Combining Community-Based Learning and Catholic Social Teaching in Educating for Democratic Citizenship

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Abstract

College students are in a key developmental stage for cultivating their civic identities. This article draws on a case example to show how courses focused on educating students for democratic citizenship—courses on leadership, community organizing, social movements, or other related topics—prove to be excellent venues for integrating Catholic Social Teaching (CST) with community-based learning to further students' moral and civic development. Centering on social justice with an emphasis on voice, power, and participation, these courses resonate clearly with key themes found in CST. And, by combining CST with the theory and practice of collective action, students gain a foundation in necessary principles for moral assessment as well as practical experiences that inform and shape their active citizenship beyond the college years.

Overview

During the past ten to fifteen years, scholars of higher education have increasingly emphasized the role colleges and universities play in the moral and civic development of students. Recognizing the importance of their role in this type of student development, various institutions of higher education have instituted academic and extracurricular programs to this end.[1] Pedagogical innovations in experiential and community-based education have created opportunities for educators to develop new curricula that prepare young people for active and informed citizenship.

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[1] Anne Colby, et al., *Educating Citizens: Preparing America's Undergraduates for Lives of Moral and Civic Responsibility* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003).

Education in light of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) asks fundamental human questions about society, mutual responsibility, and the common good. For example: What is our responsibility to confront the unjust conditions experienced by society's poor and powerless? In what ways will we work for the common good? Such social justice questions invite students to consider their responses to our most pressing public issues in a context of moral understanding and civic responsibility. For faculty in Catholic institutions, these types of questions can also serve as the basis for curriculum development. In particular, faculty can guide learning experiences that foster students' intellectual, moral, and civic development while also giving them tangible skills for civic engagement. Such learning affords an opportunity to root student scholarship in the history, context, theory, and practice of both discipleship and citizenship.[2]

This article draws on a case example to show how courses focused on educating students for democratic citizenship—courses on leadership, community organizing, social movements, or other related topics—prove to be excellent venues for integrating CST with community-based learning to further students' moral and civic development. Courses that focus on educating for social justice with an emphasis on voice, power, and participation, resonate clearly with key themes of CST: solidarity, subsidiarity, and the preferential option for the poor. By engaging multiple disciplines and by combining CST with the theory and practice of collective action, such a focus provides students with foundational principles for moral assessment as well as practical experiences, both of which inform and shape their active citizenship beyond the college years.

CST offers a rigorous intellectual framework to enable students to understand the nature of the Church's commitment to social justice. For many students, learning about the social tradition of the Catholic Church opens the door for connecting their religious tradition and spiritual lives with specific ideas about vocation, especially as they discern postgraduate opportunities for service and professional work in the public and nonprofit sectors. Such integration builds upon earlier trends in Catholic higher education that sought to introduce students to the theological arguments and social implications of a preferential option

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[2] John Coleman, S.J., "The Two Pedagogies: Discipleship and Citizenship," in *Education for Citizenship and Discipleship*, ed. Mary C. Boys (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1989), 35-75; David J. O'Brien, *From the Heart of the American Church: Catholic Higher Education and American Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1994); Carol Jean Vale, S.S.J., "Catholic Higher Education: Challenges of Discipleship and Citizenship," *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education* 21(2000): 84-93.

for the poor.[3] CST's emphasis on the structures of society makes it an excellent complement to courses on democratic participation, leadership, community organizing, and social change. Taken as a whole, the key themes that emerge from CST (mentioned above) are particularly pertinent in the teaching of such courses. The theme of solidarity emphasizes interdependence and common humanity as opposed to individualism. Solidarity means we are, indeed, our brothers' and sisters' keepers, interdependent members of one human family called to community. "Human dignity can be realized and protected only in community."[4] The preferential option for the poor charges society to have special concern for vulnerable and poor people. Subsidiarity, another key theme, calls for problems to be addressed at the most local level possible. While still acknowledging that higher-level assistance from the state may be needed for problems that cannot be addressed locally, subsidiarity asserts that community members are actors who best know the issues confronting their community. Community-based learning courses in the model of educating for democratic participation find these and other core principles of CST central to their theoretical and applied components. These principles make CST a valuable resource for students of diverse religious backgrounds and political ideologies.

