



*“The love of knowledge and truth should invite us to continue learning.
The love of others should compel us to teach.”¹*

“While it is unthinkable for an Augustinian educational institution to overlook Saint Augustine, it would also be insufficient to string together a series of Augustinian texts without looking directly at the present day context of education. ...it is inconceivable to present an Augustinian School as static, archaeological and anchored to the past...

Thus we find ourselves faced with the difficult art of interpreting St Augustine, of drawing out his intuitions - insofar as they maintain their validity - even in our times. We are to [begin] with the thought and spirit of Augustine, attempt to amplify it beyond the present horizon of understanding and, even, open it up to a new interpretation. The Augustinian school will be more a building in the process of construction than a finished work; more a live image than a still photograph.”²

If it is a reality that the Augustinian school will always be in this process of creation, the responsibility for *interpreting* and *amplifying* St Augustine *in our times* requires that attention be given to the ongoing Augustinian formation of teachers and other staff in our schools and colleges. The *Australian Province Education Commission* has in recent years given specific attention to this responsibility via a project aimed at nurturing and forming teachers through a process of working towards identifying and exploring an authentic Augustinian pedagogy.

Both Colleges already have extensive induction programs for new staff, primarily using two excellent resources created or translated for us by Michael Morahan OSA entitled: *Our Augustinian Heritage*³ and *Education: An Augustinian Approach*⁴. Both Colleges also regularly include in their professional development programs for teachers, sessions on Augustinian mission and ethos, often inviting a prominent Augustinian or Augustinian scholar to lead these seminars or lectures. In looking beyond the traditional ‘lecture’ style of presentation, though, the project recognised that *formation* is not purely, or even primarily, a cognitive process.

“Anton Pegis has called Saint Augustine... ‘the disciple of the love of God.’ For him, Augustine’s love of God is not a doctrine but a life, not an abstract analysis but a journey, not a theory but an experience.”⁵

Thus begins Gary McCloskey OSA in his short essay ‘*Augustinian Pedagogy*’⁶ in which he explores an Augustinian approach to teaching and learning. In the current project, and the series of associated professional development workshops, we have attempted to encourage colleagues on this ‘*journey*’ not through ‘abstract analysis’ and ‘theory’, but rather through an ‘*experience*’ that we hope is approaching something authentically Augustinian. This experiential focus reflects the direction taken in the *Ratio Institutionis* that ‘living the community life is itself an exercise in asceticism (and formation)’.⁷

In our experience of working with teachers we have found that using this experiential focus was an effective way of encouraging enduring changes in practice for teachers - most likely because it encourages the development of those reflective skills, and the engagement with reflective opportunities for learning, that are central to the development of some aspect of interiority. In terms of encouraging the sort of professional learning that leads to real change in practice, an *experiential learning focus* seemed to us to be most effective.

The overall theme for the series of workshops was taken as *simul quaeramus*:

Augustine’s educational maxim is simul quaeramus — let us search together: simul means learning is a public enterprise, an inquiry “with” others; quaeramus means “dynamic searching” that keeps learning demanding, open, and unfinished — fundamentally a lifelong process, a “restless journey”⁸

The Workshops

To date, four different professional development workshops have been designed and implemented as part of this project. The first, focussing on *Augustinian Values*, and the second, centered on *Augustinian Pedagogy*, have been conducted twice since 2010. The third, exploring *Leadership in the Augustinian Tradition*, was conducted in 2011 for the first time. In addition, an extra workshop focusing on both *Values* and *Pedagogy* was conducted specifically for the Subject Area Coordinator Team from Villanova.



While it was recognised that individual staff members within the two schools would be at different starting points in the journey of formation that was proposed, it is a widely held view that the vast majority of our teachers have an appreciation of, and some lived experience of, that part of the Augustinian charism that centres on hospitality and community - the 'relational' aspects. Perhaps less well understood, and less well integrated into the daily life of the Colleges, might be some of the more challenging aspects of the Augustinian set of values, such as interiority, humility, stewardship of the common good, and the pursuit of truth.

