

I

EDUCATING CLERGY

A DISTINCTIVE CHALLENGE

CLERGY WORK HAS A DISTINCTIVELY PUBLIC CHARACTER, and clergy fill a particular professional role in American life. Clergy may spend considerable time in the solitude of their studies and work primarily in the contexts of specific religious traditions, but clergy practice consistently occurs at the intersections of personal and collective, religious and secular public experience.

For example, recalling his installation as pastor in that rural congregation, Lischer writes that in this ritual event, “The church had decreed that henceforth I would be spiritual guide, public teacher, and beloved sage to people whose lives and work I couldn’t possibly understand. With a stroke of his wand, God—or the bishop—had just made me an expert in troubled marriages, alcoholism, teen sex, and farm subsidies” (2001, pp. 49–50).

With his installation, the congregation and community expected him to engage a wide range of personal and public issues through traditional clergy roles of preaching, teaching, caregiving, counseling, and organizing. Even in the most apparently private of interactions, as between pastor and hospital patient, he would be drawn into the increasingly public realms of family, medical staff, congregation, and community. This insight was the catalyst to the eventual transformation of Lischer’s pastoral imagination.

The New Rabbi (2002), Stephen Fried’s story of Har Zion Temple’s search for a new leader, also illustrates this point. The power of the public presence and influence of Rabbi Gerald Wolpe’s thirty-year tenure as that Philadelphia congregation’s rabbi could not be avoided at any point in the temple’s quest. As a public religious figure, his leadership of that congregation had established a standard for measuring any potential suc-

cessor. He was a “brilliant orator and politician” who had originally been hired to hold a conflict-ridden synagogue together as it moved from its older and changing neighborhood in Philadelphia to a new site and new building on Philadelphia’s suburban “Main Line.” He was remembered for exceptional teaching, liturgical leadership, and congregational administration—each requiring public presence and presentation. He had “helped the synagogue, and American Judaism, reinvent itself in the new ‘postwar era’—the one after Vietnam, the Yom Kippur War in Israel, and the civil rights and sexual revolutions in America”—movements that had challenged the very core of American Conservative Jewish identity and tradition. Fried adds that in his later years Wolpe “became best known” for the way he publicly shared the personal “pain and medical dilemmas” associated with the long recovery of his wife from a debilitating stroke, “expressing and evoking emotion in a place where reason and power had traditionally held sway” (2002, pp. 4–5).

Lischer’s and Fried’s stories illustrate two interrelated facts of clergy work: clergy practice occurs in public, and clergy practice engages its participants in practices of public service. Even when clergy seem primarily involved in efforts to maintain and renew the vitality of the congregations they serve, they fill roles in public assemblies that authorize their service for a wide range of public issues and concerns. They preside over religious rituals that make public significant personal transitions in life, from birth to death, and they intensify the sense of being connected with others in times of public celebration, crisis, and mourning. In the United States especially, clergy have also articulated visions of social good that have been catalysts to the organization of voluntary associations and the promotion of public policies directed to the betterment of society.

Clergy have been major proponents of the different moral perspectives at stake in what J. D. Hunter and others have recently called the “culture wars” over the family, media, education, law, and politics (1990, p. 50–51). Clergy are, at the same time, primary agents of the contemporary movements of religious fundamentalism around the world that on the one hand threaten civil liberties and on the other pose difficult questions about the relationship of religious traditions to the intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment. Many clergy are prominent and popular media personalities attracting significant segments of the population to their radio and television broadcasts and to massive public gatherings. Recent government proposals for faith-based initiatives to handle important public services would not only alter traditional views about the separation of church and state in the nation, they would also draw clergy even more visibly into roles of public leadership.

Since the practice of clergy occurs at the intersection of religious and public life, it requires an education that enhances what Mary Fulkerson, also of Duke University's Divinity School, has called a "social imagination." For seminary educators, this means helping students not only to learn "how the world works" so they can do more than theorize about the social and political world, but also to see themselves as religious leaders involved in "the action in the world."¹ From this perspective, clergy education involves more than teaching students a particular way of thinking; it requires that those ways of thinking be linked constructively with ways of being and doing. In this linking we can see in clergy education the necessary interdependence of the cognitive, practical, and normative apprenticeships of professional education.