Identity Development in the College Years

College students are in the process of developing their identities. Erik Erikson wrote of the "identity crisis" of adolescence, whereby the central task of adolescence is the achievement of identity as opposed to role confusion.[5] However, Erikson also noted the prolonged adolescence which is common in industrialized countries. Building on the work of Erikson and others, Jeffrey Arnett identified the distinct developmental period of "emerging adulthood" (approximately ages 18-25) in industrialized countries due to increased length of schooling and delayed ages of marriage and parenting.[6] Adults in their late teens and early twenties often explore different personal, professional, and social directions. In fact, emerging adulthood is the most important developmental period

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[3] David J. O'Brien, "The Option for the Poor and Undergraduate Education," in *Love of Learning, Desire for Justice: Undergraduate Education and the Option for the Poor*, ed. William Reiser, S.J. (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 1995), 31-42.

[4] National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy* (Washington, DC, 1986).

[5] Erik Erikson, *Identity, Youth, and Crisis* (New York: Norton, 1968).

[6] Jeffery Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development From the Late Teens Through the Twenties," *American Psychologist* 55 (2000): 469-480.

for people to explore their identities in these areas.[7] The college years hold particular significance as students are exposed to diverse individuals and ideas that can challenge and sharpen their sense of self and their understanding of others and of the world around them. Academic experiences, among others, can influence students' ideological systems and catalyze their commitment to engage in their communities.[8]

The college years thus provide a particularly fruitful time for students to develop their moral and civic identities. During these key developmental years, civic engagement—service, social justice, and political work—can play an important role in student growth. Through community service, for example, students clarify their identities, better understand others from diverse backgrounds, and see themselves as more intimately connected with others.[9] Research on adolescents shows that engagement in civic activities helps to promote citizenship and civic identity by helping youth become interested in others' concerns and by enhancing a sense of responsibility for those concerns.[10]

The development of an identity as a civically engaged person has long-term implications. The formation of a civic identity as an adolescent or young adult, through which one develops socio-political awareness and feels a sense of agency and social responsibility, leads to further civic engagement as an adult.[11] A longitudinal study of more than 12,000 students measured the long-term effects of engaging in volunteer work during college.[12] Controlling for variables affecting student predisposition to volunteer in college, the study found that, nine years after their entry into college, students who had engaged in volunteer work in college were more likely to attend graduate school, attain higher degrees, participate in community action programs, feel empowered to effect societal change, and feel that college had prepared them well for work.[13] Community service was also associated, nine years later, with values of promoting racial understanding, helping others in difficulty, and

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Scott Seider, "Catalyzing a Commitment to Community Service in Emerging Adults," *Journal of Adolescent Research* 22 (2007): 612-639.

[9] Robert A. Rhoads, "In the Service of Citizenship: A Study of Student Involvement in Community Service," *The Journal of Higher Education* 69 (1998): 277-297.

[10] James Youniss, et al., "What We Know About Engendering Civic Identity," *American Behavioral Scientist* 40 (1997), 620-631.

[11] Colby, et al., *Educating Citizens*, 118.

[12] Alexander Astin, et al., "Long-term Effects of Volunteerism During the Undergraduate Years," *Review of Higher Education* 22 (1999): 87-202.

[13] Ibid.

developing a meaningful philosophy of life.[14] Other researchers have found that former college student activists are more likely to be politically active and to enter helping professions such as teaching.[15]

Anne Colby and colleagues articulate a definition of the morally and civically responsible person they believe colleges and universities should strive to help their students become:

> [A] morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own…. A fully developed individual must have the ability to think clearly and in an appropriately complex and sophisticated way about moral and civic issues; he or she must possess the moral commitment and sense of personal responsibility to act…. We are concerned with the development of the whole person, as an accountable individual and engaged participant in society—local, state, national, and global.[16]

Colby and colleagues note three competencies that make up moral and civic maturity: (1) understanding: interpretation, judgment, and knowledge; (2) motivation: values, interests, empathy, hope, sense of efficacy, and moral and civic identity; and (3) core skills needed to transform informed judgment into action: moral and political discourse, as well as the ability to lead, to build a consensus, and to move a group forward with mutual respect.[17]

Community-Based Learning and Catholic Social Teaching: Pedagogy for Moral and Civic Development

Community-based learning courses[18] allow students to experience the world outside the classroom and confront, firsthand, the social issues

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[14] Ibid.

