Integrating Learning in a Catholic University: An Ongoing Conversation
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I. Integrated Learning in Higher Education

All colleges and universities, including Catholic universities, in search of excellence in learning and scholarship are facing a number of obstacles that make integrated learning both imperative and necessary. This requires faculty to think about how their individual course objectives and content can be enriched by the Catholic tradition of the intellectual life. Periodically, the university community enters into a deeper and a more extensive conversation on how to reconfigure the university-wide undergraduate curriculum so that the learning outcomes not only prepare students with the skills they need to be functionally literate in contemporary work and social settings, but also present the Catholic intellectual heritage in a way that enriches their lives and provides integration for their learning.

This paper develops several ideas and concepts for integrating learning and scholarship at Catholic universities. These ideas and concepts will be used to explore the collaboration across disciplines necessary for business education in Catholic universities. The paper is developed in four sections. The first section develops a perspective on the organization of a university as a network of conversations among communities of inquiry and practice. This perspective is utilized to show how specialization and fragmentation have become obstacles to integrated learning in contemporary universities. Two learning strategies that have proved helpful in overcoming these obstacles are learning communities and practical reasoning. These two strategies require faculty to crossover and learn the language and habits of inquiry of another discipline. The second section provides a perspective on the Catholic intellectual tradition as a 2000 year old conversation of the believers of the Catholic community with the culture in which it finds itself. The Catholic intellectual tradition is presented in a way that can assist faculties of Catholic universities in integrating this tradition into individual courses and into the overall design of the undergraduate curriculum. The third section provides a perspective on the Catholic social tradition that is a special facet of the Catholic intellectual tradition that addresses important social questions of our society, such as economic justice, war and peace, health care, etc. Some implications of the Catholic social tradition for integrated learning are explored. The fourth and final section offers some ideas on how to organize professional development programs in which faculty can come to appreciate the Catholic intellectual and social tradition.
and difficult. The world in which their students will enter upon graduation is characterized by globalization, rapid change, and hyper-connectivity. In order to address the problems and issues our graduates will confront they must develop the skills of integrated learning, namely to discover, integrate, apply and communicate knowledge from a variety of different disciplines, perspectives, and experiences. These skills are developed when students are able to engage in learning experiences that span different disciplines and professional fields of knowledge and their different experiences of engaging real world problems through internships, international immersions, and community based learning opportunities. This challenge of integrating learning is being undertaken at a time when the internal forces of disciplinary specialization and University fragmentation make it even more difficult to integrate learning. In this section some obstacles to and strategies for integrated learning in higher education are explored. These approaches will be used in later sections to address some distinctive ways integrated learning can take place on the campuses of Catholic colleges and universities.

A. Conversations and Disciplines

One helpful way to explore the challenges of integrating learning in higher education is to view the University as a network of conversations. There are the important conversations of classroom where faculty and students explore everything from the novels of the “lost generation” to the phenomenon of fractals in chaos theory. There are the important conversations of a research team exploring the frontiers of microbiology as well as the solitary scholar in conversation with a medieval text.

These conversations and their network of relationships to one another are shaped by the discipline and professional fields that make up the University; by what we might call communities of inquiry and practice. Connecting the concept of inquiry and practice with the concept of community provides a perspective on how university conversations are shaped by social dynamics. A community of inquiry and practice can be defined by its characteristic modes of inquiry and by the knowledge produced through inquiry. Communities of inquiry and practice develop a language that indicates preferred meanings, determines what assumptions are included and excluded, and shapes what counts for knowledge and truth within a discipline. Communities of inquiry and practice create for its members a perspective for interpreting the world. The norms of the community shape what can be said, by whom, when, and with what authority one can speak. For example, the disciplines of political science, biology, or philosophy are communities of inquiry and practice that have developed a particular language and habits of thinking about their focus of inquiry. To be initiated into a discipline or professional field is to be invited into the community of inquiry and practice by its members and usually mentored by one or more masters or authorities of the community.

Professional fields such as business, engineering, medicine or law can also be viewed as communities of inquiry and practice; they also have a particular language and habits of inquiry. The language and habits of inquiry of professions also provide a perspective on the world. Either explicitly or tacitly they shape the purpose of inquiry and practice and provide norms about what counts as knowledge and good practice within the profession.

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2 The concept of communities of inquiry and practice come from integrating the concepts of discourse communities and communities of practice. Viewing disciplines as communities of inquiry and practice helps identify barriers to integrating learning in modern universities as well as to develop strategies to overcome these barriers.
All communities of inquiry have traditions and inquiry within these communities is shaped by these traditions. An argument, as the fruit of inquiry is a complex and multi-faceted line of reasoning aimed at demonstrating knowledge. Traditions shape inquiry by indicating appropriate methods of inquiry and by specifying the purpose of inquiry i.e., the goods valued by the community. The arguments of a community of inquiry are historically extended in that they have been developed overtime through generations of scholars and have continuity in the midst of changing circumstance. The arguments produced by a community of inquiry are influenced by the practices and institutions of the community such as its methods of peer review and channels for disseminating knowledge as well as the practices and institutions of the larger society. The arguments of communities of inquiry can incorporate coherent and well warranted reasoning and insightful grasp of reality as well as distortions of human reason shaped by bias, power, and greed. A vital community of inquiry is constantly open to critical reflection and self correction.

B. Specialization and Fragmentation.

In striving for recognition of excellence in research and scholarship most contemporary colleges and universities have developed reward structures which press the faculty to be recognized in their discipline, usually through publication in refereed journals. Often this leads to early specialization within the discipline, i.e. going deeper within a selected area of the discipline. Departments and programs develop knowledge in specialized fields within a community of inquiry and practice where there is a familiarity and a competence in using the language and patterns of thinking of the discipline. Professors in sociology prepare their scholarship for other sociologists; professors of operations management prepare their scholarship for other operations management specialists. To develop an original contribution requires that the scholar focus on a narrow specialty and develop more depth in the knowledge of that specialty. Clearly colleges and universities are not giving up this press for scholarly excellence in its faculty. By expanding the boundaries of knowledge through scholarly excellence universities perform a very important function for society.

Specialization within disciplines by itself can also have negative consequences for the University; it can lead to isolation of departments and divisions within the University which in turn can lead to fragmentation of the undergraduate curriculum. Specialization often leads to a breakdown of conversations between departments and divisions within the university. Scholars are more often communicating with scholars in other universities that share their specialized interest. Within the reward structures of the contemporary university there is little time for conversing across the departments of the university. The specialization of disciplines and the lack of time for intrauniversity conversations have lead to a loss of attention focused on integrating the contemporary undergraduate curriculum. When it comes time for the university faculty to reconfigure the undergraduate curriculum to meet the evolving challenges of the modern world, the faculty no longer has a well developed capacity to converse across disciplines and divisions about what themes provide order and integration in undergraduate learning. Often the new undergraduate curriculum reflects the specialization of the academy; the undergraduate curriculum is often a menu of courses designed to satisfy department and divisional interest in upper level credit hours and opportunities for their faculty to teach specialized courses. There will be very little attempt to integrate or order knowledge and learning into a meaningful whole.

3 One good example of this criticism is Alasdair MacIntyre, *God, Philosophy, Universities: A Selective History of the Catholic Philosophical Tradition* (Lanham, Maryland, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2009) especially Chapters 18 and 19.
Unless striving for excellence in disciplines and professional fields and the resultant specialization is complemented by structure, processes, and conversations for ordering and integrating learning, the undergraduate curriculum will be highly fragmented.

C. Some Approaches to Integrating Learning

Today there are noteworthy attempts to counter this trend of specialization and fragmentation in undergraduate education. Two approaches that can provide some helpful guidance for the tasking of integrating Catholic undergraduate learning are learning communities and the utilization of practical reasoning as a framework and process for integrating learning.

Learning Communities: Learning communities represent a broad class of innovations in which faculty from different disciplines and students come together to create an experience of integrated learning. Learning communities have been developed in a variety of forms. It can be as simple as when two faculty members taking two courses, say a history course and a philosophy course, or a course in business ethics and course in business strategy, and integrate these courses into a common experience for a group of students. The faculty gets to work across disciplinary boundaries and presents a more coherent and integrated experience for the students. The students are presented a deeper learning experience because they are challenged to address issues and questions that require them to integrate knowledge from two disciplines. Learning communities can be developed over multiple disciplines and involve multiple faculty members. For example, at some universities the basic humanities courses (Religion, Philosophy, and History) are presented as a unit and the faculty members work to integrate learning around a theme like “human dignity in a pluralistic culture.” Learning communities provide great opportunities for integrated learning.