In beginning from where people are, though, the relational aspects of the Augustinian tradition were thought to serve as a good 'hook' from which to explore the broader set of Augustinian values and their application to a school community in Australia in the twenty-first century. Since 'tackling the subject of values means approaching the very essence of Augustinian education...'⁹, the first of the process workshops was entitled '*Augustinian Values in the School Setting*' and it aimed to challenge the participants to explore beyond the 'relational' to the 'interior', the 'intellectual' and the 'collective' values, and how these might be authentically expressed through the daily life of the teacher in an Augustinian school.

For some teachers, the notion that values such as interiority, for example, might have immediate lived application to the teaching and learning process was not necessarily obvious. Making these connections through the *process-learning* method, in which the challenge was set to develop specific concrete implications from them, was therefore a fruitful starting point.

As a base starting resource, the project decided to employ the particular set of 'Augustinian Values' as formulated in a document published by Villanova University since it appeared to us that, perhaps because of its origin, this description is grounded in terms familiar within and applicable to the intellectual or academic, learning environment.

This statement of Augustinian values adapted from the Villanova University document¹⁰ was grouped under the six unifying themes of:

- *invitation to the interior life*
- *the cultivation of humility*
- *the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom*
- *the formation of community*
- *the call to the sacramental life, and*
- *the obligation to stewardship*

The full statement can be found in *Appendix A*. As can hopefully be seen in the next section, the process used in the workshops has been designed as an 'homage' to, and drawn from, these values. The experiential elements were designed to give some exposure to aspects of the values, in that the evening included prayer, some time for personal reflection and individual study, some working together around a task, and some sharing of insights and ideas among the larger group. In this way, participants were encouraged to pursue knowledge and wisdom through interior work before transcending their own understandings and sharing their learning in community.

The Workshop Structure and Intent

In each case, the workshop was designed to be *experiential* and *participatory*, unlike the largely didactic professional development with which most teachers are familiar. This necessarily limited the number of people who could participate in each workshop, with an ideal somewhere around twelve, although one of the workshops successfully involved and engaged sixteen participants. Each workshop was conducted for four hours commencing at 5:00pm and working through until 9:00pm.

The process of the workshops was based on working *with* the participants according to Augustine's invitation to the reader in *The Trinity*:

*"Where we are equally confident - stride on with me; where we are equally puzzled - pause to investigate with me; where you find yourself in error - come to my side; where you find me erring - call me to your side."*¹¹

While detailed outlines of two of the workshops are given in the evaluations reproduced in *Appendix B* and *Appendix C*, the basic structure for all the workshops, with minor variations, has been along the following lines:

- a) the direct input from the facilitator is limited to a *very brief introduction* to the field of inquiry, and from that point the facilitator focuses primarily on *guiding the process* for the remainder of the workshop,
- b) there is extended time for *silent, personal and individual engagement* with significant texts, and reflection on significant questions,
- c) there is extended time in *small groups for sharing* what one has learned, hearing what others have discerned, and negotiating shared understandings,
- d) a *meal is shared* among friends, and
- e) there is some *specific task* set for the small groups - in order to give a focus and direction to the discussions - the result of which the small groups share with everyone in a final plenary session.

In this way, the common thread has been the invitation to use an interior experience as a preparation for sharing with one another - to engage personally with the 'truth,' before transcending one's own particular perspective, in working towards a shared understanding of that 'truth' within the small group, that can then be shared more widely with the large group.

Another significant characteristic of the general process employed is that it is *accountable* - it's not possible to sit and hide in one of these workshops. Participation is required.

Opening and Closing Prayer has been a very significant part of each workshop conducted, with each prayer drawing directly on applicable themes from the writings of St Augustine. In this way, the opening and closing prayer serves not just as 'bookends' for each workshop, but rather as prayerful invitations into the major themes for consideration. The prayer sets each workshop in a reflective, interior context.