[15] James Fendrich and Kenneth Lovoy, "Back to the Future: Adult Political Behavior of Former Student Activists," *American Sociological Review* 53 (1988): 780-784; Douglas McAdam, "The Biographical Consequences of Activism," *American Sociological Review* 54 (1989): 744-760.

[16] Colby, et al., *Educating Citizens,* 17-18.

[17] Ibid*.,* 18-19.

[18] For the purpose of this discussion, we use the term "community-based learning" to encompass experiential learning opportunities that invite students to participate in direct service, research, and/or field projects in the local community as a dimension of course work. While terminology is hotly debated in the field, we find the term "community-based learning" allows for a broader pedagogical scope within which a greater diversity of experiential learning models can be included.

about which they are learning and studying. Through direct service, organizing and advocacy, community-based research, and action projects, students participate in a variety of endeavors that connect disciplinary content with engaged learning in their local communities. Moreover, reciprocal community-based learning partnerships with local organizations not only reflect individual commitments to justice by faculty and students, but also an institutional commitment to building long-term community relationships that are rooted in mutuality, shared knowledge creation, and sustainable change.[19]

Much has been written about the contributions of community-based learning to a student's educational experience.[20] A longitudinal study of more than 22,000 college undergraduates found that community engagement through course work positively affected academic performance, values (such as commitment to involvement in community and civic affairs), self-efficacy, leadership skill development (leadership activities, skills, and self-rated leadership ability), interpersonal skills, choice of a career in service, and plans to continue participating in service after college.[21] Findings from this research literature broadly affirm the positive influence of community engagement on student learning outcomes, particularly in terms of deepening one's moral and civic development.[22]

Community-based learning courses are arenas of serious academic inquiry with a long-standing tradition. However, a potential weakness of community-based learning is that students merely "get credit" for doing community service without being required to do rigorous analytic reading and writing.[23] As civic engagement in higher education has grown in sophistication and professionalism during the last twenty-five

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[19] Amy Driscoll, "Carnegie's Community-Engagement Classification: Intentions and Insights," *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* 40 (2008): 38-41.

[20] Janet Eyler and Dwight E. Giles, *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1999).

[21] Alexander Astin, et al., "How Service Learning Affects Students," *Higher Education Research Institute* (Los Angeles: University of California, 2000).

[22] Colby, et al., *Educating Citizens*; L. Lee Knefelkamp, "Civic Identity: Locating Self in Community," *Diversity & Democracy: Civic Learning for Shared Futures* 11 (2008).

[23] For example, see Robert A. Rhoads and Jeffrey Howard, *Academic Service Learning: A Pedagogy of Action and Reflection* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998); and Eyler and Giles (1999) who distinguish academic engagement in community-based learning from co-curricular service opportunities. Within this body of literature, scholars address the need for faculty members to develop explicit methods for connecting the service experience to academic content through written assignments and class discussions. They also address the strategies for evaluating student learning rather than rewarding students or giving credit for service performed.

years, faculty and administrators have developed specific pedagogical strategies that integrate theory and practice within the context of a community-based service or research project.[24] As noted above, this type of pedagogical engagement invites students to deal with the causes and consequences of injustice, poverty, and inequality. When projects are structured with clear objectives, experiential learning in an academic context can actualize three meaningful learning outcomes for students: (1) a substantive knowledge base about social issues, politics and political processes, and social change; (2) a deeper understanding of complex systems and institutions; and (3) new skills for civic engagement, such as collaboration, leadership development, and negotiation.[25] Such learning outcomes are enhanced by the community-based experience. The frequency with which professors directly connect the engagement experience to the academic material is critical to whether the experiential component deepens a student's understanding of the material, and to whether the academic element enhances the community experience.[26] Opportunities for students to reflect upon, discuss, and process their community work in light of academic theory are essential for optimal learning experiences.[27]

Other critics charge that community-based learning courses are a pedagogical strategy used to advance a liberal political ideology, particularly in those courses that focus on fostering students' civic and political engagement. One needs to look no further than the National Association of Scholars' website for critiques of the civic engagement movement in higher education and of community-based learning courses as ideologically-driven, "activist" teaching.[28] The *Political Engagement Project* of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching provides a useful counter-argument to such criticism.[29] The findings from this mixed-method study of twenty-one courses and cocurricular programs on political engagement suggest that educating for democratic participation, especially through experiential education, is a central and effective

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[24] Thomas Ehrlich and Barbara Jacoby, *Civic Engagement in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009).