Integrated learning through learning communities requires special skills in the faculty and programs of faculty development. Faculty must not only be competent to teaching in their own disciplinary area but must be able to cross over and learn some of the knowledge and habits of inquiry of their collaborating faculty member. Without faculty willing to take this cross-over journey a university is not able to support interdisciplinary learning communities. To have faculty that can support integrated learning requires providing them with professional development opportunities to learning the disciplinary language and habits of their colleagues and work together to provide and to develop the syllabi for the learning community.

Practical Reasoning: A second approach to integrating undergraduate education is the use of practical reasoning as a signature pedagogy for professional education and with wide application in the teaching of the liberal arts. Practical reasoning, in its most abstract form, is reasoning directed toward the determination of what is humanly good and how that rationally desirable end should be pursued. Where practical reasoning gets interesting is when it confronts the uncertain or problematic situations.

The practical reasoner, working in the midst of uncertainty, must define the problem or issues to be addressed and create and evaluate the potential responses to the problem or issue and do this in the light of existing information; information that, in part, is incomplete and unverifiable.

5 Appendix A: “Practical Reasoning and Educating the Business Professional” contains a description of the central role of practical reasoning in the educational of the business student.
Making a judgment on which of the several potential responses to choose cannot be done by logic alone; the practical reasoner in addressing the situation must use other criteria such as the coherence of arguments, the fit with other data and arguments, the explanatory power of the response, and so on.

Practical reasoning in uncertain situations requires a balance between the theory or principles and the demands of a particular situation. The liberal arts or a profession provides a knowledge base or principles that may be used in solving problems. The wise practical reasoner has to balance these principles with the exigencies of the situation. A novel situation may present a challenge which is not adequately addressed in the knowledge base, yet the practical reasoner must put together a response that is at least a reasonable approach to the situation.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has been conducting a number of studies on the role of the practical reasoning in liberal arts education and in professional education. The major thesis of this work is that a modified form of practical reason is a major element in the signature pedagogies of the professional disciplines. The Foundation has experimented with seeing how practical reasoning can be a signature pedagogy of the liberal arts and then how pedagogies of practical reason can be utilized to integrate liberal arts and professional education. Several universities have begun to experiment with this approach in the faculty development efforts.

Both of these strategies for integrating learning will be used in a later section to address the issues of integrating learning in a Catholic university. Both innovations can be extremely helpful for designing excellent business education in a Catholic university.

II. Catholic Intellectual Tradition

In their pursuit of excellence in learning and scholarship, Catholic universities are also developing a wide range of integrated learning opportunities – integrated general education programs, issue oriented interdisciplinary learning communities, residential learning communities, community based learning opportunities, etc. There is wide agreement that an outstanding Catholic university must have institutional resolve and intent to privilege the Catholic intellectual tradition. The Catholic intellectual tradition must be a central element in the design of student and faculty learning and scholarship. The challenge facing Catholic higher education today is how this task is accomplished while Catholic universities are experiencing the strong forces that promote specialization and fragmentation of learning and scholarship within the contemporary American academy. In this section a brief perspective on the Catholic intellectual tradition is presented as a useful approach to integrating learning and scholarship on a Catholic university.

A. Appreciating the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

The Catholic intellectual tradition is a tradition of rational inquiry that engages the resources of the Catholic faith with the great human questions and situations as they unfold across centuries.

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7 Creighton University’s efforts are reported in Gail Jensen, Amy Haddad, and Mary Ann Daniels, “Shaping the Life of the Mind of Practice,” Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education, Fall 2009, No. 36.
8 This section summarizes the excellent descriptions of the Catholic intellectual tradition in the work of M. Steinfels, M. Hellwig, and J. Heft.
and civilizations. The resources of the Catholic faith are its classic text, e.g. the Old and New Testaments, treatises and sermons of Church Fathers, etc. and the many scholarly and artistic interpretation of these text that become part of the tradition. The Catholic intellectual tradition was initiated as the early Christians began to reflect upon and engage the Gospels, their experience of Jesus, in a number of new situations. The text of the Old Testament, the Jewish Scriptures, provided one lens that was used to reflect upon and interpret the Gospel text. As Christianity grew and became part of the Roman Empire it began to use Greek and Roman philosophy as another resource for its rational inquiry into the meaning of the Gospel in new cultural and social contexts. This tradition of inquiry leads Christians to see themselves as Trinitarian monotheists who believe that they encounter the one God whom they confess as Father, Son, and Spirit. While Augustine and Aquinas are some of the more celebrated contributors to the Catholic intellectual tradition there were many scholars, councils, documents, and works of art that find their place as part of the tradition. In their inquiry Catholic Christians have drawn upon a variety of ideas, in particular the traditions of natural law and practical reason. In more recent decades, Catholic scholars have begun serious dialogue with the philosophies of Africa, the near East, and Asia. Over time the Catholic intellectual tradition as tradition of inquiry has been sustained by a variety of institutions (Christian communities, monasteries, universities, etc.) and social practices (worship, personal prayer, scholarship, teaching and learning, etc.)

This tradition has evolved and developed through conversation with the world of ideas and philosophies, the example of the saints and the contribution of great thinkers, as well as thinking carefully about the practical meanings of this tradition for the personal and social life of those who share the tradition, as well as to everyone who might benefit from it. In short, the Catholic intellectual tradition is a 2000 year-old conversation between the Church and the world, a dialogue between the Christian community of believers and the culture in which it finds itself. “Perhaps the most fruitful way of thinking about the Catholic intellectual tradition is in terms of two aspects: the classic treasures to be cherished, studied, and handed on, and the ways of doing things that is the outcome of centuries of experience, prayer, action and critical reflection.”

This section provides a brief overview of the classic treasures and the ways of doing things, i.e., the habits of inquiry of the Catholic intellectual tradition. This section concludes with a brief summary of some of the major arguments or themes of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

B. Content: A Treasury of Classic Text

As indicated above the Catholic intellectual tradition was initiated by the early Christian community as they brought their faith in Jesus Christ into dialogue with the important questions of their personal and community lives. This 2000 year old conversation has yielded classic texts some of which are explicitly religious and other that are more generally exercises of the Christian imagination in art and literature. Among these classics are texts of the patristic era, philosophical and theological text from the early middles ages up through the Enlightenment to the modern era. Insight and perspectives of the Catholic intellectual tradition are expressed in literature and poetry. As Monika Hellwig indicates;

… certain texts in literature became classics (of the tradition), throwing light on the Christian journey through history, on Christian faith and life and understanding the big issues. Immediately coming to mind are Piers Plowman,
The Divine Comedy, The Canterbury Tales, and such modern classics as Murder in the Cathedral, A Man for All Seasons, and Four Quartets. Nor should we exclude from the treasury great Protestant and Orthodox classics like Paradise Lost, The Pilgrims’ Progress, and The Brothers Karamazov.¹⁰

The spirit of the Catholic intellectual tradition is also captured in the lives of the heroes and heroines of the Catholic tradition and the spiritualities of many religious communities who have helped to shape this tradition.

These classic formulations in texts and artifacts provide a basis for the Catholic community to keep the tradition alive by judging the validity of new initiatives and innovations within the tradition. In order to pass on the Catholic intellectual tradition it is important that the undergraduate curriculum in our Catholic universities provide a thoughtful historical introduction to some of the more important classical text. To appreciate the Catholic intellectual tradition requires that students spend some time exploring and reflecting on the questions raised by these classic texts. Exploration of classic text can help our students develop an order and integration in their learning.

C. Habits of Inquiry in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT)

In addition to its classic text and artifacts, the Catholic intellectual tradition is constituted by a distinctive but not unique way of doing intellectual work, i.e., a characteristic set of habits of inquiry. Below are summarized some the more important of these habits.

Inquiry in CIT sees reason and faith as integrally related in a common search for truth. Catholic intellectual tradition develops through an intricate and creative interplay between faith and reason. As important as discursive and logical formulations and critical thinking are, they are not able to approach all that can and ought to be understood. Horizons are expanded, relationships are made possible, and understandings embraced when individuals and communities learn to rely at appropriate times and in thoughtful ways on both faith and reason. At a Catholic university, the search for truth is based on the belief that truth is ultimately one and, while it can never be fully grasped, it can more fully be known through human inquiry. The Catholic tradition affirms the value of human agency, i.e., our ability to perceive, understand, judge, and decide, even as it acknowledges the limits and fallibility of this agency because of sin. In the Catholic tradition of inquiry, both the development of the disciplines and cross-disciplinary research and conversations are required to more fully appreciate and approach the truth. In this process, we come to realize that the most important truths are only partially grasped, and our insight into these truths develops over time.