Resources used in the Workshops

The major resource used in the design of the workshops - and as a *de facto* 'curriculum' for the overall project - was the *Ratio Institutionis*, the *Augustinian Plan for Formation*.¹² Much of the initial input presented at each of the workshops was drawn from reflection on this text. An edited and adapted version of the *Ratio* was prepared and made available to participants for further individual reading and reflection following the workshops.

The following texts - or extracts thereof - have been used in various ways in the *interior time* across the workshops. For each of the workshops, a reading list has also been included in each participant's folder and extensive resources are available on the College Staff Intranet for further reading.

- ▶ *The Rule of St Augustine*
- ▶ *The Confessions* - St Augustine
- ▶ *The Plan for Augustinian Formation - The Ratio Institutionis*
- ▶ *The Spirituality of the Order* - from *The Rule and Constitutions of the Order of St Augustine*
- ▶ *The Educational Tradition in the Order* - Thomas Martin OSA, from *Basic Elements of Augustinian Pedagogy*
- ▶ *The Augustinian Way* - Albert Esmeralda OSA
- ▶ *Typically Augustinian Values* - Fermin Fernandez Biezobas OSA from *Basic Elements of Augustinian Pedagogy*
- ▶ *An Augustinian College - based on a statement of COLEGIO AGUSTINIANO*
- ▶ *Encounters of Learning: Saint Augustine on Education* - Gary McCloskey OSA
- ▶ *The Augustinian Educational Model* - Francisco Galende Fincias OSA from *Basic Elements of Augustinian Pedagogy*
- ▶ *The Educative Community* - Francisco Galende Fincias OSA from *Basic Elements of Augustinian Pedagogy*
- ▶ *Augustine's Advice for College Teachers: Ever Ancient, Ever New* - John Immerwahr, *Metaphilosophy*, Vol 39, 2008
- ▶ *The Learning Paradigm* - Villanova University Theology Department
- ▶ *Study as Love: Augustinian Vision and Catholic Education* - Phillip Cary, *Augustine and Liberal Education*, Villanova University
- ▶ *Cracked Pots and Brave Hearts: Augustine on Teaching and Learning* - Gary McCloskey OSA
- ▶ *Augustine on Leadership* - Gary McCloskey OSA
- ▶ *Rule for the Community* - Tarcisius van Bavel OSA - *Saint Augustine*
- ▶ *The Servant Leader in the Perspective of Augustinian Spirituality* - Robert F Prevost OSA, 2005
- ▶ *The Rule of Saint Augustine* - Sr Agatha Mary SPB
- ▶ *Augustine as Mentor* - Edward L Smither, PhD Thesis & book, 2010

There are innumerable other excellent sources that could be fruitfully used in the workshops. Those listed here were chosen primarily because of their accessibility while still addressing significant ideas and themes. This was important considering the participants' diverse range of prior experience with Augustinian thought.

Another significant and rich resource used in the leadership workshop was a video of Gary McCloskey OSA speaking on *Augustine and Leadership* at the Summit on Leadership held on October 8 and 9, 2009, at Villanova University. This thirty minute lecture, and its transcript, was used as the major input presented at this workshop.

Reflections and Observations

The workshops have been strongly subscribed and well-received by participants. There is, it seems, widespread interest among staff to understand more about our shared Augustinian heritage, and a willingness to study it through these means. We suspect that staff members find the experiential nature of the workshops to be refreshing in the context of the other professional development activities that they undertake.

While some few individuals appear at first to find the *silent, interior time* challenging, we find that everyone reports it as being very ‘worthwhile’ after the fact. For some, it is a rare and all-too-brief opportunity to spend some time on their own in what they might otherwise consider almost an indulgent activity. Our observation from the sideline is that, as a preparation for the small group discussions, this individual reflection is invaluable and is key to the overall success of the workshop.