[25] Anne Colby, et al, *Educating for Democracy: Preparing Undergraduates for Responsible Political Engagement* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007).

[26] Lisa Boes, "Learning From Practice: A Constructive-Developmental Study of Undergraduate Service-learning Pedagogy" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2006).

[27] Astin, et al., "How Service Learning Affects Students"; Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning in Service-learning?*

[28] See the National Association of Scholars: http://www.nas.org/. See for example, articles by Peter Wood and Ashley Thorne, as well as the online forum.

[29] Colby, et al., *Educating for Democracy*.

strategy for equipping young people with the skills and habits of engaged citizenship and political involvement beyond party affiliation. In particular, the authors stress that course models with an emphasis on democratic participation (including the one described in this article) can foster students' political learning, increase students' sense of political efficacy, and deepen their commitment to engagement. Additionally, the study found that "political learning does not change party identification or political ideology."[30]

Catholic Social Teaching

Community-based learning opportunities focused on the preferential option for the poor have been most commonly found in cocurricular and campus ministry programs. Though the extent of the incorporation varies from course to course, these learning opportunities have also been included in certain religion, theology, and social science courses, as well as courses in other disciplines.[31] CST, states William Bolan, "offers a way to frame students' analyses and social actions in a way that integrally values and incorporates the insights that they develop through community work."[32] Just as Bolan contends that the introduction of community-based learning enhances the courses of Catholic moral theologians, the introduction of CST can enhance community-based learning courses in other disciplines. CST invites students to consider the social situations they encounter in the communities in which they work in light of the Christian gospel. Students need not have a Catholic or Christian background to learn from the framework of CST; instead, students from all religious backgrounds, and none, can draw upon key principles such as solidarity or the preferential option for the poor when deepening their understanding of the challenges posed by their community experiences. While not dictating particular policy prescriptions, the

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[30] Ibid., 11.

[31] Gary P. DeAngelis, "A Preferential Option for the Poor: Social Justice and Curriculum Reform," in *Love of Learning*, ed. William Reiser, S.J. (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 1995), 115-122.

[32] William P. Bolan, "Promoting Social Change: Theoretical and Empirical Arguments for Using Traditional Community-based Learning When Teaching Catholic Social Thought," in *New Wine, New Wineskins: A Next Generation Reflects on Key Issues in Catholic Moral Theology*, ed. William C. Mattison III (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

tradition of Catholic social doctrine provides a framework through which students can analyze "the signs of the times."

In community-based learning courses, students often confront the challenge of charity versus justice. Are members of disenfranchised communities the mere recipients of the students' good works—tutoring, mentoring, and the like—or are they actors in their own right, collaborators in providing social justice solutions to vexing problems facing their communities? CST, with its emphasis on solidarity, interdependence, and a just social order, calls students from the "charity only" mentality most common among students to consider issues of justice. This approach expands their learning experience from mere participation in service to a critical analysis of conditions under which injustice exists. Further, it invites students to make deeper connections about their roles and shared responsibilities in addressing the problems of poverty and inequality. In arguing that CST calls students beyond altruism and charity toward a deeper vision of the common good, Bolan quotes Pope John Paul II's 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*:

> [Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortune of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because really we are responsible for all....Solidarity...helps us to see the other...as our neighbor...on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God....The motivating concern for the poor must be translated at all levels into concrete actions, until it decisively attains a series of reforms.[33]

The "see-judge-act" model underpinning CST allows students to reflect and act on the social realities they confront.[34]

Case Example

We present as a case example a course on community organizing, leadership, and democratic participation that both authors have taught (separately) to undergraduates at four different institutions: a large research institution and three Catholic colleges. Although the themes of the course are relevant to CST, the instructors only recently began consciously integrating CST content into the course at their current

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Thomas Massaro, S.J., *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

Catholic college. The basic theoretical framework for the course was developed by Marshall Ganz, a Harvard sociologist and former lead organizer of the United Farm Workers.[35] For more than ten years, Ganz has trained graduate students and other scholars in the theory and practice of community organizing and leadership, and many of these scholars have adapted his model in different ways for courses at their institutions. Offering an interdisciplinary approach, the pedagogical framework draws on scholarship related to elements of democratic leadership and is rooted in required community organizing projects that students design and implement over one semester.