Inquiry in CIT is pursued in a sacramental spirit. The Catholic intellectual tradition sees the world as a creation—as a gift of God. The beauty, complexity and mystery of creation reflect God’s presence and love. All the events of life, from the most mundane to the most extraordinary, participate in the story of God’s work among us. Some draw us more into the mystery of God; some twist our vision or turn us from it. But none exist apart from it. A Catholic understanding of creation discovers in creation not only immanent purpose but also goodness and beauty. Belief in the incarnation entails recognition that the sacred can be expressed and embodied in persons and things and events of this world.

¹⁰ Ibid., 5
Inquiry in CIT uses both analytical and narrative rationality\(^{11}\). Jerome Brunner has argued that modern society engages in two modes of rationality. In analytic rationality the inquirer is skillful in abstracting from the every day events a set of explanatory concepts and principles which can be organized and manipulated into logical arguments that provides a description of the situation. The analytic inquirer searches for general patterns of cause and effect and learns to express meanings and insights through discursive arguments. Analytic rationality is marked the use of logic and its conclusions are by coherence, clarity, and uncertainty. Analytic rationality is the dominant mode of rationality for many disciplines in the academy. In fact, may disciplines only admit of analytic rationality and often this mode of inquiry becomes an unquestioned assumption of the discipline.

In exercising narrative rationality the inquirer give meaning and significance to every day events by placing them in a broader on-going story or context of meaningful interaction. Narrative rationality integrates experience through analogy, metaphor, and symbols. Narrative rationality is an important mode of inquiry for the Catholic intellectual tradition because it allows the classic texts of the tradition to provide explanation for human meaning and value. Narrative rationality can provide a way into universal meaning because it can disclose meaning in a manner not reducible to the structure of an argument.

Inquiry in the CIT sees the Catholic intellectual tradition as an open, dynamic, and self-critical tradition with a growing edge. The Catholic intellectual tradition is a dynamic historical reality and has developed by engaging a wide range of human cultures and intellectual tradition. The tradition develops through the interchange of contesting positions and arguments. Inquiry in the Catholic tradition includes a critical reflection upon the tradition itself; basing the inquiry upon questions from within the tradition and from other intellectual traditions which challenge assumptions once part of the tradition and replaces them with new or revised assumptions that better capture the basic beliefs of the tradition. Inquiry in the Catholic tradition both welcomes the questions and addresses the issues of the ages in a spirit of openness and dialogue – a spirit of fidelity, respect, sincerity, freedom, critical inquiry, and charity. Recognizing the great diversity of cultures and understandings of reality, and the incompleteness of human knowledge, thinkers working within the Catholic intellectual tradition pursue the discovery of truth, the integration of knowledge, the development and dignity of the whole person, the fostering of a just society, and the respectful, wise and productive role of humankind in the cosmos. This engagement with the critical questions of our age produces the “growing edge” of the tradition.

Inquiry in the CIT cultivates practical wisdom. This habit of inquiry offers a large degree of interpenetration with the focus on practical reasoning so important to part one of this paper. The search for truth and wisdom within the Catholic tradition seeks to transform the world toward greater human flourishing; it seeks ultimately to render truth and wisdom practical. The inquirer in the Catholic tradition endeavors to us knowledge in a way that cultivates the adoption of practical ends, practical judgment, and reflective decision making. The inquirers within the Catholic tradition seek to understand the world so that they can identify, critically evaluate and respond creatively to the important signs of the times. Starting with a conception of human flourishing, inquirers are able to define and diagnosis problems and issues, thoughtfully discern

both more human visions for the future and strategies of change to realize these visions; organize people and resources to implement the strategies of change; and reflectively learn from the consequences of change. Intellectuals in the Catholic tradition have a deep sense of a calling or vocation to utilize their talents to work at the transformation of the world into a better human society.

D. Key Themes of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

The Catholic intellectual tradition is known not only by its classic treasures and its habits of inquiry, but also by major arguments or themes that have resulted from this tradition. Many people have little or no problem with the classics treasures and the habits of inquiry of the tradition; where major questions and objections come are with some of the basic themes of the Catholic intellectual tradition that come from reasoned inquiry into Christian revelation. Yet to adequately address key social questions (c.f. the next section) these themes will be important resources. To complete the overview of the Catholic intellectual tradition a brief summary is provided of some of the key themes that have emerged within the Catholic tradition from the mutual search for truth through the integration of faith and reason.

Knowledge of the Transcendent: By openness to truth and beauty, a sense of moral goodness and the search for happiness the human person is open to the discovery of the transcendent. The Catholic intellectual tradition holds, along with other religious traditions, that it is possible to come to certain, but partial, knowledge of the transcendent which the tradition calls God. The existence of God is the foundational principle of the tradition.

Creation is Intelligible: The Catholic intellectual tradition sees God as the creator of the universe and as such has given it an unfolding purpose and filled it with meaning. God has proved the human person with the capacity to search for the truth about the purpose and the evolving order of creation.

Revelation: In addition to natural reason, God provides divine revelation, another order of knowledge that the human persons cannot possibly arrive at under their own power. The divine plan of revelation has been gradually communicated to humanity through deeds and words, through stories of creation, through the covenants with Noah and with Abraham and his descendents, as well as the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. Finally God revealed God’s fullness by sending his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

God as Trinity: The Catholic intellectual tradition sees God as both a unity and as a community of persons. While there are intimations of this profound mystery in nature and in the Scriptures of Israel’s faith, its fullness is revealed in a definitive manner in the incarnation of Jesus, Son of God born of a woman, Mary. God the Father sends his Son, true God and true man, for the salvation of the world. The Father sends through Jesus the Holy Spirit to be God’s presence in the Church and the world. God is one and God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Centrality of Jesus Christ: The Catholic intellectual tradition recognizes that the Catholic vision of the intellectual life springs ultimately from the personal revelation of God in Jesus Christ, received in a believing community which has drawn on the resources of theology, philosophy, history, art and literature to elaborate upon and understand that revelation. The mysteries of Christ’s life link the human and the divine, and open the way for all of humanity to explore in multiple ways the implications of the Gospel.

The dignity and social nature of the individual: The Catholic intellectual tradition sees in the human person an image of God. Because the Trinitarian God is a community of persons, this
tradition understands persons as both creative agents and social beings. Though clearly recognizing the reality of sin and human destructiveness, this tradition affirms that, through grace informing human capabilities, people are able to enter into partnership with God and one another and thereby to realize their true humanity. People are constituted and sustained by relationships and naturally seek solidarity with others. Society and its institutions serve a common good when they promote persons’ flourishing, both as groups and as individuals. The conditions of human flourishing encompass objective qualities of human fulfillment and social harmony, not simply satisfaction of subjective preferences.

The Church: Catholic intellectual tradition sees the Church as the people of God founded on the word and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and Resurrection, and animated by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The Church continues to witness to the presence of Christ through celebration of word and sacrament, building the community of believers, and reaching out in mission to the whole human community. The Church in this world is the sacrament of salvation, the sign of and an instrument of communion of God with humanity. The Church by her very nature is a missionary community sent forth by Christ to all nations to be a witness to the Christian life and to invite persons to become disciples of Christ. The Church is to be a witness to God’s presence in the world and to work with persons and groups to bring forth the Reign of God in the world by advancing justice and reconciliation.

While each of these key themes requires a much more nuanced development they indicate important foundational arguments or principles of the Catholic intellectual tradition.

III. Catholic Social Tradition

This section presents the Catholic social tradition in a manner that will help faculty members in Catholic universities appreciate how the tradition can be useful in helping students use knowledge for responsible action.

A. Appreciating the Catholic Social Tradition

The Catholic social tradition, informed and embedded in the Catholic intellectual tradition is an important resource for both liberal and professional education in a Catholic university. The Catholic social tradition focuses the Catholic intellectual tradition on addressing important social questions. The Catholic social tradition can be viewed as having two complementary dimensions: 1) the ongoing practice of practical reasoning by the Catholic community and 2) the themes or practical knowledge that results from this practical reasoning.