A Pastoral, Priestly, or Rabbinic Imagination

It follows, then, that a primary task of seminary education is cultivating the pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imagination necessary for clergy to embrace this multifaceted and public work. Dykstra, perhaps more than anyone else, has thought about the shape and function of the pastoral imagination. He describes meeting wonderful ministers who exhibited a kind of "internal gyroscope and a distinctive kind of intelligence" that he calls pastoral imagination. By this term he means "a way of seeing into and interpreting the world" that, in turn, "shapes everything a pastor thinks and does" (2001, pp. 2–3, 15). Dykstra clearly does not place the full responsibility for cultivating such a complete pastoral, rabbinic, or priestly persona on the shoulders of seminaries. Just as lawyers develop a way of thinking—a "legal mind"—through years of experience, so too, he notes, does practicing their profession over time develop in clergy a particular way of thinking (2001, pp. 2–3, 15).

Seminaries, however, are the primary settings for the intentional, disciplined, and sustained cultivation of the imaginative capacity for engaging in complex and rich professional practice. Dykstra notes that this capacity involves knowing "how to interpret Scripture and tradition in contemporary life," developing "an accurate sense of what makes human beings tick," possessing "a complex understanding of how congregations and other institutions actually work," and having both "a clear awareness" and an "analytical understanding of the world that the church exists to serve." "Undergirding" all this, he continues, is "a clarity of mind about what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth" and an awareness of how all these elements of clergy work "together with real integrity" (2001, pp. 2–3, 15).

Dykstra's description of pastoral imagination offers several clues to the formative and transformative power possible in seminary education. Seminary educators seek to form dispositions and the intuitive knowledge, or *habitus*, of a given religious or intellectual tradition in students. They intend for students to embody and equip the transformation of these traditions, as inherited "rules" are changed into "strategies" of new engagement to address new situations and circumstances (2001, pp. 2, 15). This is what Aristotle calls the transformative nature of *praxis*; John Dewey, the *reconstructive* nature of practical knowledge; and Pierre Bourdieu, the *strategies* of enacting a social practice. Throughout our interviews and observations we noticed that clergy education, however traditional, involves these transformative moments and goals.

Clergy educators innovate or adapt by drawing on the resources of inherited religious and academic traditions to convey or model for students' pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imaginations. The result of their efforts is often transformative. In our study, students often spoke of moments in their learning as *awakening to* or *discovering* new meanings in sacred texts, alternative strategies for the conduct of some clergy practice, or new dimensions to their calling and vocation.

Clergy practice is itself a transformative art, reinvesting inherited traditions with new meanings and strategies in response to changing circumstances and shifting contexts. From this perspective, the pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imagination requires not only capacities for engaging, integrating, and adapting learning, but also what might be called new forms of religious production. Both Protestant evangelical clergy who interpret a Scripture passage to authorize a new outreach program and Catholic priests who present the gospel in the language and cultural forms of a new immigrant population are participating in transformative practices that produce new forms of ministry.

How, then, do seminary educators think about the relationship between *what* and *how* they teach and the pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imaginations that they seek to cultivate through their teaching? Certainly, some seminary educators teach their students as if they all will become scholars with the knowledge and skills needed to participate in the academic world of publishing and teaching. These educators emphasize the cognitive or intellectual apprenticeship of professional education. Similarly, some faculty members are primarily concerned with developing practical competencies in students for their future work as clergy. They emphasize an apprenticeship of practice or skill. However, when we asked seminary deans to identify members of their faculties who are both respected by their colleagues for their teaching and reflective about their teaching, we

discovered more complex teaching practices and emphases. These seminary educators value scholarly competence and professional skill, but their intentions for student learning emphasize developing capacities for integrating various dimensions of the educational experience, what we have been calling *pastoral imagination*.

In the survey responses of nearly one hundred and thirty seminary teachers from eighteen different schools, we found clues to the pastoral imagination these seminary educators intend to cultivate. We asked them to consider a course that they “taught recently and enjoyed teaching.” Rachel Adler, at Hebrew Union College, for example, teaches a course called “Constructing Theologies of Pain and Suffering.” (Citations such as this one come from alumni or alumnae, student, or faculty responses to questions we posed on survey instruments developed for this study.) In this course, she intends to help her students read “some difficult classical texts richly and complexly; to pay attention to the process and methodology of different theologies; to develop an authentic, rigorous theological language for experiences to which we tend to respond either with silent terror or sloppy clichés; to address pain and suffering as specific to gendered persons embedded in specific families, communities, and cultures rather than universalizing; and to evaluate prayers and ceremonies, traditional and new, which deal with pain, suffering and loss in the light of the theological standards we are developing.”

She concludes her list by writing, “You could say I want my students to be rooted in Jewish tradition, to learn to appreciate and begin to construct theologies that have integrity and don’t marginalize the specific embodied, encultured people who are suffering” by focusing “the discussion exclusively on God.” For Adler, these expectations for the rabbinical imagination also mean that she seeks to help “students face their own fears and learn courage.”