From our observations, the small group discussions are where the bulk of the work of each workshop appears to happen as participants work to articulate what they have learned, or more importantly perhaps, what they are struggling with in discerning the message of some text or example of some lived principle. The small groups are generally characterised almost at the same time by much laughter and by much serious discussion, as they “*go from the lightest joking to talk of the deepest things and back again.*”¹³

Acknowledgements

The project gratefully acknowledges the generous contribution of Fr Laurie Mooney OSA through his participation in the 2010 workshops, and a similar contribution by Fr Peter Wieneke OSA in joining us for the 2011 series. The late Fr Michael Morahan OSA acted as critical friend and resource in the development and implementation of the workshop series. Fr Gary McCloskey OSA, of the Villanova Province of the USA, has also kindly and generously acted as critical friend along the way, and has provided us with valuable resources on Augustinian leadership and pedagogy.

Conclusions

The evaluations completed by participants at the end of each of the workshops have been overwhelmingly positive. More heartening still have been the occasional descriptions of an ‘*Aha!*’ experience shared by some of the participants - where they finally felt that they have grasped in a more *visceral sense* what they might previously have ‘understood’ just cognitively or intellectually.

The experiential and participatory nature of the workshops appears to be central to their perceived success for those involved. The learning process employed in the workshops, which is designed to embody Augustinian values, and as an attempt to model an authentic Augustinian pedagogy, enables the group to value and affirm the contribution each member brings to the workshop. It is clearly the work of the group itself that determines the success of the process, since this community approach reflects that:

*If the truth is the aspiration of all human beings, it cannot be the exclusive personal property of any person. The truth cannot be exclusively mine or yours precisely because it has to be both yours and mine.*¹⁴

References

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11. St Augustine, *The Trinity* 1, 5.
12. *Ratio Institutionis*, Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, Roma 1993
13. St Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 8, 13
14. St Augustine, *Commentary on the Psalms*, 103, 2, 11



If Augustine were to offer his own thoughts on what an Augustinian school should be like, he might suggest these themes and values:

We strive to be a community where *“nothing is to be preferred to the search for truth,”*¹ as our members dedicate themselves to a journey of living lives of interiority and conversion.²

I. THE INTERIOR LIFE

*“Do not go outside yourself, but enter into yourself, for truth dwells in the interior self.”*³

Both Augustine’s personal life and his spiritual teaching are dominated by a continual call to interiority. He contends that it is *“inside one’s self”* where truth is found,⁴ and that only in reflection and silence is understanding achieved.⁵ According to Augustine, the visual and the audible of the external world only serve as reminders to the student, and that learning takes place in the interior world.⁶ The interior activity of contemplation and a search for the Ultimate truth leads us to transcend ourselves to an eventual encounter with God.⁷

II. CULTIVATION OF HUMILITY

*“Unless humility precedes, accompanies, and follows whatever we do, we will find that we have done little good to rejoice in. Pride will bereft us of everything.”*⁸

Humility is the root of true charity. It calls us to accept the sacred in ourselves and others. It allows us to recognize that we are human, to accept our place in reality neither making oneself more nor less than what one actually is, and to love all things, but in an appropriate way.⁹ Humility teaches us to see others as equals. *“Humility induces us to presume on our own strength and to trust in God.”*¹⁰ Humility allows us to listen to others and to see the truth in them. According to Augustine, the only way to reach an *“abiding, active knowledge of the truth is through humility.”*¹¹

III. PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

*“Believe so that you may understand. Understand that you may believe.”*¹²

In the Augustinian model of education, both teachers and students are *“servants of the truth,”* who place instruction and learning in the disciplines at the service of development of intellect.¹³ Learning, *“cultivation of the mind,”* in the Augustinian context, is to be understood as more than the pursuit of *“academic excellence”* or of knowledge for its own sake, but more appropriately as the pursuit of wisdom, the capacity to understand one’s self, others and the world in light of the Ultimate reality. This pursuit of wisdom coincides with the search for Truth for which every person longs.¹⁴ Honesty and humility characterize *“disciplined conversation”* between teacher and student, during which students develop confidence in their abilities to reason and to assert for themselves discovered truth. The intended outcome is less dependence on the teacher’s *“authority”* but greater appreciation for *“truth,”* both discovered and revealed during principled and collaborative inquiry.¹⁵