Catholic Social Tradition: A Practice of Practical Reasoning: The Catholic social tradition is the practice of practical reasoning by the Catholic community in dialogue with others, on important social questions, such as the condition of labor, international development, or war and peace. In conducting each phase of its practical reasoning the Catholic community engages in a critical and reciprocal dialogue between the best of contemporary knowledge on the social question and the resources of the Catholic Christian faith (scripture and tradition). In this dialogue the contemporary knowledge on the social question both enriches our understanding of the resources of the Catholic Christian faith and raises important questions to be addressed by these resources. For example, using the latest research on the AIDS epidemic in Africa can provide new insights or meaning into our scriptural text on the care of “widows and orphans.” In the same manner, the resources of Catholic Christian faith both enriches our understanding of contemporary knowledge and raises important question to be addressed in the use of this knowledge. For example, the concern for the poor and the marginalized which is a theme of the
Catholic tradition can help an investigator sharpen their questions about winners and losers in the global market economy and in free trade agreements.

The Catholic tradition of practical reasoning builds on the tradition of Aristotle and Aquinas. Over the years this Catholic tradition of practical reasoning has been described by the three fold movement of seeing, judging, and acting\(^\text{12}\). In order to incorporate contemporary theories of experiential learning into this tradition it is helpful to add a fourth movement of reflecting. In assisting students and faculty in implementing the Catholic tradition of practical reasoning it is helpful to use the following heuristic:

- **Seeing** is about naming issues and underlying problems in a particular situation,
- **Judging** is about discerning a vision of justice for the particular situation and strategies to realize this vision,
- **Acting** is about organizing to implement the strategy and realize the vision, and
- **Reflecting** is about learning what the change process has taught us.

When examining how a professional person or a group of scholars actually applies practical reasoning we see that the process is not simply a sequential one, but involves a circular movement with an iteration of the steps\(^\text{13}\). The professional or a scholarly group engaging in practical reasoning forms a hypothesis about the possible issues and underlying problems in a situation and then tests those possibilities against details revealed by closer examination of the actual situation. This circular, interpretive procedure moves back and forth between the *theory* of the system being addressed (be it the human body, a business enterprise, a political system, or any other system) and the concrete and particular signs and symptoms of the individual situation. This pattern of reasoning continues until a workable conclusion is reached. This exercise of practical reasoning is a dialogue between the general principles of a discipline or professional field (the theory) and the actions to be taken within the concrete particulars of a given situation (the practice). Since practice situations provide many surprises, practical reasoning can also be very helpful in deriving inductively new knowledge from practice situations.

**Catholic Social Tradition: Themes and Practical Knowledge:** Over time this practice of practical reasoning by the Catholic community yields a set of *themes* or practical knowledge, i.e., principles for reflection, criteria for judgment, and directions for action that can guide practical reasoning on current and future social questions\(^\text{14}\). These themes or practical knowledge are expanded, refined, and critiqued as participants in the tradition apply practical reasoning to new situations and questions and to new understanding of previous situations and questions. The insert on the next page entitled *Themes in the Catholic Social Tradition* provides a summary. The appended bibliography on Catholic social teaching contains several summaries of the themes or practical knowledge of Catholic social teaching or what some writers call the principles\(^\text{15}\) of Catholic social tradition. The articles by Bucheye, et. al. on *Educating Highly Principled Leaders* and Bryon on *Applying the Tradition of Catholic Social Thought to Education for Business* contain good summaries of these themes that are oriented to business enterprises and

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\(^{12}\) This is the Cardijn method of social inquiry is named after the Belgian priest, Joseph Cardijn. See Mich p 74.


\(^{14}\) Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima adveniens*, no. 4, O’Brien and Shannon

\(^{15}\) I have chosen the *themes* instead of *principles* because I believe *themes* captures the principled dimension of the Catholic social tradition as well as the narrative or symbolic based elements of the tradition.
business education. Kelly Johnson in *Catholic Social Teaching* provides a very helpful summary of the themes that can be used with courses in liberal education. She also cautions that over reliance on the themes can be counterproductive to understanding the prudential use of the social tradition.

B. Roles in Developing the Catholic Social Tradition

In the 2000 year old record of the Church’s practice of practical reasoning there have been

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**Some Themes of the Catholic Social Tradition**

*Summarized from the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops*

**The Right to Life and the Dignity of the Human Person:** Human life is sacred. The dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision of society.

**Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** The human person is not only sacred but also social. Full human development takes place in relation with others. The family—based on marriage between a man and a woman—is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary of the creation and nurturing of children. How we organize our society directly affects the common good and the capacity of individuals to develop their full potential. The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not interfere with smaller institutions, yet larger institutions have responsibilities when smaller institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.

**Rights and Responsibilities:** Human dignity is respected and the common good fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met.

**Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** While the common good embraces all, those who are weak, vulnerable, and most in need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for our society is how we treat the most vulnerable in our midst.

**Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** The economy must serve the people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers. Workers have responsibilities to their employers, co-workers, and to the common good. Workers, employers, and unions should not only advance their own interest, but also work together to advance economic justice and the well-being of all.

**Solidarity:** We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has a global dimension and requires us to eradicate racism and address the extreme poverty and disease plaguing so much of the world.
important roles in developing the Catholic social tradition. The Christian scriptures record many teachings of Jesus on social questions such as poverty, violence, etc. and many of the conversations of the early Church as they built upon the Hebrew scriptures and discerned how to address the plight of widows and orphans. This practice continued through the patristic era through the middle ages into our modern era. Miles, et al\textsuperscript{16}, distinguish three important roles or streams of activity in this Catholic tradition of practical reasoning:

- **Catholic social teachings**: The Popes, the Council, the Bishops utilized the Catholic tradition of practical reasoning to address “the social questions” in local, national, and international situations. The role of Catholic social teaching is a development of the last 120 years. Each of the documents of Catholic social teaching manifests the dynamic structure of practical reasoning; there is a reflecting on the impact of past teachings, a seeing that names current issues and problems; a judging that outlines a vision and strategy for change, and an acting that develops recommendations for policy interventions.

- **Catholic social thought**: Faith-filled scholars from multiple disciplines have utilized Catholic tradition of practical reasoning as well as past arguments to extend and expand the arguments of the tradition into a new area of economic, social, and political life. This work involves interdisciplinary efforts to bring the best of contemporary knowledge on social questions into dialogue with the resources of the Catholic tradition.

- **Catholic social practice**: Committed Christians, communities, and organizations have utilized practical reasoning aided with the resources of the Christian Catholic tradition and the best interdisciplinary knowledge to develop programs of action which address social questions in their local, national, and international situations.

It is important to recognize the interdependence of these roles in developing the Church’s social tradition. Out of the practice of engaged and committed lay persons applying the Catholic social tradition to their situations of work and life come experiences that can be reflected upon by scholars and the authoritative teachers of the Church. The authoritative teachers of the Church look to both scholars utilizing the Catholic social tradition and the experience of lay Catholics to formulate their teaching. Scholars engaged in Catholic social thought critically dialogue with the authoritative teaching and critically reflect on the experience of the practitioners of the Catholic social tradition. For the Catholic social tradition to be a strong living tradition within the Church and the world requires each of these roles or streams of activity to be vital. The interaction and exchange among these different roles must be authentic and truthful.

C. **Catholic Social Tradition and Knowledge for Responsible Action**

One of the most important challenges for higher education today, for both liberal education and professional education, is to help learners discover, integrate, apply, and communicate knowledge that can be used for responsible action. Helping students utilize knowledge to become responsible agents involve some form of practical reasoning. Practical reasoning, in its broadest sense, has the intent of realizing change in systems, large and small, personal and social. The practical reasoner must read a situation to identify issues and underlying problems, discern an image or vision of the goods to be realized and strategies to realize these goods, organize people and resources to implement the strategies of change, and learn from the many aspects of the

\textsuperscript{16} Based Miles, et. al. pp 440-441
change process. What constitutes practical reason and good methods of practical reasoning has been a widely debated and discussed topic. There are several perspectives on what constitutes practical reasoning and what methods are appropriate for utilizing practical reasoning for addressing moral and ethical issues.