Mary Schertz of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary observed that a course she teaches, “Reading Greek: the Synoptic Gospels,” is “one of the two most important classes at our seminary for developing pastors who have a strong sense of what the biblical text is (and is not) and a properly chastened sense of their own power and authority as an interpreter of the text.” These intentions for cultivating a pastoral imagination involve helping students learn both “a method and an attitude toward biblical studies that will nourish them and their congregations.” In “Alternative Religions in America,” taught by Donald Huber, professor of church history at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, we found similar attention to the interdependence of cognitive, normative, and practical goals in the process of developing a pastoral imagination that transcends denomina-

tional particularity. Huber encourages students “to listen empathetically to the religious viewpoints of others,” to have the sensitivity and skill “to discuss ‘strange’ religious points of views with their parishioners,” and to develop the ability to “teach about these groups on the basis of real knowledge of them.” At St. John’s Seminary in Camarillo, California, Paul Ford brings to “Sacramental Theology” yet another way of looking at the role of course work in cultivating students’ ability to “understand the implications of the part of the ordination rite in which they are told: ‘Accept from the holy people of God the gifts to be offered to him: Know what you are doing, and imitate the mystery you celebrate; model your life on the mystery of the Lord’s cross.’”

Common to each of these seminary educators is the expectation that students will, through their courses, integrate various cognitive, relational, spiritual, and professional understandings and skills. These clergy educators know that for students, developing the capacity to integrate skills and concepts in this way involves increasing depth and breadth of understanding, expanding their ability to see connections among things typically hidden from view and to recognize the relevance of the subject to their lives and work, and learning to attend simultaneously to the multiple and often competing tasks integral to the work of clergy—tasks that originate in texts, traditions, ideologies, practices, congregations, and larger publics. Clergy educators thus approach teaching by considering each individual learner’s growth as both a person and a religious leader.

Indeed, the complexity of these educators’ expectations for student learning, as reflected in their goal statements, was chiefly responsible for shifting our attention from the strategic skills that seminary educators employ while teaching to the ways in which they imagine the teaching and learning enterprise. We discovered that we were exploring the movement from the *images of clergy* that informed the pedagogical imaginations of seminary educators to their *practices of fostering*, or cultivating, the priestly, pastoral, and rabbinic imaginations of their students for their future work as clergy.

The goals of these seminary educators also reveal attempts to cultivate among their students pastoral, priestly, and rabbinic imaginations that encompass concerns and values traditionally associated with the cognitive, practical, and normative apprenticeships that William Sullivan has identified as common to all forms of professional education.² Clergy educators give attention to the *cognitive apprenticeship*, for example, in their quests to nurture their students’ ability to read “difficult classical texts richly and complexly,” to have “a strong sense of what the biblical text is (and is not),” and to understand “the implications of the ordination rite.”

Their attention to the *skill apprenticeship* concerned with the excellence of “knowing-how” is evident in Adler’s desire that students have the ability to “evaluate prayers and ceremonies . . . which deal with pain, suffering and loss in the light of the theological standards we are developing” and Huber’s hope that students will be able to teach the religious viewpoints of others with sensitivity and skill. Their goal—to foster the knowledge integral to clergy identity—is the objective of the *normative apprenticeship*. This is evident in Schertz’s desire that her students develop both a “method and an attitude toward biblical studies that will nourish them and their congregations” and in Huber’s intention that his students will be able to “listen empathetically” and discuss sensitively and skillfully the religious viewpoints of others to members of their congregations.

Teaching Practices in Cultivating a Pastoral, Priestly, or Rabbinic Imagination

In the seminary setting, teachers engage students—clergy novitiates—in the interactions of teaching and learning with the intention of helping them acquire and develop perspectives, dispositions, and habits—ways of thinking and doing integral to roles of professional leadership in religious communities and public life. The category of pedagogy writ large, however, encompasses topics for investigation ranging from institutional ethos to student readiness, teaching styles to learning theories, curriculum design to lesson planning and assessment. Since it would be impossible to explore all of these topics, we chose to focus our attention on teaching practices—those complex and sustained pedagogical interactions involving strategies and methods to facilitate increasingly proficient participation in the community of the practice.

We focused on teaching practices as a way to explore how seminaries prepare clergy for their professional roles and responsibilities for several reasons. In a survey of articles published over the last ten years in *Theological Education*, the journal of the Association of Theological Schools, we saw a shift of emphasis paralleled in the literature on education in general.³ Discussions have moved from broader analyses of educational aims and purposes to explorations of clergy identity, the relevance of modes of thinking associated with the Enlightenment, the influence of institutional ethos on student learning, and the methods and strategies used in teaching. The attempts of seminary educators to account, in their teaching, for the increasing diversity in student backgrounds and educational experience and the changing expectations for religious leadership in Jewish and Christian congregations have intensified their interest in the dynam-

ics of teaching and learning. So has the challenge to teachers to account for the “explosion of knowledge” in their decisions about what and how they teach.