The College community acknowledges belief in God as reasonable, places each discipline in conversation with the Catholic intellectual tradition, and creates an environment *“where being a faithful Catholic is taken seriously as an intelligent and morally responsible option for contemporary people.”*¹⁶ In the Augustinian model, teachers and students form a learning community, pursuing goals as *“friends, brothers, sisters, sharing with others what they have or gain, and receiving what God has given or will give”* to each.¹⁷

IV. FORMATION OF COMMUNITY

*“An Augustinian community is a place where the search for truth takes place in a climate of love and friendship, where one can experience that the ‘truth is neither yours nor mine, so that it can belong to the both of us.’”*¹⁸

In an Augustinian community, the purpose of life is to search for God, the Ultimate truth, not alone, but among friends,¹⁹ who are committed to the same journey. In such a community *“love is at the center and the heart”* of every act and interaction,²⁰ and respect for each person, as children of God, is primary. Members strive to live in

harmony - in a quest for union of mind and heart,²¹ to mutual concern for and assistance to each other in every way possible, including fraternal correction, in a spirit of love and understanding.²² Members look upon their work as an expression of one's human nature, not as a burden, but in cooperation with the Creator in shaping the world and serving humankind. Always conscious of the virtues of honesty, integrity, and compassion as fundamental to the Christian way of life,²³ members seek in every effort to work for unity, making justice and peace, the fruits of love, a reality in the Church and in the world.²⁴

V. CALL TO THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE

*"Every good thing is sealed to us in the celebration of the sacraments."*²⁵

All in the College community are invited into the sacramental life that is active participation in an outward expression of one's faith. Exploration of religion and faith, participation in prayer, liturgy and other forms of communal worship are both respected and encouraged. Those who have a desire to live an Augustinian life seek to make "unity and peace a reality in the Church and in human society." It requires a particular expression of faith, of Gospel values - putting aside narrowness and selfishness and becoming "attuned to a broader social love, joining ourselves to others in such ways that we may have only one mind, the mind of Christ."²⁶

VI. OBLIGATION TO STEWARDSHIP

*"The degree to which you are concerned for the common good rather than for your own, is the criterion by which you can judge how much progress you have made."*²⁷

Stewardship of the common good requires that we willingly accept accountability for others through service to them, without control of them. In the Catholic tradition, "the Beatitudes teach us the final end to which God calls us, and confront us with decisive choices concerning earthly goods. They teach us [how] to love..."²⁸ "Love, when it is true, is always directed away from oneself. It is transcendent. The two-fold commandment of love, therefore, translates into working for the common good, [and] working for the common good is service."²⁹ Service in an Augustinian context is done in the spirit of gratefulness and in recognition that the service owed to God must be rendered to humankind. Service is love in its dynamic dimension. Service gives expression to Jesus' command, "Love one another as I have loved you."³⁰

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5. *Sermon 56*, 22
6. *The Teacher*, XIV, 46.
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20. *Tracts on the Gospel of John*, 7, 8.
21. *The Rule of Augustine*, 3 and 4.
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23. Cf. *General Statutes*, 67.
24. *Letters of Augustine*, 234, 3-7.
25. *On the Spirit and the Letter*, 17.18.11.
26. *The Augustinian Way*, Albert Esmeralda OSA
27. *The Rule of Augustine*, 7, 2.
28. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1726-1728.
29. *The Augustinian Way*, Albert Esmeralda OSA
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Evaluation

This evaluation was completed by the author for reporting back to the Province Education Commission of the Mother of Good Counsel Australian Province. It is reproduced here in its original form.

The first *Augustinian Values Workshop* was conducted for staff members from Villanova College and St Augustine's College over four hours on the evening of Tuesday 4th May, 2010.

The Aims and Design of the Workshop:

The aims for the Workshop were to have a process which:

- a) engaged participants with, and deepened their understanding of, the Augustinian values
- b) encouraged and enabled participants to engage with some key documents
- c) encouraged a sharing among participants, and
- d) was enjoyable.

