

Annotation

Bastow, J. “Lasallian Mission and Integration in a Secondary School.” Dossier Style Dissertation, Ed.D., Johns Hopkins University, 2024, 94 pages.

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Bastow explored the legacy of the Lasallian mission, how it is understood, and how it can be better put into practice in a secondary school. A research study led to the development of related materials for teachers’ professional development. The study was based in a Lasallian school with a 170-year history (p.1) in the Washington, DC, area. The history, literature, and background (p.3) that inform the Lasallian and Catholic educational legacies were reviewed. A conceptual model for mission integration and legacy in a Lasallian secondary school was developed. Catholic education, teacher factors, historic events, and professional development make up the model (p.16). The review further suggested situating the problem of practice within two theoretical frameworks, institutional ethnography (IE) (p.20) and actor-network theory (ANT) (p.18). IE considers how norms and expectations are formed by structures. ANT suggests how people do things across networks of many types, including geographical, institutional, spatial, and even temporal. ANT and IE can overlap, especially at the juncture of mission as written and as behavioral norms. Bastow put historical events into the IE framework to help explain how history has informed the development of current contexts and understandings. The ANT framework, as used by Bastow, explored the formation of persons within a culture as teachers and looked at the nature of value congruence. It is pointed out that in this study the broad context is Catholic education and the more specific context is a Lasallian secondary school.

The purpose of the study was to investigate how teacher perceptions, experiences, and knowledge shape understanding of the school mission. As an ongoing project, it also involved promoting insight within teachers into how the mission has been shaped by internal and external factors (p.30). Qualitative ethnographic methods were employed. The researcher invited 102 faculty members to participate, and twenty-four agreed. Consent was obtained. Focus groups using Zoom were conducted and recorded for data analysis. Groups were formed from similar content areas or departments (p.32). Groups included Administration, Athletics, STEM, Humanities, Religion, Fine Arts, and Counseling. Eleven prompts were developed. Transcripts were analyzed; codes were developed and further defined into themes.

Two broad categories of themes were apparent: mission integration and mission knowledge (p.39). The first theme had sub-themes of five core principles, school culture, and mission concerns (p.40). The second had sub-themes of personal experience and mission pedagogy (p.43). The findings indicated that participants understood mission and could identify it in action within the context of the school, but there were gaps in knowledge about the legacy and specific components of the mission. Those with personal experience of Catholic and/or Lasallian education were more drawn to a mission-centered focus and were better able to integrate it into

the classroom. Teachers had a sense of self-efficacy when included in conversations about how to improve mission integration. Finally (p.39), while faculty and administrators were able to identify areas where the mission was strong, concerns were expressed about “weaponizing” the mission to serve individual needs of faculty and students (p.39). This was illustrated by reference to a situation framed as “meeting kids where they were” rather than as taking responsibility for teaching better and holding children accountable (p.42). The data suggested that participants were aware of and had experience with the feel of mission (pp.48-49) in interactions and classrooms. However, they lacked knowledge of the principles and origins upon which these are based. Additionally, they felt there was a lack of formal training in how to integrate this content even though it was clear they were expected to do so. Bastow had supporting evidence, quotes, and responses included in the discussion. Limitations of the qualitative design were reviewed, including a limited number of participants within a specific context, but this was counter-balanced by the rich, in-depth description made possible (p.48). In summarizing, Bastow stated that “modern faculty cannot be expected to integrate and ‘live’ mission in their classrooms without more formal training and modeling” (p.52).

Bastow proposed an applied project (p.52) of professional development for new faculty during orientation as well as a future project of a catalogue of content areas for mission integration into classrooms gathered from veteran educators. Bastow had the objective of posting these on the District of Eastern North America (DENA) website. The framework for professional development (p.53) was to be based on *Lasallian Formation for Mission: A Pilgrim’s Handbook* (Alexander, 2019). The modality of delivery was to be an in-person discussion-based format based on best practices (p.57). Bastow (p.58) cites McVey and Poyo regarding additional requirements for Catholic schools to include components of professionalism, pedagogy, relationship, formation, and evangelization.

Professional development is to consist of three sessions: (1) Induction: from Outside to Inside; (2) Co-Responsibility: From Followers to Leaders; and (3) Wisdom: From Positional Power to Charismatic Witness (p.67). The future project outlined would be a digital catalogue organized by content areas. These would be collected materials from veteran educators as examples of lessons that demonstrate effective application of these mission-oriented ideas (p.65). The need for collaborative forms of communication was emphasized, indicating that *how* to communicate is nearly as critical as *what* is communicated, and this further reflects the norms of how to integrate mission (p.59). This applied project is intended to give faculty (p.60) a basis of knowledge about the mission, including access to the original writings of De La Salle and the events that have shaped the mission and its legacy.