We also focused on the notion of teaching practice because we wanted to resist the general tendency in the educational literature and other discussions of education to reduce teaching to technique. Technical notions of teaching, although important, do not adequately explain the significance, influence, or variety of approaches to cultivating a rabbinical, priestly, or pastoral imagination that we observed among seminary educators participating in this study.

The notion of *practice* has recently received considerable attention,⁴ especially among seminary educators. Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, for example, have argued that a practice consists of “a sustained, cooperative pattern of human activity that is big enough, rich enough, and complex enough to address some fundamental feature of human existence” (2002, p. 22). From this perspective, teaching is that human activity addressing the need in human communities to transmit and renew the knowledge and skills, perspectives and sensibilities to each new generation to ensure their futures.

This means, as Alasdair MacIntyre argues, that practices such as teaching are more than instrumental activities (1984, p. 175).⁵ The patterns in their activities originated in the earliest responses of humans to their environment and circumstances to ensure biological and communal survival through successive generations.⁶ As practices are learned by each new generation of participants in these community practices, they move from being celebrations of discovery to being increasingly taken for granted—to becoming the ways that the members of a given community do something. Eventually, practices are so ingrained in habits and dispositions that not only are they extended over time and through generations, but also, as they are tested by new conditions and circumstances, ideas and procedures, they are renewed and even transformed. They become the structures of expertise and the resources for improvisation in meeting new and unexpected challenges. From this perspective, practices are, as Lave and Wenger have argued, the fundamental processes by which we learn and become who we are (1991, pp. 52–54). They are inherently pedagogical.

The activity of a practice, Wenger has also observed, “connotes” something we do—as in teaching (1998, p. 38). In a teaching practice the patterned activity of that “doing” consists of *methods* as optional and instrumental activities organized into coherent and complex teaching *strategies* to engage students in the intentions of a teacher (and implicitly

in the intentions of the community of the practice) for their learning. The methods a teacher can use are limited only by the teacher's imagination, skill, and experience. For example, one seminary educator, pushing beyond traditional methods of lecture and discussion, observed that "We do a lot of 'hands-on' or creative learning experiences, like visiting a service of another faith, or conducting 'on the street interviews' . . . or rethinking how ordinary objects can be used to communicate a specific concept or faith supposition or truth. We also review for tests by playing all kinds of games."

Another seminary educator's description of a course illustrates how a variety of methods might be linked into a strategy to establish a rhythmic structure for student learning across an academic term:

Lecture made up the first 4–5 sessions of the course and included case studies of the methodology I use in presenting the Talmudic tales as examples for the students. I also provided them with a library tour and resources list for finding Talmudic stories by subject matter. For a period of 2 sessions after this, students did research toward their presentations. This included study of Talmudic stories with study partners or in small groups. Students also met with me for a "trial run" of their class presentations and to discuss effective teaching strategies for them. This gave me the opportunity to discover what engaged the students, how they thought about their material, and what they felt about it. It also gave me a chance to raise questions about both the intellectual and theological/spiritual nature of the story and the presenter.

The pedagogical function of a teaching strategy such as this one is at least twofold: to gather students into the teacher's vision of possibilities for student knowing and doing in the subject and to engage students in disciplines culminating in the appropriation of that knowledge and those skills. The social function of a teaching strategy like this one emphasizes the commitment of the seminary community to the continuing vitality and relevance of the academic discipline of the course for the future of the seminary's religious tradition.

Students enter a teacher's practice through the practice's methods and strategies. Students participate in a teacher's practice as apprentices to a master craftsperson. As the teacher invites the students into the rhythmic structure of the practice, the students subordinate themselves to the requirements of the rules, standards of excellence, and roles encountered in its methods and strategies. As they rehearse the knowledge and skills toward which the practice is directed, they are gradually drawn into the deeper structures of its ways of thinking, dispositions, and habits. Over

time, the knowledge and skills required to participate in the practice become increasingly familiar, even comfortable and often unconscious, enhancing (but also sometimes hindering) the continuing openness of students to learning.

Compelling features toward learning in a practice—especially in a teaching practice—are the “internal goods” that MacIntyre (1984, pp. 189–90) describes as giving rise to and filling the practice with meaning and purpose. For MacIntyre, the internal goods of a practice are evident in, first, the “excellence” identified with the performance of a practice—in the instance described above, in the extent and depth of the engagement of students in studying Talmud, compelling the students into ever deeper encounters with the text and its methods of study—and, second, the “excellence” of the goods appropriated in the course of the practice—in other words, the goods are evident through not only expanding knowledge and growing expertise but also an accompanying sense of accomplishment and appreciation of their value.