For the purposes of the Workshop, the decision was taken to use the six-fold description originating from Villanova University as a working definition of the set of values which are particularly Augustinian.

This list included:

- I. Invitation to the Interior Life
- II. Cultivation of Humility
- III. Pursuit of Knowledge and Wisdom
- IV. Formation of Community
- V. Call to the Sacramental Life
- VI. Obligation to Stewardship

The process outlined below was designed to loosely 'pay homage' to, and be drawn from, this set of values. Some experiential elements were designed to give some exposure to aspects of the values, in that the evening included prayer, some time for personal reflection and individual study, some working together around a task, and some sharing of insights and ideas among the larger group.

The Workshop was conducted from 5pm to 9pm and included the sharing of a simple meal.

The Workshop Process:

The Workshop followed this outline:

1. Brief Initial Input

After some words of welcome and orientation to the workshop, some brief input was given as to the context of this session marking the formal beginning of the Augustinian Pedagogy action-research project. Some brief explanation of the nature of values and the decision to use, as a working document, the Villanova University description.

2. Prayer

The adaptation of the Evening Prayer created by Michael Morahan OSA for the first 2010 Provincial Education Commission meeting was used as the prayer. It was used because it employs some passages from the Rule.

3. Reflection/Personal Study

Then followed approximately 45 minutes of quiet, individual time in which participants were invited to engage reflectively with at least one of a number of sources with which they had been provided.

These sources included:

- a) the Villanova University description of the Augustinian values
- b) *The Rule of St Augustine*
- c) the chapter from the *Constitutions* on Augustinian Spirituality
- d) an adaptation of an extract from the *Ratio Institutionis* (previously distributed to Prov Educ Comm)
- e) *The Augustinian Way*, an essay on ten Augustinian values by Albert Esmeralda OSA
- f) *Typically Augustinian Values*, an article by Fermin Fernández Biéznobas OSA, from *Basic Elements of Augustinian Pedagogy*, Berdon, E B. OSA, Pubblicazioni Agostiniane, Roma 2006

Participants were 'allocated' a particular value upon which to reflect. Rather than just use the time reading across all the sources, participants were encouraged to limit their reflection to just a few passages or quotes, and to pause on those, contemplating their meaning in relation to their particular value of interest.

4. Working Together

In a further 40-45 minute block, participants joined in pre-determined groups of two or three according to the specific value they had been allocated, in order to share the fruits of their reflection and to prepare a short five-minute presentation to the larger group which would help “break open” for the other participants the value on which they had been working. Groups could choose to make a poster or a powerpoint presentation to support their report back.

5. Dinner

A pleasant, convivial dinner concluded this first section of the evening.

6. Presentations

After dinner, each of the six groups in turn presented the results of their individual and collective considerations to the larger group. Comments and questions were invited after each presentation.

7. Conclusion

It was intended that following the presentations, participants would be asked - just in pairs or threes around the table - to consider the *implications* of their understanding of each of the values for how to ‘be’ in an Augustinian school, i.e. to look for how these values find, or should find, expression in day-to-day school life. Unfortunately, time got away from us and this task was unable to be completed. A short reflection on the progress made over the evening, and a sincere expression of thanks to all participants, followed by the customary completion of evaluation forms, brought the Workshop to a conclusion right on 9:00pm.

Observations, Reflections and Evaluation

Firstly, it’s worth noting how enthusiastically and genuinely the participants entered into the spirit of the workshop - and their interest in, and appreciation of the importance of, the values set. As I observed to the group during the evening, I believe the two school communities are indeed gifted by their talented and generous staffs - as evidenced by the contributions of these staff members to this workshop.

The participants’ response to the workshop was overwhelmingly positive. The *Participant Evaluation results*, reproduced in Appendix A, indicate that they found the workshop to be worthwhile. Personally, from the facilitator’s perspective, I also believe that the workshop was worthwhile, though I suspect I would have liked to have achieved more - perhaps unrealistically, given the time available to us on this night.