Understanding the Catholic social tradition as having two complementary dimensions: 1) the practice of practical reasoning and 2) themes or practical knowledge that results from the practice of practical reasoning can lead to two helpful insights. First, it allows the Catholic social tradition to enter into dialogue with other contemporary approaches to practical reasoning and moral discourse. The Catholic intellectual and social traditions most often engages in an Aristotelian-Thomistic approach to practical reasoning. This approach has several distinctive features:

- **Theologically resourced**: The Catholic tradition of practical reasoning utilizes the beliefs and convictions of the Catholic Christian faith as one of its resources in formulating its arguments.
- **Publically argued**: Because of its natural law and virtue orientation, the Catholic tradition of practical reasoning is able to produce arguments that can be made intelligible and persuasive to people from many different perspectives and backgrounds.
- **Comprehensively engaged**: In formulating its arguments the Catholic tradition of practical reasoning strives to use the most current interdisciplinary knowledge on the social question being addressed.
- **Institutionally embodied**: The arguments developed by Catholic tradition of practical reasoning addresses the institutional context for human flourishing, both personal and social.

Some scholars of practical reasoning object to the theological resourcing of the Catholic approach to practical reasoning. These scholars reason that, because there is such a diversity of religious ideas and beliefs, it not possible to agree on foundational principles that can be used in formulating practical judgments. They maintain that religious beliefs and convictions should be bracketed out of any public practical reasoning. The Catholic tradition, on the other hand, maintains that religious beliefs and convictions can be a valid resource for formulating arguments of practical reasoning; yet for these arguments to be part of the public exercise of practical reasoning they must be formulated in a language that is accessible to all involved in the public exercise of practical reasoning. This is a critical point that needs more development, though perhaps not in this venue.

Viewing the Catholic tradition of practical reasoning as having two complementary dimensions yields a second helpful insight, one that is of particular importance for pedagogy. The Catholic tradition of practical reasoning has the potential of providing a common method for moral discourse on complex professional issues and problems. Using a thoughtfully expanded version of the “see, judge, act, and reflect” method (c.f. Insert Method of Social Inquiry as one example)
scholars and learners working within the Catholic social tradition could develop a number of case studies around complex social and professional problems. Students in both liberal education and in professional fields learning how to apply knowledge to responsible action could use this Method of Social Inquiry to organize their experiences, their research, and their arguments for recommendations for change. Such an approach will allow students to bring into dialogue their faith with their use of the best available knowledge for addressing a social question, bring a comprehensive interdisciplinary view to their investigation, and develop public defensible reasoning for their recommendations for system change.

IV. A Note on Faculty Development

If the Catholic intellectual and social traditions are to be integrated into the curriculum of Catholic universities, then it will require a core group of faculty from the College of Arts and Sciences and the Professional Schools that are willing to work collaboratively on this integration. This group of faculty must be willing not only to develop expertise in their own specialized discipline or professional field but have the ability to both cross-over to appreciate another

Method for Social Inquiry
Based on the Cardijn Method

**See** is about naming patterns of injustice. It is important to be able to appreciate the institutional or structural elements of the patterns of injustice. What institutions or structures are presenting barriers to human flourishing of the people suffering injustice? Whose interests are being served by the current institutional arrangements? What ideas provide a rationale for the current institutional arrangement -- the current patterns of injustice? Who promotes these ideas? How can these ideas be changed?

**Judge** is about discerning a vision of justice for this situation and strategies to realize this vision. Is there a common ground among the stakeholders for a shared vision of justice for the situation we are addressing? Is this vision shared by the least advantaged? Whose thinking must change and how must it change if we want to realize this shared vision? What leverage (assets and resources) do we have to realize this shared vision and how can we use this leverage to develop a strategy for realizing our shared vision?

**Act** is about organizing for transformation. How do we mobilize people in order to implement our strategy? How can we mobilize resources needed to support our strategy? How we adjust our plans as we encounter surprises? How do we keep people motivated and focused on the vision of justice?

**Reflect** is about learning what advancing justice has taught us. What surprises did we encounter during the change process? What did these surprises tell us about our assumptions about the situation and our vision of change? How do we need to change in order to advance justice? How were the least advantaged affected by the change?
discipline at an advanced introductory level and to develop an appreciation for the Catholic intellectual and social traditions. To build and sustain this core group of faculty two strategies suggest themselves, namely (1) recruiting faculty with these skills and abilities and (2) supporting programs of professional development that develop these skills and abilities. This section outlines one approach to professional development.

Faculty in our Catholic universities have engaged the Catholic intellectual tradition at a variety of levels of commitment. Some understand and appreciate the tradition and are able to thoughtfully utilize it in their teaching and research. They often provide leadership in making sure the Catholic intellectual tradition is a part of the conversations on curriculum. Others are interested in knowing more about the tradition and are willing to invest some time and energy in learning more. Another group is acquainted with some of the key ideas of the tradition, but has many questions, concerns and doubts about it. Some others are reluctant to engage the traditions because they fear the tradition will pose some limitations on what they can teach and what research they can undertake. And finally, some are indifferent and simply want to focus on their discipline.

Given this variety of engagement by the faculty, how do we invite our colleagues, faculty and staff members to engage and learn about the Catholic intellectual and social traditions and to use it as an integrating theme of undergraduate education? One approach that has been helpful is to invite faculty to an interdisciplinary seminar that explores practical reasoning, how practical reason enables people to live lives of responsible action, and how practical reason can be utilized to integrate the Catholic intellectual and social tradition into the curriculum.

The invitation to engage in the interdisciplinary faculty seminar tradition should incorporate a respect for the participants with their deep commitments to their discipline and their desire to awaken in students the desire to use their learning to undertake responsible action. The interdisciplinary faculty seminar should start with conversations of how the faculty participants see their disciplinary practice and how they awaken in students the desire to utilize their knowledge for responsible action. This first conversation provides a basis for a conversation that focuses on a comparison and contrast of the participants’ ideas on practical reasoning and engaging students to live lives of responsible action with key ideas and practices of the Catholic intellectual and social tradition. This can lead to open and candid conversation concerning how the participants see the assets and strengths of the Catholic intellectual and social tradition as well as its deficits and weaknesses. Catholic scholars participating in this conversation must show an openness and even eagerness to learn from their colleagues. Often this conversation leads faculty members to see ways that the Catholic intellectual and social traditions are aligned with their own approach to practical reasoning and to engaging students to live lives of responsible action. In this way the conversation can provide them some insight into how the Catholic intellectual and social tradition can be a resource for their teaching and scholarship.

Assuming that there is common ground on how to use practical reasoning to engage students to live lives of responsible action and how the Catholic intellectual and social tradition can be resource for this task, participants in the seminar can work on a curricular project that incorporates practical reasoning as an integral part of the course and uses the Catholic intellectual and social traditions as a resources. Participants can work on individual projects or on the design of interdisciplinary course, such as a capstone course for a business major that would integrate business strategy with business ethics. Participants are encouraged to share their
designs with one another so that they have the thoughtful reflections of other members of the interdisciplinary seminar. Participants leave the seminar with fairly well developed curricular initiative that has integrated practical reasoning and the Catholic intellectual and social traditions.

Participation is such seminars requires a good deal of intellectual work and must have some incentive for faculty to participate in the seminar. Two methods that have been helpful incentives are: 1) course release for one semester or 2) resources for a professional development account that can be used for travel to conference or the purchase of scholarly resources. For this interdisciplinary seminar to be successful in producing new initiatives that integrate the curriculum around the Catholic intellectual and social tradition, the University administration must be willing to invest the resources needed to implement the seminar.

V. Conclusion

In this paper we have reviewed some of the obstacles to integrated learning in the contemporary American university, namely specialization and fragmentation, and some of the strategies that can help overcome these obstacles, namely learning communities and practical reasoning. Next we provided perspectives on the Catholic intellectual and social tradition that may help faculty members at Catholic universities integrate these traditions into the undergraduate curriculum. Finally a brief note was provided on faculty development in Catholic universities.
Bibliography
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Integrating Higher Education


Catholic Intellectual Tradition


An extensive bibliography on the Catholic intellectual tradition can be found at [http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/bibliographies/cit.htm](http://www3.villanova.edu/mission/bibliographies/cit.htm)

**Catholic Social Tradition**


A more extensive bibliography on topics address through Catholic social tradition see [http://socialconcerns.nd.edu/mission/cst/CatholicSocialTeachingBibliography.shtml](http://socialconcerns.nd.edu/mission/cst/CatholicSocialTeachingBibliography.shtml)
Appendix A
A Teaching Note

Practical Reasoning and Educating the Business Professional
Raymond Fitz, S.M.
Revised: 5 September 2010

Repeated and on-going revelations of corporate wrong-doing have deeply eroded the public’s trust in business institutions and executives. These revelations have challenged business schools to examine the role that ethics has in their curriculum and to see what role they have in forming the integrity of their students, who will soon be business professionals. The purpose of this Appendix is to illustrate how the development of wise practical reasoning can be an important tool in integrating concerns for ethics and integrity into the total business curriculum. The argument starts by exploring business as a profession and demonstrating the importance of practical reasoning in the life of a business professional. The last section develops some characteristics of practical reasoning as used by the business professional. This exploration of practical reasoning is designed to provide a basis for investigating the ethical dimensions of business education.