MacIntyre identifies a second internal good as “a certain kind of life” associated with the increasing claim of the competencies acquired while engaging in the practice on the ways we think, relate to others, and work at tasks. For seminary educators, this kind of life has to do with the increasing ability of students to identify the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and habits integral to the teaching practice in which they are participating with their future roles and responsibilities as priests, rabbis, or pastors—when, as in the above instance, students can envision themselves not only as students but as preachers and teachers of Talmudic texts in rabbinic practice.

In this way, the internal goods of a teaching practice intensify the relationship of students to the communities of the practice—initially, in the above instance, to the immediate community of students studying Talmud, and over time with the communities of Talmudic scholarship and rabbinic practice. Jerome Bruner borrowed the image of “distributed intelligence” to underscore the socializing dynamics in this view of a practice: “The gist of the idea is that it is a grave error to locate intelligence in a single head.” Rather, it has to do with being part of specific communities “in whose extended intelligence” we share:⁷ the community that forms in the classroom or other educational activity as well as the communities of the seminary, academic disciplines, religious traditions, and public life that have a stake in what is learned and how. Each of these communities brings normative expectations to what and how students shall learn.

Dykstra and Bass identify implications of this insight for a teaching practice in seminary education when they note that “Christian practices

contain within them normative understandings of what God wills for us and for the whole creation and of what God expects of us in response to God's call to be faithful. Christian practices are thus congruent with the necessity of human existence, as such, as seen from a Christian perspective on human flourishing" (2002, p. 22). Christians in different denominational traditions will argue about particular ways of articulating what those normative understandings are, but they share a common relationship to the Christ event in the course of human history.

In other words, Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or Muslim communities—or American, Brazilian, or Chinese communities, or professional societies of doctors, lawyers, or chemists, or disciplinary guilds of theologians, practical theologians, or historians—are defined, in part, by their relationship to a trajectory of normative meanings associated with real and mythic events in the past central to their collective identities and activities in the present. These communal norms not only establish boundaries for human knowing and doing in the communities in which teachers engage the learning of students, but they are also repositories of possibility and sources of constructive critique in their interactions with each other.

Pedagogical Imagination in Seminary Educator Teaching Practices

The *pedagogical imagination* of seminary educators significantly shapes their teaching practices. Through the exercise of their pedagogical imaginations, seminary educators envision pedagogical events to draw students into "existence possibilities" for their future clergy practice in the interplay of disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills, habits, and dispositions. The exercise of the pedagogical imagination involves teachers, at a minimum, in making decisions about (1) what to teach from all that could be taught; (2) how to engage students in what they intend for them to learn; (3) how to assess the extent to which students learn what was intended; and (4) how to negotiate their sense of obligation to the expectations of students, to traditions of knowledge, and to the religious communities that will be receiving them as clergy and leaders in ministry.

Although few seminary educators in the study used the language of apprenticeship to describe their teaching, we increasingly encountered the relational patterns of apprenticeship in their teaching practices. Over and over again, we heard them describe how they envision introducing students to some confluence of the traditions of knowledge and ways of knowing identified with their academic disciplines and religious communities and the traditions of practice associated with religious leadership.

They seemed intent on creating pedagogical environments that blend the values of cognitive, skill, and identity-formation integral to the three apprenticeships of professional education. They want students to develop a relationship with the subject while at the same time becoming agents of that subject through their professional roles in academic and religious communities.

Although seminary educators set goals to facilitate these intentions, their expectations for student learning cannot always be reduced to these goals. In her discussion of teaching and religious imagination, Maria Harris suggests why this may be the case. "With reference to [teacher] intention," she writes, "the role of imagination is critical" (1987, p. 67). We saw clues to the working of this teacher or pedagogical imagination in the intentions of some seminary educators to engage students in their own practice to the end they might "discover" in it "a rigorous demand" or possibility of "excellence." That demand, Harris continues, in Kierkegaard's words, is an "existence possibility" impelling students to join their teachers in choosing how to relate to the subject of their interaction with each other.