I think the Personal Reflection/Study time, and the Working Together time were probably the most beneficial parts of the evening. Both sections seemed to prompt some deepening of people’s understandings, in different ways. The groups for the Working Together section were not randomly selected, and I think the particular pairings that we set up contributed to the success of this part.

The presentations were diverse and interesting and demonstrated the considerable care that the participants had put into the task of breaking open their particular ‘value’ for the larger group - given the severe time constraints in their preparation. There seemed to be, also, a keen interest in what other groups had ‘discovered’ in their study and a genuine appreciation of the effort people had taken. Some presentations prompted further discussion, and Fr Laurie Mooney’s insightful input during this part was invaluable, in my opinion. On reflection, I think we achieved what could be achieved given the time constraints. There is also the issue of recognising “where each of the participants were” as to their prior understandings of our Charism, and familiarity with the values already. The group had a wide range in terms of experience and history.

Ideally, I think this first workshop could fruitfully be *the first in a series of three or four* involving the same group of participants. I think it made a great start, but there is clearly much more to explore.

Perhaps the evening could have benefitted from more directed and authoritative input - taking a more didactic rather than participatory approach. This is something worth exploring - keeping in mind, though, that I think there were distinct advantages of having the participants so directly involved in and responsible for “creating” the outcomes. Maybe there is a better ‘middle ground’ that we could find between direct instruction and input on the one hand, and participation and collaboration on the other.

As with all of these evening PD sessions of this model that I have conducted over the years, I felt privileged to be able to lead this group of willing volunteers through the workshop. I think that this particular aspect of these workshops - that the participants have chosen to come along and therefore are there keen to learn and to contribute - is key to the high participant satisfaction rate. I am conscious of the need to ensure that since so many staff volunteer their time so generously to undertake these workshops, that the workshop experience be productive and enjoyable for them.



Evaluation

This evaluation was completed by the author for reporting back to the Province Education Commission of the Mother of Good Counsel Australian Province. It is reproduced here in its original form.

This evaluation relates to the second Workshop in the series which focused on *Augustinian Pedagogy* and which was conducted for staff from Villanova and St Augustine's over four hours on the evening of Tuesday 1st June.

Each of the participants, with the exception of one, had also attended the first Workshop on *Augustinian Values* on May 5th, 2010. Two of those teachers who had attended the first Workshop were unable to make it for this second one.

The Aims and Design of the Workshop:

The aims for the Workshop were to have a process which:

- a) engaged participants with, and deepened their understanding of, some characteristics of an authentic Augustinian pedagogy
- b) encouraged and enabled participants to engage with some key documents
- c) encouraged a sharing among participants, and
- d) was enjoyable.

The theme around which both the content and process of the Workshop were designed was *simul quaeramus - let us search together*. This theme of 'restless searching' paid homage to Augustine's educational maxim (after McCloskey) and gave us both a focus and a structure for the evening's activities. Just as the first Workshop aimed to give participants an *experience of the values* as well as knowledge about them, this second workshop was based loosely around a *socratic dialogue process* for the same purpose - in some ways, the *experience* was intended to be part of the *outcome* and the *learning*. To this end, the prepared "input" from the Workshop leader accounted for less than 10 minutes of the four hour workshop.

The Workshop was conducted from 5pm to 9pm and included the sharing of a simple meal.

Augustinian Pedagogy:

We defined an *Augustinian pedagogy* as '*the art and science of teaching and learning in ways authentic to the Augustinian tradition*.' In this way, an authentic Augustinian pedagogy is informed not only by Augustine's particular pedagogy - which may be limited by the times and culture in which he lived - but also by Augustine's works themselves, as well as the rich academic and intellectual tradition of the Order right from its foundation in the thirteenth century to the present day. It would be a pedagogy firmly rooted in the lived expression of that particular set of values associated with Augustine and his life, and the life of the Order, and developed through an understanding of the educational tradition and ethos of Augustinian scholars of the intervening centuries. The strong intellectual tradition of the Order, and of its members, from the Grand Union until the present day should clearly inform our developed conception of this authentic Augustinian pedagogy.