We now describe the basic model of the course, followed by a discussion of how CST has been integrated. We each offer the course in our respective disciplinary departments; the classes are quite similar overall, but are somewhat tailored to our own areas of expertise and background in CST. One course, entitled "Catholic Thought and Social Action," is offered as an advanced seminar in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and draws more broadly on CST. The other course, "Introduction to Community Organizing," is taught as a seminar within the Interdisciplinary and Special Studies department and highlights Jesuit notions of vocation and discernment.

The course begins with the presumption that leadership in a democracy does not consist of personality characteristics alone, but rather requires a set of learned skills: the habits and practices of citizenship. Essential skills for leadership and engaged citizenship include forming relationships, motivating others through story and narrative, engaging in strategic deliberation, and mobilizing action.[36] Although the conceptual material is interdisciplinary in nature, the subject matter is grounded in the social science disciplines of sociology, social psychology, and political science. The course is broadly framed by readings on democracy and civic engagement. Weekly readings include material on the political and

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[35] See http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/mganz/ for information on Dr. Ganz's teaching, practice, publications, and syllabi, including the course *Organizing: People, Power, and Change*.

[36] In Ganz's model, the so-called "great man" theory of leadership does not adequately explain leadership. See Ronald Heifitz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (USA: Library of Congress,1994), 16. Rather, leadership consists of skills that can be taught and learned. Of course, skills, including those mentioned here, can be used to either good or malevolent ends, depending on the character of the person engaging them. With the course's focus on leadership in democracy, this serves as an important point for discussion with students, as they not only discern their own leadership capacity but also the leadership practices of others.

social structures of influence, leadership, and collective action, and on power. In addition, readings from the humanities engage students in the purposes and power of narratives. However, learning the skills of leadership and democratic participation—like learning any skill—is impossible without practice. The course comes alive for students through community organizing projects. Students are required to spend approximately five hours each week engaged in an organizing project of their own choosing, either with an off-campus internship at a local organization or with an on-campus group. During the project, students take on the role of "organizer" and are tasked with achieving a measurable, collective-action outcome by the end of the semester. Building on theoretical reading and case studies of collective action, the organizing project is matched with integrative writing assignments and class discussions. This type of learning about leadership and democratic citizenship incorporates theory, practice, and values.[37] The course builds on those values found within moral traditions—religious, cultural, and political—which have motivated public leadership, democratic participation, and collective action for centuries. The course highlights the moral traditions of well-known social movements using case studies such as the Montgomery bus boycott in the civil rights movement and Gandhi's struggle for India's independence.

Integrating Catholic Social Teaching

The basic model of this course, as presented above, is an effective way in which to foster moral and civic development among college students across all types of institutions. However, this course, and other courses on similar topics, are especially well-suited for the inclusion of CST in the context of a Catholic college. CST is often called the Church's best kept secret, and even many Catholics have never heard of these rich teachings. This is true even among students attending Catholic colleges with stated missions that incorporate principles of social justice. Students are often surprised to see how CST aligns with both the academic and community-based learning components of courses relating to engaged citizenship.

In adapting the above-described course in the framework of CST, one instructor began by providing students with an overview of the rich body of CST, which consisted of introducing official CST documents as

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[37] Marshall Ganz, "Organizing: People, Power, and Change: Notes on Organizing – Fall 2009." http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/mganz/Organizing%20Notes%20Fall%20 2009%20with%20materials.pdf.

well as action that takes place through Catholic social service and social justice organizations, international relief organizations, hospitals, schools, lay leaders, and local parishes. Students start by learning that modern CST began with Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum*, "On Capital and Labor."[38] Students see how this encyclical calls for the rights of workers to receive just pay, to have humane working and living conditions, and to organize into workers' associations. Such issues are as relevant to community organizing efforts today as they were in *Rerum novarum*'s context in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. Students are introduced to themes addressed in subsequent papal social encyclicals, including the gap between rich and poor countries, war and peace, urbanization, and consumerism.[39] In addition to official Vatican documents, students learn about CST in the American context by reading letters and statements from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) on issues such as economic justice and immigration.