The exercise of the pedagogical imagination in the teaching practices of seminary educators becomes more visible in educational theorist Maxine Greene's description of what teachers do. "Teaching is purposeful action," she notes. Yet "it cannot function automatically or according to a set of predetermined rules" because it occurs in always-new situations and constantly changing circumstances. Teachers engage students in the repetition of complex, yet coherent, pedagogical strategies through which they expect, in Greene's terms, "to bring about certain changes in students' outlooks," to "enable them to perform in particular ways, to do particular tasks, to impose increasingly complex orders upon their worlds" (1973, pp. 69–70). From this perspective, the intent of teaching is purposeful and orderly, not random or idiosyncratic. Among seminary educators it originates in expectations for clergy practice deeply rooted in particular religious, cultural, and academic traditions and is influenced by expectations, standards, and norms in those traditions for the excellence of their efforts.

Although seminary educators typically assume their students come to their classes with some facility in the knowledge and skills for professional practice in their religious traditions, what students actually know and can do typically varies widely. Yet the habits and dispositions, knowledge and skills they do bring influence their ability to enter into and engage the various subjects of their learning. In class, they may encounter new ways of thinking and doing that challenge some and reinforce for others their prior knowledge, beliefs, and methods of study.

Students are novitiates or neophytes engaged in developing new perspectives, skills, and habits that may lead them to new understandings and competencies. As students participate in a seminary educator's teaching practice, no matter the particular intention of the practice, they move through a series of increasingly complex tasks, each typically requiring the recapitulation and repetition of prior tasks in the quest for increasingly confident competence. This learning process toward increasingly complex understandings integral to processes of professional reasoning may include several interdependent steps;⁸ for example:

- Becoming familiar with the vocabulary, rhythms, methods, and genres of a given course of study.
- Developing skills to recognize tensions, questions, issues, and interpretive problems in the subject of study. This information typically requires students to rehearse over and over again what they know and can do until it begins to shape their perceptions, influence their dispositions, and take root in habits integral to the subject of their study, thereby linking knowledge, skill, and character.
- Developing the facility to identify and follow the structure, design, or argument of the subject of their learning to the point that they become increasingly aware of and invested in new issues, questions, possibilities, and competencies for their learning.
- Developing interpretive frameworks through which they may approach, make sense of, and use the subject of their learning—a process that typically requires them to review, rehearse, reappropriate, and refashion knowledge and skills developed in the repetition of each of the previous steps in this learning process.
- Developing the ability to compare and contrast what they have learned with alternative interpretive frameworks; in other words, to engage what they know through the eyes of others, providing them with the confidence and competence to critique or reconstruct what they know and can do or to construct something new. Again, moving into this stage of understanding typically takes students back through the prior steps.

A Signature Pedagogical Framework

In trying to understand the shape of the pedagogical imagination of seminary educators, and in looking closely at what might be called the “deep structures” of their teaching practice, we wondered if clergy education has

a *signature pedagogy* that would be as distinctive as the Socratic dialogue in the analysis of legal cases in law schools or the mathematical analysis of structures in engineering schools.

Lee Shulman (forthcoming) has observed that signature pedagogies function as “windows” into “what counts most significantly as the essence of a profession’s work.” He illustrates this point by pointing to the objective conditions of diagnosis and treatment in medical practice “centered on an individual patient in a hospital bed.” In explicating what he means by signature pedagogy, Shulman notes it includes four dimensions. It consists of strategies and methods that create a “surface structure” for the interaction of teachers and students. It also has a “deep structure” connecting the “concreteness of practice with the more conceptual, social or ideological aspects of the profession’s essential character.” It contains a “tacit structure” that includes the attitudes, values, and dispositions “modeled by the instructor and other students regarding professional practice.” A signature pedagogy may also be distinguished by “what is missing”—what is not taught and what methods and strategies are not employed.

When we began the clergy study, we expected that pedagogies emphasizing the interpretation of texts and the critical reflection on clergy practice might be signature pedagogies, revealing what counts most in the education of clergy. However, as we observed the interactions of teaching and learning in seminary classrooms, we encountered too many variations even in these two approaches to be able to conclude that they or any other pedagogy dominated the pedagogical imaginations of seminary educators. At the same time, across the spectrum of the Jewish and Christian seminaries we observed four shared intentions for student learning, originating in clergy practice and embedded in a variety of pedagogies. Together they seemed to reflect what these seminary educators view as counting most in preparing students for clergy practice:

- Developing in students the facility for *interpreting* texts, situations, and relationships
- Nurturing dispositions and habits integral to the spiritual and vocational *formation* of clergy
- Heightening student consciousness of the content and agency of historical and contemporary *contexts*
- Cultivating student *performance* in clergy roles and ways of thinking

Each pedagogical intention had the potential of being expressed through a signature pedagogy. We discovered, however, that we could not

anticipate how seminary educators with similar intentions for student learning would weave a variety of teaching methods into strategies for teaching. No teaching methods shared the surface structure of a signature pedagogy.