The Business Professional

Clearly there is a debate about whether business is a profession in the traditional sense. In this section we begin with the assumption that business has many of the characteristics of a profession and by looking at it as a profession we can discover the important role that practical reason plays in the exercise of the professional competence in a business setting. Lee Schulman, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has developed a framework for educating professionals. Schulman sees all professions as characterized by the following attributes:

- the obligation of service to others, as in a “calling”;
- understanding of a scholarly or theoretical kind;
- a domain of skilled performance or practice
- the exercise of judgment under conditions of unavoidable uncertainty:
- the need for learning from experience as theory and practice interact; and
- a professional community to monitor quality and aggregate knowledge.

These characteristics allow us to explore what it might mean for business to be a profession.

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**Business as a Calling:** The purpose of being a business professional is not always obvious in our teaching and learning with business students. Graduates from business schools must be prepared to perform a function within an organization – they need to be excellent in marketing, quality control, accounting, operations management or some other technical field of business education. By treating business as a profession, we guide our students to not only think about their current job or about their career, but to explore what is the purpose or their calling as a business professional. This exploration provides a moral dimension to their professional work. It engages them by asking what the purpose of business is and what is not only my obligation to the firm, but to the service of others and the greater good of society.

**Business as Theory:** As business schools have become more deeply integrated into the modern University they have developed the knowledge base of the profession. Business as theoretical knowledge has integrated knowledge from a wide variety of areas -- business practice, the social science, the mathematical sciences, and many others. Faculties are recruited and rewarded by their ability to advance business as a theoretical discipline. Students that graduate from business schools are expected to know the basics of the business disciplines and have to have specialized knowledge in one or more of them. A business graduate from a University is also expected to have a basic grounding in the liberal arts as part of his or her knowledge base.

**Business as Practice:** Although a significant portion of business knowledge that a student will obtain in his or her business education is developed in the academy, it is not professional knowledge until it is enacted in the field of business practice. Students graduating from a business school are expected to know how to apply their knowledge to specific business situations and problems. Through a variety of project oriented courses and capstone courses business educators have been helping students develop the skills needed to apply their knowledge to practical situations.

**Exercise of judgment under uncertainty:** The application of knowledge to a particular situation requires the application of practical judgment. In Schulman’s words “Human judgment creates bridges between the universal terms of theory and the gritty particularities of situated practice.” An important part of business education is the opportunity for students to develop judgments which incorporates the technical and moral, that negotiates between the general and specific, as well as between the ideal and the feasible. While we are getting better at giving students practice oriented projects to develop their practical judgment to apply their technical knowledge, we are not as good at providing an apprenticeship for our students in making good judgments that incorporate the social and moral dimensions of the project.

**Learning from Experience:** Academic knowledge is a necessary condition for success as a business professional. This knowledge provides a good basis for designing an intervention into a business setting. Yet, it is the practical knowledge that is discovery and integrated by reflecting on surprises that one encounters in implementing the intervention that provides a deeper basis for responsible action. The lessons of practice must not only add to individual knowledge, but to the knowledge base of the organization and the profession.

**Community of Practice:** The last of Schulman’s characteristics, the community of practice, is the most difficult to apply to the business profession. Business professionals, in general, have been one of the last to organize communities of practice. Communities of practice have evolved in accounting and certain fields of financial management. These communities of practice hold and help aggregate the knowledge of the profession and help define the standards of public accountability for the profession.
Schulman’s framework provides guidance for reflecting on the requirement for educating a business professional. If we are to educate business students for the practical and professional challenges they will encounter, they must be able to respond with theoretical knowledge and practical know-how, as well as, insight, a sense of purpose or vocation, and with discerning moral commitment. The challenge of universities is to educate business students to respond to the world in which they work and live and make informed and responsible judgments about the role they will play.

The Importance of Practical Reasoning

The key skills identified by Schulman in his framework for a profession are “the exercise of judgment under conditions of unavoidable uncertainty” and the “need for learning from experience as theory and practice interact.” These two skills point to the importance of practical reasoning in the work of a professional. Practical reasoning is reasoning directed toward appropriate action and it is the reasoning that helps us bridge theory or knowledge base of the profession and the practice of the profession. Practical reasoning also allows to untangle the complex web of experience and to draw practical knowledge from this experience. In its most abstract form, practical reasoning is reasoning directed toward the determination of what is humanly good and how that rationally desirable good should be pursued.

Practical reasoning can be described as a four-fold movement or pattern of thinking. When we reflect on how we address a problematic situation in a deliberate manner we can distinguish variations of the following movements:

- **Reading the situation** – we define a problem or issue that has to be addressed
- **Discerning a direction for action** – we make judgments on what is the appropriate action
- **Implementing the action** – we implement the action
- **Reflecting to see what we have learned** – we reflect to see if our action was appropriate in addressing the problem or issue;

For example, if we reflect on how a medical doctor engages patience we see the doctor

- **Reading the situation** -- engages the patient to understand the presenting symptoms and the context of these symptoms; gathers information to understand the underlying problem.
- **Discerning an approach** – based on the information gathered and knowledge of the human body makes a judgment on the underlying problem and appropriate approach to curing the problem.
- **Implementing a course of action** – what is the right course of treatment for this patient at this time and in this situation?
- **Reflecting on the case** – consolidating the practical knowledge I have gained in this encounter.

When looking at how a doctor actually apply practical reasoning we see that the process is not simply sequential one but involve a circular movement with an iteration of the steps. This heuristic is suggested by Aristotle’s treatment of practical reasoning. See especially Nancy Sherman, *The Fabric of Character: Aristotle’s Theory of Virtue*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1989), especially Chapter 1.
doctor forms a hypothesis about the possible causes of a particular patient’s situation and then tests those possibilities against details revealed by closer examination of the patient. This circular, interpretive procedure moves back and forth from the theory of the human body -- generalities in the taxonomy of diseases and the concrete and particular signs and symptoms of the individual case. This pattern of reasoning continues until a workable conclusion is reached. This exercise of practical reasoning is a dialogue between the general principles of the medical science (the theory and knowledge base) and the concrete particulars of a given situation (the practice of medicine).

In order to understand practical reasoning in uncertain or problematic situations of professional practice it is helpful to think about problematic situations as being on a continuum from routine situations to adaptive situations. Routine situations are those situations which we have confronted many times in our past experience. Based on our past experience with these situations, we have developed a response that works well and we use this response in a routine manner each time we encounter the situation. Practical reasoning in these situations is routine and mostly tacit. For example, when I first come to a college campus I may have to be deliberate about how I get from my office to the faculty dining room. After a few tries at this task I have found a satisfactory route and my response becomes automated and taken for granted.

Adaptive situations are those situations which present us with new challenges that we have not meet before in quite the same way. These situations require us to understand the challenge and then to invent a response. In adaptive situations our exercise of practical reasoning is deliberate and usually explicit. An example of an adaptive situation would be a situation in which I am the leader of a project team and during a team meeting I witness a serious conflict between two members of the team. There is miscommunication and the parties are not listening to one another. While I have seen conflicts like this before, I notice that this particular conflict presents some new challenges – for example, I do not know the two participants well and nor do I understand what motivates them. I need to understand the challenge before me and then I need to deliberate on how I might respond as the leader of the team. In this situation I have to override my automated mode of practical reasoning and deliberate in a critical and reflective manner on both the challenge – what is involved in understanding the conflict and an appropriated response – what intervention I might design and implement to resolve the conflict.

**Characteristics of Practical Reasoning**

In order to develop an approach to learning that employs practical reasoning, it is helpful to understand some of the characteristics of practical reasoning. These characteristics can help us understand the complexities of practical reasoning.