The Workshop Process:

The Workshop followed this outline:

1. Brief Initial Input

After some words of welcome and orientation to the workshop, very brief input was given to set the context of the evening in the educational or pedagogical field. A working definition of the term 'Augustinian Pedagogy' was proposed as follows:

'the art and science of teaching and learning in ways authentic to the Augustinian tradition'

The task for the workshop was explained as being "*to search together towards an authentic Augustinian pedagogy for teachers in our Australian boys' schools, in the twenty-first century.*"

2. Prayer

The group began their work with a short prayer which included a period of reflection around some key Augustine quotes.

3. Major Influences

A 'think-pair-share' exercise challenged participants to identify the major influences or sources that should be consulted in the task of developing an authentic Augustinian pedagogy, and led to a lively discussion of the same. While this task generated a long list of such influences or sources, it didn't identify some of those I thought should have been included, but it did identify some that weren't on my list. The breadth of the suggestions from the group indicated the richness of the tradition and the wealth of influences on an Augustinian pedagogy.

4. Implications of the Augustinian Values

One task that was not achieved in the first Workshop was included at this point in the second one, namely identifying and exploring some of the implications for living Augustinian values within an Augustinian community of a school, and in the classroom. Participants had been asked prior to the workshop to give this question some thought - and most came prepared with some ideas in this area.

5. Major task - Reflection & Sharing

After dinner, the major task for the workshop was undertaken and this involved participants engaging with a number of key sources about Augustine's pedagogy and a broader Augustinian pedagogy. The initial engagement for each participant was a reflective reading and consideration of an assigned article - with four articles each assigned to three people. The groups of three that had been assigned the same article then came together to establish a common - or at least multi-perspective - view of their particular article. This was followed by a rearrangement of the four groups into three, each group comprising four people who had each worked with a different article. The task of this final grouping was to distill the wisdom of the four articles into identifying *no more than three* 'defining characteristics of an Augustinian pedagogy' which they were then required to report back to the larger group.

6. Conclusion

The Workshop concluded with the usual thanks, completing the evaluation, and an expression from participants that they would be keen to pursue a third Workshop to take their work together further.

Observations, Reflections and Evaluation

As I noted in the evaluation of the first Workshop, it was heartening to witness the energy and enthusiasm with which the group joined in the spirit of the activities and the generosity of spirit in the willingness of participants to share of their experience and knowledge.

The participants' response to the workshop was once again overwhelmingly positive. The *Participant Evaluation results*, reproduced in Appendix A, seem to indicate that they enjoyed the Workshop and found it to be valuable.

Once again, I think the Personal Reflection/Study time, and the sharing time in small groups were probably the most beneficial parts of the evening for the participants. In this Workshop, with the *simul quaeramus* focus on experiential learning, the bulk of the time was spent in discussion in small groups either in response to a question or in reacting to a document. This sharing of ideas and experience is extremely valuable.

It was heartening to hear - at the end of the second four-hour Workshop - that many participants still wanted to get together again for further such opportunities. As I remarked after the first Workshop, the whole field is such 'rich pickings' that its exploration could fruitfully engage an interested group for quite a few four-hour sessions. I gave no commitment at the end of this workshop, though, to extending the series beyond the two now-completed Workshops. A decision will need to be made soon as to whether we add further Workshops to the series, or the current series of two recommence for another group of participants. There is considerable interest - enough I would believe that another Workshop series could be run in Second Semester. At the moment, I am tending towards re-running the current two Workshops for a new group next Term in order to broaden the base of people engaging initially with the topics.

Moving to involve a new group of people doesn't preclude, however, looking for other - perhaps differently-constructed - opportunities for those who have already been involved to further pursue their interest.

A final personal note of thanks for Fr Laurie Mooney's generosity in coming along to both Workshops - his contributions to the discussions were invaluable.