We gradually recognized that differences we observed in the teaching practices of seminary educators could be traced to varying religious and cultural assumptions about clergy practice embedded in the culture and mission of each seminary. Thus, the deep structures of their teaching practices vary. As the educators model values, attitudes, and dispositions embedded in those assumptions about clergy practice, the tacit structures of their pedagogies also differ. Something else was at work.

That something, we gradually realized, had to do with the persistence of these intentions for student learning in the variety of teaching practices we observed. We gradually recognized that together they formed a *signature pedagogical framework*. The interdependence of these intentions in the pedagogical imaginations of seminary educators influences their decisions about what and how to teach. Over time, and with much repetition, seminary educators develop distinctive approaches to the interplay of these four intentions in their pedagogical interactions with students. Those approaches, which students can often describe with considerable clarity, are the *teaching practices* that became the subject of this study.

Aligning Teaching Practices with the Mission and Culture of the Seminary

Descriptions of teaching practices, however, do not fully explain how seminary educators help prepare students for their future work as rabbis, priests, and pastors. Two phases of our research reinforced our awareness of this issue. In our review of the history of the education of clergy and the many studies of clergy education conducted over the past century, we were challenged to account for widely varied and deeply rooted historical assumptions about clergy work that continue to influence the intentions of contemporary seminary educators for the learning of their students. Understanding these traditions helped distinguish teaching practices in one seminary from those in another.

We were also fascinated by the diversity in the institutional cultures we experienced from one campus visit to the next: in the lines of authority among administration, faculty, and students; the patterns of relationship among faculty, between faculty and students, and between schools and their religious and public constituencies; the role of worship, student involvement in campus governance, and service to the community beyond

the seminary; connections with sponsoring religious institutions and other academic entities; the design of the curriculum; and the relationship between course and field work.

The issue of the influence of school mission and culture on faculty teaching practices came into focus as we pondered, in each school we visited, the forces and structures that supported or discouraged teacher intentions for student learning. We had discovered in each school some students who had effectively pulled together and integrated the disparate strands of their education—from across the curriculum and in relating their academic work to spiritual growth and to professional skills integral to the daily work of clergy. We heard these reports in schools where lecture pedagogies dominated and in schools where students engaged predominantly in active learning pedagogies. We heard similar reports in schools where students experienced few overt connections between field education and class work and in other schools where the structures of field education and classroom were interwoven throughout their seminary experience. We heard these reports in schools where community worship and governance were tightly coordinated and in schools where they seemed almost incidental activities for many students (and often for faculty).

In a study of communities of practice, Wenger suggests that one may account for the coalescence of forces supporting or resisting faculty intentions for student learning by recognizing the presence of “three modes of belonging” (1998, pp. 173–4). Wenger calls the first mode the belonging that emerges from “active involvement in mutual processes of negotiation of meaning.” This is the mutuality of influence in a teaching practice that occurs for students simply by participating in a small discussion group during a class session or by sharing the challenges and rhythms of an academic course and its assignments together. The second form of belonging at work in the teaching practices of clergy educators is rooted in the imaginative capacity to expand “the scope of reality and identity” in one’s social world by producing new “images” and generating new relations that become “constitutive of the self” and one’s participation in the community. In a pastoral, priestly, or rabbinic imagination, this is the capacity to see in a biblical text the form of a sermon, or in the depths of a fractured relationship, clues to reconciliation; to hear in an ancient prayer the voices of those who have prayed it through the centuries; in the act of a child’s, generosity a vision for the stewardship of the earth. A third form of belonging in the teaching practices of clergy educators “bridges time and space” to align one’s engagement in an educational activity with the “energies, actions, and practices” of something larger. In the context of seminary education, the dynamics of teaching and learning take place in

and are influenced by their relationship to the “larger enterprises” of the school’s mission and culture, the religious traditions that look to the school for future religious leadership, and the public realm in which those religious traditions negotiate their futures.

In a study of “good work,” Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon use the notion of alignment to describe the coalescence of forces that support and sustain the sense that one’s work, or practice, is indeed good (2001, p. 1). Although they do not use the language of belonging, they observe that good work involves more than professional skill or being thoughtful about one’s responsibilities and the implications of one’s work.” Good work involves acting responsibly on one’s personal goals in relation to “family, friends, peers and colleagues; the mission or sense of [one’s] calling; the institutions with which [one] is affiliated; and lastly, the wider world”—the people we know, as well as “those who will come afterwards, and in the grandest sense, to the planet or to God.” From these perspectives, work is more likely to be experienced as good both by the worker and others in the collaborative activity of the work itself, in the recognition of its imaginative possibilities, and when the worker senses alignment among all the possible relationships that impinge upon the work.