**The personal exercise of practical reasoning is embedded in and shaped by a rich web of dispositions and virtues, beliefs and assumptions, and narratives and symbols.**

In the case of the doctor describe above we saw that practical reasoning involved the interaction of a knowledge base with a particular situation. Knowledge influenced the judgments made in practical reasoning. In fact practical reasoning is influence by much more. Practical

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reasoning is always shaped by what we can describe as our internal cognitive structures or mental models. Our internal structures are our deeply held beliefs, images, assumptions and stories we hold about our world, ourselves, and our social networks and how we fit into them. The process of practical reasoning can be viewed as the marshalling and organizing of our internal structures to read problematic situations, to make arguments about a good to be pursued and the means to realize this good. Our internal structures are shaped by the culture and traditions of the moral communities in which we are formed, by our experiences, and the choices we make in response to these experiences. Our internal structures influence the process of practical reasoning in that they shape how and what we see, guide how we form inferences about possible solutions, and what suggested strategies of actions we might take. Practical reasoning in adaptive situations requires continual evaluation of the reasoner’s beliefs, assumptions, and hypotheses against existing data and against other plausible interpretations of the data. The conclusions of practical reasoning in adaptive situations remain open to further scrutiny, evaluation, and reformulation.

**Practical reasoning in adaptive situations requires making practical judgments in the midst of uncertainty and incomplete information**

In practical reasoning in adaptive situations there is no way to apply a formula or procedure to derive a correct solution and no way to prove definitely that a proposed solution is correct. Formulating a judgment in adaptive situations involves identifying which facts, procedures, knowledge, and assumptions are relevant to defining the problem and generating potential solutions. Practical reasoning does not follow fixed procedures or algorithms of technical rationality. Nor is it equivalent to the abstract reasoning which is appropriate to mathematical or philosophical inquiry.

Practical reasoning in adaptive situations must define the problem and evaluate the potential solutions to problems in the light of existing information; information that, in part, is incomplete and unverifiable. Making a judgment on which of the several potential solutions to chose cannot be done by logic alone; the practical reasoner in addressing an adaptive situation must use other criteria, such as the coherence of arguments, that fit with other data and arguments, the explanatory power of the solution, and so on. The practical reasoner’s judgments must negotiate between what is ideal and what is feasible. The theory of a profession provides a knowledge base or principles that may be used in solving problems. The wise practical reasoner has to balance these principles with the exigencies of the situation. A novel situation may present a challenge which is not adequately addressed in the knowledge base, yet the practical reasoner must put together a solution that is a reasonable response to the situation.

**Wise practical reasoning uses both analytic and narrative rationality**

In analytical reasoning or what Jerome Brunner called paradigmatic reasoning things and events are detached from their situation and represented by abstract and systematic propositions. Analytical reasoning attempts to view problematic situations through general patterns of cause and effect. By transferring problematic situations into abstract concepts the practical reasoner can use the rules of logic and discourse to generate conclusions marked with coherence, clarity, and certainty. In exercising narrative rationality the practical reasoner gives meaning and

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significance to a problematic situation by placing it in a broader on-going story or context of meaningful interaction. Narrative rationality integrates experience through analogy and metaphor. Narrative rationality does not provide the certainty of analytic rationality, but allows the practical reasoner to make sense of the problematic situation as a context for action. One of the important roles of liberal arts education is to enrich the imagination and provide opportunities to develop the skills of narrative rationality.

**In almost all situations, practical reasoning is exercised in a dialogical context.**

Practical reasoning is dialogical; it is exercised in a network of social relations. The practical reasoner designs actions and these actions have an impact on the situation of others. The formulation of a problem and its potential solution often requires the mobilizing important stakeholders in the problematic situation into a conversation in which conflicts about the description of the problem and the conflicts in beliefs used to construct and judge solutions can be addressed and resolved. Orchestrating and resolving these conflicts are an important skill in the repertoire of a practical reasoner. Practical reasoning is most often carried out in conversation in which persons seek to determine the right action by the dialectical exchange of arguments. I strongly believe a practical wise leader is able to organize conversations of public reasoning where we share and integrate our personal practical reasoning.

**Conclusion**

This appendix reflected on how business can be viewed as a professional. As a profession practical reason is a core skill for exercising the profession. Several characteristics of practical reasoning that can be helpful in teaching this skill are outlined.
Response to Michael Naughton’s paper

Seeing Things Whole

The Theological Importance to Business Education:
University Capstone Signature Course for Business Students

and Brother Raymond Fitz’s paper

Integrating Learning in a Catholic University:
An Ongoing Conversation

Msgr. Richard M. Liddy
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I am very grateful to Mike Naughton and his collaborators for all their work on the “Mission-driven Business Education” project. Seton Hall University has been a proud supporter of this project from the beginning when our Bill Toth – of happy memory – joyfully collaborated with Mike Naughton on this important project. In particular, I am grateful to Mike and Brother Ray Fitz for their respective background papers: “Integrating Learning in a Catholic University: An Ongoing Conversation” and “Seeing Things Whole: The Theological Importance to Business Education: University Capstone Signature Course for Business Students.” In ten minutes I cannot highlight all the excellent dimensions of their papers, so I will limit myself to commenting on Mike Naughton’s reference to intellectus as distinct from ratio in the writings of Joseph Pieper and to Brother Fitz’s reflections on “practical reasoning” as the exercise of intelligence in the various professions, each with its own retinue of assumptions, presumptions, presuppositions, necessary skills, etc. For I believe that both of Mike and Brother Fitz are referring to one complex fact, that is, the exercise of human intelligence, the intellectus at the basis of ratio, human intelligence as it unfolds discursively in the various areas of human endeavor.

In higher education one often hears references to “critical thinking.” To cite my own experience in the creation of our new core curriculum at Seton Hall University, the development of such critical thinking is seen as one of the central objectives. So much so in fact that I have been led to remark to my colleagues,

Let’s have some critical thinking about critical thinking! Are there not other kinds of thinking besides critical thinking? artistic, evaluative, meditative? How are they related to critical thinking? Should not critical thinking about critical thinking show how it is related to these other types of thinking and other proficiencies? Is there not an underlying unity to all the intellectual proficiencies that leads at various times to symbolic thinking, evaluative thinking, etc. and eventually to critical thinking?

In fact, an excellent book on critical thinking, Jennifer Moon’s 2008 Critical Thinking: An Exploration of Theory and Practice acknowledges the many and various descriptions of critical thinking as well as the confusion over the meaning of critical thinking.
Not only do we behave as if “critical thinking” and other terms have agreed definitions, but we use them with learners in this way. In one staff development workshop, there were, by agreement, some postgraduate students present. There was horror in their faces as it dawned on them that there was not an agreed definition for critical thinking among those who were their tutors. There was some embarrassment among the tutors too. (Moon, 2008, 23)

What then IS critical thinking? Is it “just thinking?” or “thinking well?” What does that mean? Obviously the use of the modifier “critical” refers to a certain “normativity” in thinking. Sometimes we do it better than at other times. What’s the difference? And is all non-critical thinking just “sloppy thinking?”

Moon raises further questions. For example, she asks, does critical thinking differ according the methodologies of the different disciplines? Is it just following the particular method of a particular discipline? For example, the scientific method in doing physics, the historical method in answering questions about 16th century Ireland? And what about what is generally called “problem solving” in various practical areas? Is this critical thinking? For example, in managing a business? Or in the development of a particular product? Moon asks whether there is a general form of critical thinking that would hold even in what she refers to as “the swamps of professional practice?” In the development of a new technology? In managing a business? In marketing? What are the competencies or proficiencies to be exercised in business leadership? Do these have any family resemblance to the sets of competencies needed in the scientific method or in the scholarly process of historical research?

And what about the areas people refer to as the “deeply personal,” the emotional, the areas where people trust their “gut feelings?” is there any role for “feelings” in relation to critical thinking? What about the aesthetic, what some regard as “the feminine” side of life? Or does critical thinking only have to do with the strictly “logical?” What is the role of “logic” in critical thinking?

The general question is: Is there a relationship between critical thinking in one area and critical thinking in other areas? Is there, as Bernard Lonergan maintained, a “general empirical method,” a dynamic structure of the human mind, that leads to one method in one area and another in another area – both reflections of the general structure of the human mind when it is “thinking well?” What is this general structure of “thinking well?” Can critical thinking be taught apart from the particular disciplines in which it gets exercised?