Exposing students to CST encompasses much more, however, than only learning about official Church documents. Students also learn about CST through examining Scripture, studying the lives of influential Catholic lay leaders, and looking at Church-based organizations that carry out the work of justice today. They read Old Testament prophets who issued calls for a just society and lay leaders such as Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker movement. They learn that the U.S. Catholic Bishops' domestic antipoverty program, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), "aims to address the root causes of poverty in America through promotion and support of community-controlled, self-help organizations, and through transformative education."[40] Students read about the many grassroots organizing efforts supported by CCHD during the past few decades, which include participatory projects initiated by local groups doing work with (not for) the poor. They consider the role of organizations that help carry out the Church's outreach in both charity and social justice, such as Catholic Charities and Catholic Relief Services.

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[38] Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum novarum: On Capital and Labor," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.

[39] Thomas Massaro, S.J., *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (Lanham: Sheed & Ward/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

[40] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, "Mission," http://usccb.org/cchd/mission.shtml.

Books such as Thomas Massaro, S.J.'s *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*[41] and Kathleen Maas Weigert and Alexia Kelley's edited volume, *Living the Catholic Social Tradition: Cases and Commentary*,[42] provide students with historical context and a framework for grappling with CST. Weigert and Kelley provide useful case studies specifically emphasizing the role of Catholic social doctrine in community action, which complement the more well-known social action case studies drawn from the original model of the course.[43]

In addition to integrating core elements of CST, the professors also emphasize the notion of vocation in their adaptation of the course. Students have the opportunity to consider how moral traditions shape their motivations by considering the question: *Why are you called to this work?* Students develop a public narrative—a descriptive story about why they are motivated to learn about and practice organizing.[44] For many students, this becomes a critical first step in both understanding why they care about social change and—from a skills perspective— articulating their underlying motivation for civic participation, their values about justice, and their vision for change. In this way, the course also provides a curricular avenue for students to connect the values that shape their actions with the stories that have formed who they are, all within the context of a theoretical framework undergirded by experiential learning.

To help students articulate their own stories of why they feel called to work for justice, readings are assigned from key figures who have lived out a vocation congruent with CST. (See Appendix A.) Students read autobiographical pieces and other works by and about people such as Dorothy Day, Mother Teresa, Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King, and Jane Addams. The autobiographical selections focus on the young adult lives of some of these now well-known figures, highlighting their early confusions and struggles for vocational direction. Students see how these leaders once struggled to determine their path, and how they persevered to begin the movements for which they later became famous. Readings also include case studies of ordinary neighborhood members or college students mobilizing for social action in keeping with CST.

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[41] Massaro, *Living Justice*.

[42] Kathleen Maas Weigert and Alexia K. Kelley, eds., *Living the Catholic Social Tradition: Cases and Commentary* (Lanham, MD: Sheed and Ward/Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005).

[43] Ibid.

[44] Marshall Ganz, "What is Public Narrative?" (unpublished paper, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 2007).

Reading about some of the early struggles of social justice leaders as well as about the actions of ordinary college students and community members helps students to see themselves on a similar journey and demystifies the process of how one comes to live out a vocation of social change. Through a combination of community-based learning projects, reading stories of social justice leaders, and structured opportunities to learn how to articulate their own narratives, students connect with others who may or may not share common experiences or values but who are also engaged in a process of discernment about their lives and how to further justice in the world around them. Because of this, this course is, for many students, an avenue for intellectual inquiry, reflective practice, and spiritual insights about how they will live their lives beyond college.

Conclusion and Implications

Building on best practices, the teaching approach described above includes theoretical reading in fields such as sociology, organizational and behavioral psychology, political science, and history, as well as the use of conceptual frameworks for students to integrate their experiences as practitioners. Students are assessed on their scholarly reflection about their community-based learning experiences in light of theory and CST, not on their performance in an internship.[45] We have found that through reflective practice, students make connections between academic content and their community projects. This, in turn, can advance learning outcomes as well as facilitate a student's intellectual, spiritual, and civic growth. Community-based learning courses allow students the experiential education necessary to make theoretical material come alive. Students in the course have mobilized people on legislative issues related to education, affordable housing, the environment, nutrition, and public health. They have created new campus organizations on homelessness, mentoring youth, and post-international-immersion-trip reflection and action. Some students have facilitated campus forums on public issues as diverse as the Iraq war, genocide in Darfur, and support for pregnant students on campus. The core principles of CST not only resonate with the goals and outcomes of such endeavors but also with the methodology of "bottom-up," empowered communities building relationships to tackle common problems affecting them.