During our study, the notions of alignment and its opposite, misalignment, helped us think about how the various forces in the seminary setting contribute to or hinder the individual and collective intentions of a faculty for the integration of student learning experience in professional practice. They shed light on those aspects of a seminary education that augment and reinforce or hamper and diminish the individual and collective intentions of seminary educators for the learning of students.

The quest for alignment may be found in faculty attempts to limit or align those forces that may help in that effort by articulating academic, personal, and doctrinal or spiritual criteria for new faculty appointments, as well as academic and ethical standards for student admission; by requiring psychological tests and statements of motivation and interest in student applications; and by establishing sequences of learning in the curriculum. Some forces are much more difficult to control or manage—the relationship of student and faculty interest in a subject; the complementarity of assumptions across a faculty about the role of the classes they individually teach in the curriculum; the congruence of faculty teaching and student learning styles; the relationship of course work, worship, governance, and field education; and the confluence of academic, denominational, and cultural expectations for religious leaders.

We did not have the time or resources to investigate, as part of the study, the full range of these influences on the interaction of teachers and students in seminary teaching practices. However, throughout this volume we have attempted more generally to account for ways to assess the extent to which the alignment or misalignment of the institutional culture and mission of a school either augments and reinforces or hampers and diminishes the intent in faculty teaching practices for student learning.

In the next chapter we look closely at the diverse practices and many influences on practice that we found in the seminaries we studied. From that point, we move to an in-depth description of the pedagogies, both classroom and communal, that together prepare students for their work as clergy.

ENDNOTES

1. Quoted by Boyle (2004), p. 2.
2. This observation, described in the introduction to this study, is amplified in Sullivan (2005).
3. This movement in general education is reflected in the recent outpouring of books examining the general dynamics of teaching and learning. Some recent titles include Atkinson and Claxton (2000), Ayers (2004), Banner Jr. and Cannon (1997), Bess (2000), Ropers-Huilman (1998), and Vella (1994).
4. The defining work of Alasdair MacIntyre (1984) has significantly influenced these discussions. See, for example, Dykstra (1991), Kelsey (1992), Chopp (1995), Volf and Bass (2002), Farley (2003), Dykstra and Bass (1998), and Graham (1996).

An important related contribution to the literature on practices among Jewish scholars is the work of Wendy Rosov (2001).

Philosopher Paul Fairfield (2000) puts MacIntyre into conversation with Heidegger, Gadamer, and Dewey in his discussion of practices.

David T. Hansen probes, through the concept of tradition, the persisting character of practice in teaching in *Exploring the Moral Heart of Teaching: Toward a Teacher's Creed* (2001)—certainly one of the more provocative recent discussions on teaching in the life of the community.

Michel de Certeau (1984) describes a practice as “a way of making”—“insinuated into and concealed within devices whose mode of usage they constitute, and thus lacking their own ideologies or institutions—conform to certain rules.” Those “rules” thereby constitute a certain pervasive

“logic.” This view of practice leads de Certeau to argue that popular culture consists of “arts of making” (p. xv).

The topic of practices equally engages the imagination of social scientists and theorists. See, for example, Bell (1992), Argyris and Schön (1974), Bourdieu (1998 and 1990), Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger’s major study (1998), and Wenger, McDermott, and Snyder (2002).

5. See also Fairfield (2000), pp. 8–9.

6. Hall (1959): “I was led to my conclusion by the realization that there is no break between the present, in which man acts as a culture-producing animal, and the past, when there were no men and no cultures. There is an unbroken continuity between the far past and the present, for culture is bio-basic—rooted in biological activities“ (p. 44).

Fairfield has observed that “Practices thus conceived encompass both primarily cognitive and pragmatic forms of activity including language use, hermeneutic dialogue, education, the arts, games, competitive sports, commerce, law, politics, community service, medicine, friendship, romantic love, family life, science, and scholarship” (2000, p. 9). He, for some strange reason, omitted religion.

7. In a chapter entitled “Knowing as Doing” in *The Culture of Education*, Jerome Bruner begins to explore the deeply historical and social processes of learning to know, which we are describing as our participation in social practices (1996, p. 154).

8. The schema that follows draws on Kieran Egan’s study (1997) of the development of understanding. His attention was directed to the changing capacities in humans for understanding in the movement from young childhood into young adulthood. His description of the process of developing understanding, however, also seems appropriate to the experience of adults moving from ignorance to knowledge in their encounter with new bodies of knowledge or skill sets. It is in this latter sense that we suggest this schema as a way to think about the experience of students as they move through the seminary curriculum.