Several times Moon highlights the role of “epistemological awareness” – that is, an explicit idea of “what counts for knowledge.” For what we consider counts for knowing will in fact influence what we count as knowing. Epistemological beliefs about what constitutes knowledge influence what one considers to be the outcome of knowledge. And here we should point out one of Moon’s central conclusions, and that is that critical thinking has to do with assessing the evidence necessary for correct judgment. “The central activity of critical thinking is the assessment of what be called evidence – in order to make a judgment.” (93) According to Moon, critical thinking involves many activities, but she stresses that it especially involves making
judgments based on assessing evidence from different kinds of sources. For her the central activity of critical thinking is “the habit of engagement” in making judgments. She says:

The central activity of critical thinking is the assessment of what might be called evidence, in order to make a judgment….Critical thinking is an aspect of the activity of thinking. It is a form of learning in that it is a means of generating new knowledge by processing existing knowledge and ideas using what we have called the “tools for the manipulation of knowledge” (e.g. analysis, understanding, synthesis).

…There is a sense of precision and skill in the use of critical thinking. When we engage in critical thinking, we are usually working towards an anticipated form of outcome, which is likely to be a “judgment.” Critical thinking would usually relate to subject matter that is complex and about which there might be some alternative viewpoints, and it involves deep engagement with the subject matter. Reflexivity is usually implied in the process. (33-34)

And it is here that I would hazard to remark that the Catholic intellectual tradition can make a definite contribution. For the Catholic intellectual tradition through the centuries has had to deal with philosophical issues, issues about “what counts for knowing” in a particular culture. (Cf. Lonergan quote on Cath theology’s contribution to contemporary culture. For example, John Henry Newman’s classic Grammar of Assent stresses the central role of judgment in human knowing.

Without this philosophical element there can be no viewpoint or fulcrum from which to critique the normal presuppositions and assumptions of the disciplines or professions. All week long we have been critiquing various assumptions about business and business education. In the light of what? Here I would say that the philosophical fact at the core of the Catholic intellectual tradition is the self-luminousness of the human subject to himself or herself - the fact that you can “know that you know.” You can be aware of yourself understanding, having the “aha!” experience. It might take years to come to terms with this implicit self-knowledge, but it is that core fact of intellectus that is witnessed to by such writers in the Catholic intellectual tradition as Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman and – in the twentieth century – Bernard Lonergan.

Just to call attention, for a moment, to Augustine: his journey, marked by so many twists and turns, took a particularly positive turn at the age of 19 when he read Cicero’s Hortensius, an exhortation to philosophy in which he read that he should seek wisdom, not in this or that philosophy but in the truth itself. But the major moment in his intellectual journey is when he read “a few books of the Platonists” and came to a knowledge of his own mind. Previously, as he puts it in the Confessions, he had been hampered by the philosophical assumption that “the real” is what you can see and touch and feel. In the words of Bernard Lonergan, Augustine came to a knowledge of his own mind – after years of quite critical thinking, his focus became his own ability to think critically, his own ability to appropriate veritas, the truth. He moved from being a very bright and intelligent materialist to realizing that there was more to his spirit than that – and that he was on the brink of acknowledging God as spirit. Let me quote Bernard Lonergan on what such an acknowledgement means.
The problem in philosophy is to start off from the average naïve realist and bring him on to something that involves a fuller grasp of all the issues and a more profound understanding of what his real basis is. The problem is not having people repeat with Augustine that ‘The real is not a body, it is what you know when you know something true.’ The problem is to get people to mean as much as Augustine meant when Augustine spoke about truth. And that is a transformation of the subject. (Bernard Lonergan, 2001, 132)

No wonder Aquinas called the human intellect “a created participation in uncreated light,” an intellectual procession reflecting the procession of the Word from the Father within the Trinity. Our coming to understand our own understanding – for example, appreciating the judgment of truth from the grasp of sufficient evidence – or the procession of love from recognized value - can give us a glimmer of what goes on within the very life of God.

Now to jump to the modern Catholic intellectual tradition. Such a view of the self-luminous character of human intelligence is at the basis of Bernard Lonergan’s reflections on methodology, the basic methodology of the human spirit as that basic methodology is exercised in the various disciplines and professions. Always there is an sensitive, imaginable, empirical element; just open and shut your eyes and you are aware of it. But another significantly different element emerges when we ask questions and have insights; and paying attention to that difference provides the evidence for not being a materialist. Another level of consciousness emerges when we check to see if our insights are accurate and we make judgments; paying attention to that difference opens one up to a critically realist philosophy. Finally, another whole level emerges when we evaluate, decide, act and love. This fourfold dynamic and unfolding structure is more differentiated that the JOCist “See…Judge…Act” referred to by Brother Fitz, for it highlights the element of emerging insight and our own ability to catch ourselves having insights – whether in engineering or in any other area of human endeavor.

Such was Augustine’s desire for veritas and that drive is cut short by any form of anti-intellectualism that refuses to check its own presuppositions but only asks questions that support one’s own interests, prejudices and biases. We have spent this week checking out the presuppositions and practices of business and business education and letting the light of intelligence – Augustine’s veritas – shine on them. Lonergan’s differentiated account of human intelligence and reasoning can be employed to illuminate all the professions. It is the basic method of the human spirit as it unfolds in the various methods used in the various disciplines or professions. It is operative in the sciences – data collection/hypothesis formation/verification/experimentation – followed by feedback – as well as in the professions.

At this point let me just allude to the application of these reflections on methodology to illuminating the practical reasoning operative in business education. In the following schema on the unfolding of the “functional specialties” operative in the human sciences, the study of history prepares the way for highlighting the basic underlying issues. We have been in one way or another highlighting these basic conflicts in business education all week. Are we to educate our students as if “profit” is all that matters? Or are there other issues that give various meanings to the term “profit” and its role in the unfolding of an economy? Similarly with regard to other
conflicts we have highlighted. Such study, coming out of historical research, gives rise to the specialty of “dialectic” that highlights such basic conflicts. Let us highlight these methodical relationships in the study of historical conflicts by the following diagram that illustrates their functional relationships:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On the level of decision</th>
<th>= dialectic (concerns historical conflicts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On the level of judgment</td>
<td>= history (“what was going forward”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the level of understanding persons/writings</td>
<td>= interpretation (regards particular)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the level of experience</td>
<td>= research (the basic data)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But we not only highlight basic conflicts. Most of us here this week are convinced we should also take a stand. Such “taking a stand” involves basic philosophical, moral and religious issues. Are we to look at the world through materialist eyes? Hedonistic eyes? Reductionist eyes that do not highlight what we call “the dignity of the human person?” Or is there “something more?” Such are the foundational issues witnessed to in Augustine’s *Confessions* and, in my view, in such a work as Bernard Lonergan’s *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, as well as in other basic existential and philosophical works. Such foundational works reflects the level of our basic “conversion” – where “we’re at” intellectually, morally, religiously. And from such foundations flow our basic judgments – our doctrines – for example “the principles of Catholic social teaching” (CST), our systematic account of what these doctrines “mean” (systematics) and our communications of these to others. Such are the “functional specializations” as we try to fully understand business in history – even allowing theological perspectives enter into such understanding.

Out of the past          Conversion                  Towards the future
Dialectic               [decision]                Foundations - conversion
History                 [judgment]                 Doctrines
Interpretation          [understanding]           Systematics
Research                [experience]               Communications and
Feedback

All such efforts at communications and implementation of practical knowing involves feedback. The unfolding of the cycle of human knowing and doing involves new questions for our both our theologies and our understanding of business in the light of our own personal development and conversion. Such could be further illustrated as the unfolding of this dynamic wheel of human thought developing according to enlightened feedback. (For a fuller explanation of how these functional specializations are related and operative in both theology and in the human science of business, see Lonergan’s *Method in theology*, and especially his last chapter on communications.)

In other words – to be brief – our way of looking at business in its various dimensions involves our own level of development and conversion: intellectual, moral and religious. For what Brother Fitz referred to in his paper as the basic assumptions and presumptions of doing business and doing business education need not be correct. In fact, a great deal of what we talked about these days has been a feedback process of highlighting basic misconceptions in order that we
may do business education – and business – in a better way. In one way or another we have called for a basic foundational element of conversion from an inadequate view of what business and what business education is. We have highlighted the “truth” – in Augustine’s full sense - of what business is, as well as the importance of a moral conversion to “the common good,” and a religious openness to “grace,” that is, for us as Christians, the Spirit of Jesus leading us through all the challenges we face.
Works Cited:

