. Ignatius Loyola. This is particularly true for Canisius as we celebrate our Sesquicentennial (150th) during the 2019-20 academic year. In 2018, as a part of Canisius' "Mission Priority Examen," our undergraduate students completed a survey that sought responses to three open-ended questions: (1) *What does a Jesuit education mean to you?* (2) *How have you experienced Canisius' Jesuit mission?* (3) *From your perspective, what is missing or what could we do better?* Faculty and staff were also asked these questions at an open forum in 2018; conversations were held with faculty who had participated in the Ignatian Colleagues and Canisius Colleagues Programs, along with volunteers from the Faculty Senate and the Jesuit community. The data from these inquiries and conversations were then discussed at a retreat of the Steering Committee of the Mission Examen in 2018.

Based on their findings and the entirety of the Examen Self-Study, Canisius committed itself to

several “mission priorities.” The first priority addresses the dwindling presence of Jesuit priests on our campus; it affirms for the Society of Jesus the Catholic Jesuit identity of Canisius, acknowledging the immense challenge to continue offering this very special Catholic and Jesuit education:

For the past several years Canisius has experienced a precipitous decline in the number of Jesuits assigned to the college. In fall 2010, the Jesuit community at Canisius numbered 25 Jesuits, of whom 15 were employed at the college in some capacity. In the intervening eight years, only one Jesuit has been sent by the Province to the college, while 15 have departed, so that in fall 2018, only one Jesuit remains full-time at Canisius. Of all of the challenges the college has faced in the past 10 years, this challenge goes to the heart of the college’s historical identity and has and will continue to directly affect how it lives its mission. Despite these difficult challenges Canisius has never wavered from its Catholic Jesuit mission.²

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., superior general of the Society of Jesus reminds us in the *Thirty-Fourth General Congregation* that college campuses must be involved and committed to the distinctive Jesuit and Catholic character.³ The “help of souls,” originally taught by the Jesuits, was not simply to guide people to a life that would lead to heaven, but to teach us how to live a life for others while on earth. In 1521, at the start of his conversion, Ignatius was a “disheveled and repulsive-looking hermit,” letting his hair and fingernails grow and dressing in rags before he determined to pursue his education at the University of Paris, the most prestigious academic institution of his day. It was at this time he began his intellectually spirited life of reflection and service.⁴ The results of his teachings and his devotion to God continue to play out today in the Spiritual Exercises, a central part of our current Jesuit instruction that emphasizes the power of reflection and discernment.

In his guide to teaching Ignatian ideals, *Learning by Refraction: A Practitioner’s Guide to 21st-Century Ignatian Pedagogy*, Johnny C. Go, S.J., professor of Education and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines, offers instructional strategies and topics for 21st century teachers and students of

Jesuit learning. Go demonstrates the use of Ignatian pedagogical styles that help lead to meaningful and engaging learning, pointing out how students grow in their relationships to their world and their fellow humans. He uses the phrase “refractive learning” as a sound approach to 21st-century learning and teaching that can effectively help promote the Ignatian worldview and values we seek to promote in our students. “Indeed the principles underlying refractive learning, based on contemporary understandings of learning and teaching, are suitable to any educator who wishes to create conditions more conducive to student learning.”⁵

Go presents what he refers to as the “6 E’s” of refractive learning: *Engagement, Excellence, Expertise, Enthusiasm, Empathy* and *Empowerment*—some or all of these elements common to many of our current professional development initiatives at Canisius. Engaging teachers, for example, occurs when we create learning experiences that challenge them to be self-directed and self-reliant. “Teachers understand that student engagement is a condition for the possibility of any learning. Otherwise, the students will not be on task, let alone begin to wrestle with the ideas in their heads.”⁶ As well, our professional service to our neighboring schools is always characterized by enthusiasm, empathy and empowerment. Teachers are supported and encouraged to discover refreshing and energizing approaches to their teaching that offer a chance to rejuvenate the old and discover the new.

Jesuit education is centered on justice and mindfulness of the needs of the poor and marginal. In our school of Education and Human Services at Canisius, there are a formidable number of initiatives that allow us to live our mission of *cura personalis*, a personal knowledge of and concern for every individual student. Our partnerships with local underserved schools, for example, are designed to address our Jesuit mission—in most cases, critical needs of teachers, students and staff.

Excerpted here from our Mission:

Canisius is an open, welcoming university where our Catholic, Jesuit mission and identity are vitally present and operative. It is rooted in the Catholic intellectual tradition’s

unity of knowledge and the dialogue of faith and reason. Founded by the Society of Jesus as a manifestation of its charism, Canisius espouses the Jesuit principles of human excellence, care for the whole person, social justice, and interreligious dialogue. Jesuit spirituality calls us to seek God in all things and Jesuit education aims to form students who become men and women for others.⁷

The Professional Development Project

Let us now turn to the partnership project that achieves these Jesuit goals. As a faculty member in our School of Education and Human Services, much of my research and service is focused on professional development projects in Buffalo's most needy schools. The project I present here began in meetings with the President of NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo and the Dean of Instruction. NativityMiguel is a Catholic school (grades 5-8) located on Buffalo's East side. It is independent of the Diocese of Buffalo, and is financed almost exclusively by donations and scholarships. Although not officially referred to as a Jesuit school, it was founded by Jesuits in 2003 and is deliberate in its practice of Ignatian pedagogical principles. Thus, it is closely aligned with Canisius, and therefore boasts a strong bond with Jesuit learning and teaching. As its website states, it is a

faith-based middle school that transforms the lives of underserved students in a secure and nurturing environment on single gender campuses: the St. Monica Campus for girls and the St. Augustine Campus for boys. In partnership with its families, the school delivers a uniquely effective education that includes an extended school day and school year, dedicated and caring teachers, personal mentoring and continuing support through high school graduation.⁸

During our meetings with the NativityMiguel administrators, we talked at length about the faculty—their greatest challenges, strengths and weaknesses, their working environments, students, curriculum and more. We looked at the school's mission statement and how it plays a role in teaching and learning. Teachers were asked for input during these early discussions, and

collaboratively we arrived at three presentation topics to focus our work: (1) teaching diverse learners in the 21st century; (2) engaging students in their learning; and (3) managing and teaching students at once. Our work with these three topics is discussed below, and a sampling of documents used in the workshop is found in Appendix 1.

Nine teachers averaging 10.8 years of service at the school participated. They represent content subjects in English Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, Mathematics, and Religion; they teach in grades 5-8. NativityMiguel targets low-income youth from inner-city neighborhoods who are performing below grade-level and who are willing to embrace an extended school day and school year to work toward the goal of high school and college graduation. Rather than being a school for the academically-gifted, NativityMiguel serves students most likely to “fall through the cracks” in a traditional educational setting. One hundred percent of the students come from families living below the federal poverty level, and one hundred percent identify as Black or African American. In Buffalo, poverty levels are high, while educational attainment is low: 2017 U.S. Census data showed that just 10% of Buffalo residents had earned a bachelor's degree—an indicator surely entwined with the intractable poverty that affects many parts of our city.

The project employs a theoretical framework from a previous workshop I completed that includes theories of adult learning, collaboration, social constructivism/active learning, as well as a learning partnership model. These theories demonstrate that one's identity plays a central role in crafting knowledge, a tenet closely related to St. Ignatius' experiences with reflection and discernment. Crucial to teachers benefiting from this particular project was the climate of social and knowledge-based exchange. Professional development projects must provide and nurture an environment that is safe, comfortable and secure—just as we must do for our students in our classrooms. A bibliography of sources for this theoretical framework is included in Appendix 2.

As I advance my research and design of professional development programs for high needs schools, I find it useful to use a simple and clearly defined philosophy/mission statement:

“Professional Development provides quality instruction and support to teachers who wish to improve their instructional skills and thereby enhance student learning. Classrooms are teachers’ and students’ sanctuaries. Professional development programs in instructional techniques must foster the respect and mutual understanding deserving of these sanctuaries.”⁹

Peter McDonough, in “Social Order, Social Reform, and the Society of Jesus” looks at the evolution of Jesuits’ experiments with educational formats beyond the liberal arts model (labor schools, schools of social work, etc.):

The schools of social work that the American Jesuits set up in the first half of the 20th century provided services: training in community organization, in therapeutic intervention, and the like. The services were educational, rather than direct; very few Jesuits were social workers or community organizers themselves. At the same time, practical know-how rather than theoretical knowledge was transmitted. The schools broke from the classical, belletristic template of the liberal arts colleges, but they did not pioneer in original thought, as did some of the graduate programs in secular universities. The schools of social work delivered a service—training in skills useful for white-collar occupations. Graduates could do well by doing good.¹⁰

Similarly, current day professional development for teachers is typically skill-driven and focuses on pedagogy; the daily mechanics of teaching are often the focus of discussion and analysis. Anyone who works in a school understands the importance of such support. Today’s teachers must demonstrate strong skills in leadership, management, counseling and other expertise—all in addition to an exceptionally strong command of their content areas.

Discussion

This project began in October 2018, one month after the start of NativityMiguel’s school year, and it concluded in June 2019. I held three two-hour sessions with teachers during the months of November, December and March. These sessions

were interactive and collaborative, involving much discussion in small and large group settings. I also spent time throughout the year visiting these nine teachers’ classrooms at least twice, usually more often. These visits provided me with the opportunity to better understand NativityMiguel’s teaching practices and styles, their students’ needs, and the specific challenges both they and their students face. My visits were not evaluative sessions; they were simply meant to offer objective observations and consequent mentoring when time allowed. None of the teachers were in any current programs of training in education at this time; in fact, almost all of them had had no formal teacher training in the last five years, some even longer. They welcomed the opportunity for constructive and supportive feedback.

As previously noted, we arrived at three topics for instruction. The goal of the first topic, “Teaching Diverse Learners in the 21st Century,” was to identify a number of practical instructional approaches that meets the needs of 21st century learners. We spent time talking about the term, “diverse.” Most of the teachers defined “diverse” in the context of clinically diagnosed learning, emotional areas of disability, and/or limitations. However, in their small group discussions, teachers discovered a broader definition that better served their needs: they came to discern “diverse” to include unique, personal circumstances: those students who arrive to school having had nothing to eat, students from difficult home lives with little or no parental support and guidance, students who don’t get enough sleep, who don’t have appropriate clothing to wear, those who struggle with chronic physical health issues and other special circumstances that result in the need for specialized teaching. These kinds of diversities, not necessarily labeled in educational research, are very much the realities that often lead to students’ academic failure in high-needs schools, and, here in particular, at NativityMiguel.

In early Jesuit literature, much is written about this kind of attention to the individual person, particularly in the Spiritual Exercises. Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J., reports that “Like the guide of the Exercises, the teacher is at the service of the students, alert to detect special gifts or special difficulties, personally concerned, and assisting in

the development of the inner potential of each individual student.”¹¹ Similarly, Robert Mitchell, S.J., characterizes Jesuit education as “person-centered.” “No matter how large or complex the institution, the individual is important and given as much personal attention as humanly possible, both in and out of the classroom. I believe that the reason for this specific attention to the individual is that for many in these institutions, teaching ... is much more than a job—indeed, more than a profession. It is a vocation.”¹²

During our workshops, teacher-participants realized their powerful commitment to the individual student as a daily and inherent part of their work. Offering individualized instruction, paying close attention to their students’ special needs by offering oral and written feedback specific to each child was developed from Ignatius’ understanding of what it meant to serve the whole person. As a result of their close reflection, these teachers realized that this Jesuit-centered approach to instruction is, and always has been, very much a part of their work—a powerful realization for them as today’s students’ needs in underserved environments continue to escalate, particularly in this area of Buffalo.

All agreed that the second topic, “Managing and Teaching Students at Once” is daunting, to say the least. In addition to teachers’ knowledge of their subject areas, and in so many other professional activities that have a direct effect on students’ learning, teachers must be effective classroom managers—professionals who direct teams. We “direct” students who may be consistently attentive and active in their learning, but we also interact with those who need close and explicit instruction. During our workshops, teachers talked about approaches that have potential for *all* students to learn. We looked at circumstances that cause students to disengage. The good news, they discovered, is the power in acknowledging this disengagement. Teachers became more at ease as they shared descriptions of their classroom climates, acknowledging their need to adjust some of their management styles and regularly practice those techniques that result in effective learning.

We talked about today’s classrooms that are less defined by rigid standards. Teachers saw this to be a result of students’ learning and social processes.

The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum of 1599, a document that laid out the course of studies for students in Jesuit schools, also known as the “Order and Methods of Studies in the Society of Jesus,” addresses this very issue of managing classes of students and learning outside the classroom: “The teacher shall so train the youths entrusted to the Society’s care that they may acquire not only learning but also habits of conduct worthy of a Christian. He should endeavor both in the classroom and outside to train the impressionable minds of his pupils in the loving service of God and in all the virtues required for this service.”¹³ Thus, educational philosophers as far back as this sixteenth-century course of studies recognized that our students are in school not only to learn content, but to develop the skills that will allow them to live productive and rich spiritual lives.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm also addresses this role of teacher as manager. “Experience” for St. Ignatius meant “to taste something internally.” This calls for knowing facts, concepts, and principles, and requires one to probe the connotation and overtones of words and events, to analyze, evaluate and reason ... Ignatius urges that the whole person—mind, heart and will—should enter the learning experience.¹⁴ Go makes a reference to a Chinese proverb, often translated as: “Tell me and I’ll forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I’ll understand.” He states that teachers must create “empowering learning experiences” that will allow students to be directly involved with the subject matter—again, a daunting task in today’s classrooms.¹⁵

The third topic of the project, “Involving Students in Their Learning: Teacher-Centered vs. Student-Centered Learning,” provided the opportunity for teachers to share much about their preferred method(s) of instruction. All agreed that teacher-centered and student-centered instruction are equally challenging, both requiring unique and common skills. Because of its historically traditional approaches to learning, teachers at NativityMiguel have relied on more teacher-centered approaches of instruction. They agreed that effective student involvement occurs when teachers address diverse learners and manage classrooms effectively, and they came to realize the scaffolding of these three areas of our project. They shared instances where students are more

actively engaged in learning when they see themselves as important participants, and when they are tasked with specific goals—this in every class, every day. As Go states, “It is not healthy when students become overly dependent on teachers. Teachers need to empower their students by designing learning experiences that encourage students to be self-directed and self-reliant.”¹⁶

These discussions were both challenging and enlightening for the teacher-participants. They shared instances where all attempt to facilitate a student-centered lesson resulted in confusion, time poorly spent and, thus, less instruction. As they reflected further, however, and as we looked at what precisely “student-centered” means, they became more open to experimenting with lessons that fully engage their students, whether in a more traditional teacher-centered or student-centered classroom. They came to see that these terms, “student-centered” and “teacher-centered” can be misleading when they are presented as contrasting teaching styles. Students are at the center of the learning in any teacher-driven instruction insofar that they must listen actively, think critically, question when necessary—all very high-order and active methods of thinking and learning. Likewise, they too are at the center when the teacher facilitates a lesson that challenges them to engage and interact with one another more interactively.

We looked at the power of teacher-centered learning and the student’s role in it. A teacher imparts knowledge, then may pause and ask students what they understand. Students must be able to articulate this understanding, a high-order skill in an open classroom setting. Teachers may then use whatever questions and comments students share to further their instruction. This is a highly sophisticated form of exchange, particularly for grade levels 4-8. They discovered that a classroom doesn’t have to be without structure to be student-centered. These were important discussions for teachers to reflect upon. They all agreed that they need to talk to one another about their teaching more often. Sharing these discoveries empowered these teachers and gave them well-needed confidence and enthusiasm in their moving forward.

We talked about ways to anticipate lessons that can be more effective in either student- or

teacher-centered methods. Some held firmly to the belief that classrooms must be highly structured; others said that the most effective classrooms today are often unpredictable, messy and active. Students stumble as they learn; they build knowledge through their trials and errors, resulting in lively learning climates. And with these more informal atmospheres of 21st century learning comes the need for secure and safe conditions, an aspect of education fundamental in the earliest Jesuit learning communities. From the “Common Rules of the Teachers of the Lower Classes” (“lower” referring to younger: high school and first two years of college), “The teacher should not be hasty in punishing nor too much given to searching out faults. He should rather pretend not to be aware of an infraction when he can do this without harm to anyone. He shall refrain not only from striking a pupil but also from humiliating anyone by word or act.”¹⁷ The principles of these teaching approaches are very much the same today; teachers strive to create environments in which students will learn without unwarranted punishment or intimidation. What replaces some of the 16th century language, however—“*striking a pupil*” or “*without harm to anyone*”—is today’s verbiage, including “*total respect for the student*,” the “*safe classroom*,” “*collaboration*,” “*constructing knowledge as messy business*.”

Teacher-Participants’ feedback

Teachers completed a two-part survey at the end of the project: ten statements with multiple choice responses: “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Strongly Disagree,” and four open-ended questions of short prose responses (Appendix 3). Since this was a small sample, I offer a few general observations that summarize teachers’ responses.

All teacher participants “agreed” and “strongly agreed” that they would like to engage in further professional development projects. This is important feedback that illustrates teachers’ interest in ongoing and collaborative support. Having conducted many projects in urban and suburban schools, I find there are often mixed responses to outside professional development projects, particularly those presented by external consultants. In the three sessions I conducted, it was clear that at the start, teachers were somewhat ill at ease about speaking in front of their

colleagues. As they found a level of comfort and openness, they became engaged and energized.

In their written responses, these NativityMiguel teachers indicated that they are now more likely to engage and collaborate with one another. Their responses also demonstrated that the workshop project was conducive to open conversation, something useful to me as I further my work in this area. As one teacher wrote, “Fellow teachers were most supportive and gave me specific advice to improve my classroom management.” Another stated “There was a lot of attention to learning styles and hindrances to learning that we needed to address.” They responded positively to the topics we covered in the workshops, and the level of specificity they saw in the context of their own teaching.

Conclusion

My work at this school offers one example of the strides we are making in Jesuit institutions to continue the teachings of St. Ignatius. As a representative of Canisius, I am able to extend our mission of serving the individual person by providing teachers in underserved schools the chance to reflect on the importance of their Jesuit mission. As well, we are always hopeful that these professional development experiences have a direct impact on students as beneficiaries of newly inspired pedagogical approaches. Students need to realize the value of knowing that each of them is singularly significant in the classroom setting—*cura personalis*.

I will advance this work to include our own undergraduate education majors who will spend time in schools like NativityMiguel as apprentices/teaching assistants and in so doing, enjoy the opportunity to live out the Jesuit mission. They will be witnesses to and embrace the hardships of poverty in a school setting, positioning them to carry out their own college’s mission of service and social justice. This undergraduate participation was an effective model in another project I conducted for the Diocese of Buffalo where I included a few of my undergraduate and graduate Education majors as apprentices. Participating teachers were able to be excused from their teaching to work with me while these Canisius students conducted their

classes. This experience provided valuable learning contexts for my university students as they worked with the middle school students and received personalized instruction in teaching methods from me.¹⁸

Jesuit universities will continue to look to academic departments and programs and other areas of campus communities to engage students in the teachings of St. Ignatius and the Jesuit tradition. These campuses have extended this promotion of social justice and service of faith far beyond their traditional boundaries. For example, NCAA regulations embrace social justice as a benchmark of student-athletes’ college lives; student senates, clubs, honor societies, alumni groups, and many other of the important areas of our colleges address very directly the goals of social justice and service. Happily, this is becoming the norm.

As Paul Lakeland in “Teaching the Mission by Institutional Example” states,

Mission was something we left to the Jesuits, and the rest of us got on with our teaching, hopefully employing some approximation to Ignatian pedagogy. Inevitably, too, this meant that mission was commonly understood to be primarily a religious activity. But when “the promotion of justice” was proclaimed as a vital component of “the service of faith” in 1975, things began to change. And at that moment, it seems in retrospect and coincidentally, the numbers of Jesuits available to staff our campuses began its slow slide to the present situation.¹⁹

Most will agree that social justice and service to others have always been implicit in any act of teaching and learning; after all, we educate—and we are educated—for the primary purpose of contributing to a society that strives for successful advancement, improving the world, and in so doing, using trust, goodness and hard work to get there. In Jesuit institutions, this commitment to social justice and service is explicit and is guided by the powerful tenets of St. Ignatius. It is likely Ignatius Loyola would be delighted to know his principles abound, both in the campuses of our Jesuit universities and beyond.

Monika Hellwig, the president of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (1996-2005) and former faculty member at Georgetown University, describes the challenge this way:

We are not trying to recover something that has been lost, some neatly packaged, precisely described and circumscribed identity, or even a museum piece. Rather, we are trying to create something that has never existed: a Jesuit, Catholic identity combining Ignatian

Spirituality, the Catholic intellectual tradition, and Catholic Social Teaching, all forged with diverse colleagues, in a pluralistic, postmodern university setting, while facing all of the challenges of a globalizing world ... nothing is clearer, from the history of Jesuit educational practice, than that it was endlessly adaptive to time and place and the needs of those who sought it.²⁰ HJE

Appendix 1

Proposal for NativityMiguel Professional Development Betsy M. DelleBovi, Ph.D., Professional Development Consultant

I. Mission Statement

Professional Development for Teachers provides quality instruction and support to teachers who wish to improve their instructional skills and thereby enhance student learning. Classrooms are sanctuaries. Professional development programs in instructional techniques must foster the respect and mutual understanding vital to those sanctuaries.

II. Introduction

This proposal is based on specific needs identified by the school President and Dean of Instruction at the NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo, in consultation with Dr. Betsy DelleBovi, Professional Development Consultant. Three specific instructional needs were identified at an initial meeting: (1) Diverse Students' Needs; (2) Classroom Management; and (3) Student Involvement. These needs are intimately connected.

Some of the teachers from both campuses use traditional approaches to teaching; some are open to more student-centered "open" approaches. Both methods will be addressed in this Professional Development project.

Traditional, teacher-centered instruction requires students to be active listeners; traditional instruction demands students' skills in focusing (attention span), effective notetaking, learning visually, and more. For teachers, large group teaching requires strong presentation skills, including creative use of physical space, non-verbal cues, the ability to contextualize subject matter, as well as effective methods for managing students.

"Open" teaching methods require the same skills as traditional instruction, but the students' responsibilities and skills are extended to collaboration among their classmates and their teacher, the understanding of how learning is constructed, individual skills and expectations within small groups or pairs, the dynamics of student interaction, and more. The teacher's responsibilities and skills include identifying methods to structure small group learning and/or paired learning, creating a focused set of learning objectives within a specified period of time, and making the transition from the small group work to the large group reporting out portion of the class.

III. Outline of Professional Development Program: 3 Parts

(1) Diverse Student Needs: Our 21st century students are diverse learners. As teachers plan their lessons and get to know their students' skills, they need to attend to the whole student: cultural needs, learning styles, and thinking skills.

Some students are more effective in traditional classroom environments; some respond positively to more open experiences; some find success with both. Teachers can improve their "delivery systems" by experimenting with different ways of presenting lessons.

This professional development program will offer multiple opportunities to engage in discussions and activities that refine their current teaching strategies and practices in an effort to meet the needs of all learners.

Goal:

Teachers will develop the use of varied teaching strategies for instruction that meet the needs of all students' learning styles.

Objectives:

- (a) To identify the need for varying instructional approaches in an effort to meet the needs of 21st century learners;
- (b) To practice a variety of teaching strategies that offer diversity in instruction and are appropriate to the students' present skills;

(2) Classroom Management: In addition to teachers' knowledge of their subject area and teaching strategies, teachers must be effective managers: a person who "directs a team" (Merriam-Webster). Our "teammates" are our students—some are attentive and active in their learning almost all of the time, while others need effective strategies to direct their attention and participate actively. Classroom management is a very challenging part of teaching. The good news, however, is there are current and well-defined methods for today's teachers that can lead to healthy classroom environments.

Goal:

Teachers will develop routines that foster classroom communities, effectively manage disruption, and build student relationships, both among students and their teachers.

Objectives:

- (a) To identify and practice classroom management strategies that address the current and specific climate of learning at NativityMiguel and that can be used in other learning environments. These strategies will be identified based on the needs of the teachers and administrators in consultation with Dr. DelleBovi.
- (b) To develop and practice strategies for building relationships in the classroom: student-to-student relationships and teacher-to-student relationships.

(3) Student Involvement: Teachers need to develop skills to fully engage their students. They need to fully engage with their learning, whether in a more traditional, teacher-centered classroom, or in a student-centered environment. It is the teacher's responsibility to know when teacher-centered learning is most appropriate, and when student-centered learning can result in effective learning.

Teachers need to be comfortable experimenting with a variety of teaching strategies. This requires teachers to be confident in their work. This confidence will be developed when teachers receive support from administrators, professional development consultants and teaching colleagues. Teachers must be afforded a safe environment in which they can learn how to best involve students. Students will be most involved when teachers are prepared to expect something from them—other than an acceptable test score; students need to see themselves as significant participants in the learning process—not just receivers of their teachers' instruction.

Goal:

Teachers will develop various methods for engaging students in their learning that will allow them to recognize their role in learning and feel a sense of belonging to a learning community. Student-centered learning is proven to be effective not only in reaching the goal of involving students, but also managing a classroom effectively and offering students variety in teachers' delivery systems.

Objectives:

- (a) To identify and practice strategies for student-centered learning (small group activity, paired student learning and other student-centered contexts).

- (b) To identify lessons that can be more effectively presented when students are active participants, and to identify lessons that are more appropriate for a teacher-centered methodology.

IV. Description of the PD work:

How will this material be presented (detailed description and calendar of services—to be developed by NativityMiguel and Dr. DelleBovi)?

The NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo
Supportive Professional Development: “Be All We Can Be—To All Students”
An Interactive Workshop Series

Presented by: Betsy M. DelleBovi, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, School of Education and Human Services
Canisius College
2018-2019

A 3-Part Instructional Series:

1. Teaching Diverse Learners in the 21st Century through the lens of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm
2. Student Engagement through the lens of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm
3. Classroom Management through the lens of the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm

Part One:
Student Engagement at NativityMiguel

Student Engagement can be defined in many ways. Appropriate to our work is this definition:

A strong relationship between students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community. Student engagement is essential to a positive school climate; significant research links it to high academic achievement.

Three Levels of Student Engagement

1. **Behavioral Engagement:** students have good attendance, follow rules, complete assignments, arrive to class prepared, participate in class and school activities;
2. **Emotional Engagement:** students are interested and identify with school;
3. **Cognitive engagement:** students exert extra effort to do well in school, have high academic expectations of themselves, and set goals for their academic success.

Schools’ Responsibility: Provide an Atmosphere for Students to Be Engaged School-Wide

- Students’ sense of belonging to their school *and* their classrooms;
- Teachers’ understanding of fostering respectful, trusting, supportive and caring relationships with all students;
- Connectedness between students and teachers: Students are more motivated and more confident in completing their schoolwork when they feel their teachers care about and support them;
- Connectedness between teachers and students is a stronger predictor of students feeling safe within school than published poverty levels of students or the crime rate of the neighborhoods where students live;
- Research using nationally representative data also suggests that positive student-teacher relationships predict fewer episodes of misbehavior and violence in school;
- Student participation in class, completion of assignments and other course requirements, and participation in extra-curricular activities also have strong proven links to attendance, test scores and graduation.

In particular, service learning programs and other types of experiential learning can help disengaged students connect to learning. Students are much more likely to participate in school when they are actively supported by parents and staff members.

Part Two: Teaching Diverse Learners at NativityMiguel

Teaching diverse learners is more important today than ever. President Obama's reauthorization of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB)—now called the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA)—is fully operational in schools across the United States.

This initiative to teach diverse learners includes, but is not limited to, programs that help schools meet the special educational needs of:

- English Language Learners (ELLs)—students working to learn the English language
- students with disabilities—physical, cognitive and emotional
- homeless students
- children of migrant workers and immigrant families
- neglected or delinquent children

Two questions for our consideration:

1. What are our diverse students' greatest needs?
2. How do we address them?

Part Three: Classroom Management

Classroom management is the process by which teachers and schools create and maintain appropriate behavior of students in classroom settings. The purpose of implementing classroom management strategies is to enhance positive behavior, increase student academic engagement, and therefore improve learning.

Positive results of effective classroom management include:

1. Sustaining an orderly environment in the classroom
2. Increasing meaningful academic learning and facilitating social and emotional growth
3. Decreasing negative behaviors and increasing time spent academically engaged

Teachers who are effective classroom managers:

1. Promote active learning and student involvement
2. Identify behaviors required to reach the goals of learning activities
3. Develop specific learning activities designed to meet *all* students' needs and abilities

Teachers concerned with classroom management typically need help with two issues:

1. Preventing discipline problems—through focused instruction and student-driven activities, as well as an understanding of students' behavioral expectations and realities at home

2. Resolving immediate discipline problems with an effective “tool box” of methods

Let's consider the overlap of Part One (Student Engagement) and this work with Classroom Management!

Appendix 2

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Appendix 3: Survey of Teachers' Responses to the Project

NM Teachers: **Please do not identify yourself in any way on this report.**

The following responses will offer valuable feedback on the work we did last year. In addition, your views will be helpful in furthering this professional development work.

Please circle the response that best represents your views.

1. I learned about aspects of my teaching during this workshop.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
2. The workshop sessions were conducive to open conversation.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
3. I felt that my presence at the workshops was important.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
4. The topics covered during the workshops were significant to me.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
5. I have already—or plan to—collaborate more often with my fellow teachers about our teaching lives.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
6. The workshops offered me specific ideas about my teaching that I have or will consider.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly disagree
7. There have been times in class when I have recalled something from the workshops.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly Disagree
8. I enjoyed participating in the workshops.
 - (a) Strongly agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly Disagree
9. I would like to see more opportunities for professional development that focuses on my teaching.
 - (a) Strongly Agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly Disagree
10. I see value in talking about my teaching and my students' learning.
 - (a) Strongly Agree
 - (b) Agree
 - (c) Disagree
 - (d) Strongly Disagree

Please offer as much or as little commentary as you choose. Please do not identify yourself, unless you wish to.

1. What did you find useful from this professional development project?
2. Have you altered your teaching methods at all as a result of the project? Please explain.
3. What other areas of your teaching that were not covered in last year's workshops would you find valuable to address in future professional development projects?
4. Do you have any other comments on your experience with this workshop that you would like to share here?

Notes

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⁴ John W. O'Malley, S.J., "How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education," in *A Jesuit Education Reader*, ed. George W. Traub, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), 49-54.

⁵ Johnny C. Go, S.J. and Rita J. Atienza, *Learning by Refraction: A Practitioner's Guide to 21st-Century Ignatian Pedagogy* (Quezon City, Philippines: Blue Books, 2019), 1.

⁶ Go, *Learning by Refraction*, 10.

⁷ Canisius College, "Canisius 150: Excellence, Leadership, Jesuit," n.d., accessed on April 27, 2020, https://www.canisius.edu/sites/default/files/%2A/canisius_strategic_plan.pdf

⁸ NativityMiguel Buffalo, "About Us," accessed April 29, 2020, <http://nativitymiguelbuffalo.org/about-us/>.

⁹ Betsy DelleBovi, "Professional Development: Partnerships for Success," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3, no. 3 (February 2013): 27.

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¹¹ Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J., "Some Characteristics of Jesuit Pedagogy," in *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives*, ed. Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 212.

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¹³ Claude Pavur, *The Ratio Studiorum: The Official Plan for Jesuit Education*. (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2005), 62.

¹⁴ International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education, "The Characteristics of Jesuit Education" (Rome, 1986).

¹⁵ Go, *Learning by Refraction*, 83.

¹⁶ Go, *Learning by Refraction*, 62.

¹⁷ Claude Pavur, *The Ratio Studiorum*, 62.

¹⁸ DelleBovi, "Professional Development: Partnerships for Success," 28.

¹⁹ Paul Lakeland, "Teaching the Mission by Institutional Example," *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* no. 56 (Fall 2019): 7-8.

²⁰ Patrick J. Howell, S.J., *Great Risks Had to Be Taken: The Jesuit Response to the Second Vatican Council, 1958-2018* (Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books, 2019), 139.