

Mann, William. Annotation of "The Frequency of Implementation of Lasallian Pedagogy in Traditional College-Preparatory High Schools Sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States." by Kristopher White, Ed.D. diss., University of San Francisco, 2011. *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 3, no. 2 (Institute for Lasallian Studies at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota: 2012).

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ANNOTATION

White, Kristopher. "The Frequency of Implementation of Lasallian Pedagogy in Traditional College-Preparatory High Schools Sponsored by the De La Salle Christian Brothers in the United States." Ed.D. dissertation, University of San Francisco. 2011, 236 pp.

With the proposed intention of bridging the gap between spiritual awareness and its pedagogical implications in the classroom, Kristopher White strives in this doctoral dissertation to establish a baseline measurement for the frequency of implementation of Lasallian pedagogy in curricular focus and instructional methodology according to seven dimensions (i, 2, 77, 80, 94). He does this using a mixed-methods approach (a) including a researcher-designed survey with 137 academic department chairs at 21 traditional college-preparatory Lasallian high schools in the USA (Appendix B) and (b) selective brief follow-up interviews by telephone (Appendix C) with 8 respondents to expand on information collated from the survey (i, 77).

The author observes that current Lasallian scholarship has been done primarily by De La Salle Christian Brothers who have focused on the spiritual dimension of Lasallian education and the dispositions necessary to be a Lasallian educator (i) and that there is not much currently being written about the practice of Lasallian pedagogy in terms of how Lasallian pedagogy informs teachers in the design of curriculum and the content of classroom instruction (2-3, 7, 142). Consequently, he asserts that this dissertation, as it focuses on day-to-day classroom implications, begins a new chapter in the literature of Lasallian pedagogy (142). He also asserts that too many contemporary Lasallian writers look backward by focusing too much on the historical dimension while the real need is to understand what Lasallian education means moving forward with its present-day meanings and possibilities (6).

Drawing primarily on Everett's introduction to the 1995 edition to John Baptist de La Salle's *The Conduct of Christian Schools* (22-29), a document described by White as an intentional recipe for student learning grounded in relationship and pragmatism, and selected writings of Campos and Sauvage (3-32), Lauraire (40-45), Poutet (32-34), and VanGrieken (34-40), the author identifies seven key dimensions of Lasallian pedagogy: student-centeredness (49-54), holistic education (54-57), constructive scaffolding (57-61, 82), collaboration (61-64), social justice (64-68), relevancy (68-71), and discipleship (71-75). White refers to these as the complex, pragmatic, radical educational vision of De La Salle for the 21st century. Also incorporated in this analysis are both Vatican and USA Catholic Bishops Conference teachings about Catholic education (15-22). Recent developments in the field of curriculum and instruction are interspersed throughout the presentation by White of these seven dimensions of Lasallian pedagogy; and a lengthy bibliography of existing Lasallian research, which was compiled by Mann, is also provided (164-189).

White acknowledges two key limitations of the study: (a) the selected sample might not have been as representative of the total population of Lasallian educators as it could have been and (b)

the findings might not be generalizable to the entire Lasallian educational enterprise since the Lasallian educational network also involves pre- secondary schools, post-secondary schools, and non-traditional college preparatory high schools (83-84).

Results of White's research about what he identifies as the seven key dimensions of Lasallian pedagogy indicate: (a) that student-centered, holistic education, and constructive scaffolding were incorporated into curriculum and instruction multiple times per week (ii, 98, 102, 106, 141, 143); (b) that collaboration in terms of curriculum and instruction was incorporated infrequently, only two to four times per month (ii, 133, 137, 141, 143), and a need exists to focus more effort on the collaboration of teachers to teachers, of teachers to students, and of teachers to parents (148); (c) that teachers with the most experience in the classroom and those with the least experience in the classroom were the most student-centered teachers (ii, 126, 128, 137, 141, 143); (d) that teachers of the visual/performing arts department and those who had participated in Province/District Mission Assemblies incorporated holistic education more frequently than other teachers, whereas mathematics departments incorporated holistic education less frequently (ii, 126, 141, 144); (e) that social justice was a highly incorporated pedagogical practice and teachers of religious studies departments and those who had participated in a Huether Lasallian Educational Conference or a Province/District Mission Assembly incorporated social justice more frequently into curriculum and instruction than others, with members of visual/performing arts and mathematics departments with low levels of inclusion (ii, 113, 127, 133, 137, 141, 144-145); (f) that relevancy of instruction was more focused on preparation for college-level courses and for general development as human beings than it was on professional careers, civic participation, or family life and respondents with doctoral degrees maintained the highest levels of relevancy in curriculum and instruction (ii, 117, 119, 130, 137, 145-146); and (g) that implementation of discipleship as a dimension of pedagogy was only moderately frequent in the classroom, being the lowest of the seven measures studied (121, 124).

According to survey responses, respondents had limited levels of participation in Lasallian formation activities (95-96, 136). In other words, participation in formation activities by department chairs was weak. Consequently, White wonders whether efforts to incorporate academic leaders into Lasallian formation initiatives have been unsuccessful or merely non-existent (140). However, White also notes that the study seemed to indicate that there was not much significant variation in responses on the part of those who had significant Lasallian formation experiences and those who did not (124-125).

A few avenues for future study, research, or action suggested by the study are: (a) the development of a more pedagogical articulation of the elements of Lasallian education (5); (b) a need to focus more on department chairs as academic leaders in Lasallian formation initiatives (147); (c) the development of pedagogical outcomes within a Lasallian framework, of design instruction methods consistent with Lasallian principles, and of appropriate Lasallian assessment instruments and more systematic efforts at measuring the level of implementation (149); and (d) further research into whether or not Lasallian formation activities contribute to the growth of educators and, if so, the variable results from one Lasallian formation program to another (124-125, 153).