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[45] Eyler and Giles, *Where's the Learning in Service-learning?*

Two students' project from spring 2007 provides an excellent example of successful implementation of these principles and methodologies. Their project comprised working on a "1000 Summer Youth Jobs" campaign with a city-wide interfaith community organizing group, trying to develop summer jobs for disadvantaged city teenagers. The students' initial role was to have meetings with employers in the local area in an attempt to build relationships with them and secure their commitment to providing summer positions for teens. The students were met with much resistance from employers and were discouraged at midsemester. They turned to working directly with the teenagers and collaborated with some of the youth in the community to develop an employment fair to teach teens job-hunting skills. As a result, they became re-energized for their employer outreach work, tried a new tactic, and had big breakthroughs, resulting in a number of local employers committing to providing summer jobs. Employers attended the employment fair as well, where they met with interested potential workers and with some of the teen leaders who had helped organize the event. At the end of the semester, the students' learning and growth from the initial experience of failure and discouragement was clear in their final term papers. Their work tied together CST themes of the dignity of labor, the preferential option for the poor, the notion of solidarity, and being "one with" rather than merely "doing for."

Student response to the integration of CST into the course has been extremely positive. Many students are hungry for knowledge of the Church's social tradition as it relates to their social justice interests and pursuits. The first time the course was taught this way, the syllabus contained a relatively modest amount of CST; however, throughout the semester, the students kept asking for more CST to be included. In subsequent versions of the course, students have continued to ask for the inclusion of even *more* CST. Their enthusiasm and engagement in narrative work has led to deeper investigation of the discernment process in both class discussions and reflective writing. In course evaluations, students have recommended the course be two semesters in order for them to be able to absorb more Catholic social doctrine, to continue to learn and practice leadership and civic engagement in light of academic theory, and to pursue a more in-depth process of discernment.

Student course evaluations reveal that this model of integrating CST with community-based learning provides an excellent mechanism contributing to students' moral and civic development. Here is a representative sample of some of the student comments:

- "It has been more than just an academic experience for me. This course has personally challenged me and has directly impacted my decisions about what I will be doing once I graduate."
- "It is the most meaningful class I've ever taken. I think it has caused me to totally change my way of thinking and has impacted how I am going to go about my future."
- "This course needs to be a year-long course. The more time, the more fruitful and helpful the class will be for the community and the student. The best course I have taken here in my four years."
- "The most meaningful aspect of the community-based learning project was integrating faith and religious background into [the] project – getting to see my faith in action. It has given me [a] new perspective on options for [the] future – has shown me something else I am interested in and now have skills in."
- "Catholic Thought & Social Action has transformed my capacity to community organize, my discernment to pursue the field of Public Health, and my personal development as an engaged citizen of the world. The eclectic readings, animated discussions, collaborative support of my classmates, and the professor's rich experience and teaching all have contributed to a deeper understanding of the dependent processes of theory and action. The integration of Catholic social thought and social action has facilitated my ability to be able to carry out my community-organizing project, which consists of mobilizing students to create an environmental justice movement on campus by getting the community involved in advocacy and social action initiatives that seek to address the climate crisis."

David O'Brien argues that faculty and staff at Catholic colleges need to mentor students in decisions about vocation with a focus beyond careerism, helping students to make choices "self-consciously related to their faith, their values, and the kinds of people they wish to become."[46] As these student evaluations indicate, this course linking CST with community-based learning helps equip students for vocational discernment in light of their values.

There are, of course, problems and pitfalls when considering how best to integrate CST in this type of community-based learning course. One involves practical considerations and time constraints. Teaching the social science concepts related to leadership and social movements while monitoring outside community-based learning projects would be

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[46] O'Brien, *From the Heart of the American Church,* 204.

a very full semester already, even without trying also to introduce the major themes and documents of CST, acquaint students with themes of justice in Scripture, teach about important lay leaders, and consider issues of student vocation and discernment. The instructors who have done so, however, have found it a worthwhile endeavor. With an eye toward intellectual, moral, and civic development, faculty members need to make choices about how best to structure student learning. Theory-driven discussions can be balanced with integrative conversations about theory in action, where students draw from their own experiences to illustrate theoretical ideas and concepts. This is a common challenge for educators engaging in community-based learning, and though difficult, it is highly rewarding to help students acquire skills for collective action in a context of religious and civic tradition.

This case example provides a model of a course that uses the framework of CST to help students develop the fundamental competencies needed for moral and civic maturity: understanding, motivation, and core skills needed to transform understanding into social justice action.[47] By showing how CST has been carefully integrated into a community organizing course, this case example also provides a resource for faculty seeking to adapt their existing courses on this or similar topics to incorporate CST.

Borrowing a concept from the former Jesuit Superior General Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., the measure of Catholic colleges and universities is not what students do, but the people they become and how they exercise their adult responsibility for their neighbor and the wider world.[48] Courses related to issues of democratic citizenship, as this case example shows, can deeply foster students' moral and civic development, helping them to discern who they want to become and how they will respond to social injustice. By joining community-based learning and CST as powerful and complementary resources in such courses, these important aims of Catholic education can be realized in meaningful ways.

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[47] Colby, et al., *Educating Citizens*, 18-19.

[48] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., "The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice in American Jesuit Higher Education," Keynote Address to 'Commitment to Justice in Jesuit Higher Education,' Santa Clara University, October 6, 2000, reprinted in *A Jesuit Education Reader: Contemporary Writings in the Jesuit Mission in Education, Principles, the Issue of Catholic Identity, Practical Applications of the Ignatian Way, and More*, ed. George W. Traub (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 2008), 144-162.

Appendix A

Selected Readings

Catholic Social Teaching

Kathleen Maas Weigert and Alexia K. Kelley, eds., *Living the Catholic Social Tradition: Cases and Commentary* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005).

Thomas Massaro, S.J., *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* (The Classroom Edition) (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008).

Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of Dorothy Day* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 4th printing edition, 1996).

Excerpts from papal encyclicals, including:
Pope Leo XIII, "Rerum Novarum: On Capital and Labor," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html.
Pope John Paul II, "Centesimus Annus: On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html.
Pope Benedict XVI, "Deus Caritas Est: God is Love," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html.
Pope Benedict XVI, "Caritas in Veritate: In Charity and Truth," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy," http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/EconomicJusticeforAll.pdf.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Inc. and Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano, "Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope," http://www.usccb.org/mrs/stranger.shtml.

Jeffry Odell Korgen, *Solidarity Will Transform the World: Stories of Hope from Catholic Relief Services* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

Jose Luis Gonzalez-Balado and Janet N. Playfoot, eds., *My Life For the Poor: Mother Teresa of Calcutta* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985).

The Bible, Ex 2-6; Sm 17: 4-49.

History and Theory of Collective Action
Jane Addams, "The Snare of Preparation," in *Twenty Years at Hull House*, Revised Edition (New York: Signet Classic, 1961), 60-74.
Taylor Branch, "The Montgomery Bus Boycott," in *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years 1954-1963* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 143-205.
Robert Middlekauff, "Resolution," in *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 221-249.
Dennis Dalton, "Civil Disobedience: The Salt Satyagraha," in *Mahatma Gandhi: Nonviolent Power in Action* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 91 –138.
Jacques E. Levy, "Boycott Grapes," in *Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa* (New York: Norton, 1975), 263-268.
Dennis Chong, "Creating the Motivation to Participate in Collective Action," in *Collective Action and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 90-102.
Robert Bellah, et al, "Introduction: We Live Through Institutions," in *The Good Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 3-18.
Leadership and the Practice of Democratic Organizing
Marshall Ganz, "Organizing Notes" (Working paper, Harvard Kennedy School, http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/mganz/OrganizingNotes Fall 2009 with materials.pdf).
Ellen Langer, *Mindfulness* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1989).
Bernard Loomer, "Two Kinds of Power: The D.R. Sharpe Lecture on Social Ethics," *Criterion* 15 (1976): 10-29.
Ronald A. Heifetz, "Values in Leadership," and "The Personal Challenge," in *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1994), 13-27; 250-276.
Martin Luther King, Jr. "The Drum Major Instinct," in *I Have a Dream: Writings and Speeches that Changed the World*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1992), 180-192.
Kimberly A. Bobo, et al, *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists* (Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press, 2001).
Sim Sitkin, "Learning Through Failure: The Strategy of Small Losses," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 14 (1992): 231-266.