Saint Peter's
UNIVERSITY
1872

Scholarly Guide

Editor's Note

Continuing our efforts to showcase voices and topics from across the academic spectrum, this issue includes pieces on rubrics and assessment by Dr. Nicole Luongo and on efforts to develop students' critical thinking skills by Fr. Jose Salazar. Daisy DeCoster from the library shares information and perspective on the standards and value of "open access scholarship" for faculty members and institutions.

Dr. David Surrey provides a summary of the work accomplished by the Title V team as the five-year grant comes to its end. This issue's endpaper is a chapter, entitled "Seeing Through Water," from Professor Fatima Shaik's upcoming book *What Went Missing and What Got Found* (scheduled to be released this month in honor and respect of the 10th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina).

As always, we also recognize the depth and scope of SPU scholarship in listing various faculty accomplishments and highlighting the Faculty Scholarship Celebration event (where Dr. Luongo and Professor Shaik, along with Dr. Dan Wisneski, shared some of their current research and creative work).

Finally, we've also included information on deadlines for various fellowships and grants—both our in-house Saint Peter's opportunities and some national grants to which we've been encouraging folks to apply.

Sincerely yours,
Paul Almonte & David Surrey

Teaching Critical Thinking as Peformative Act

Jose-Luis Salazar, SJ, Ph. D., Assistant Professor, Theology Department

What are you <u>doing</u> when you are **thinking**? The question puzzles my students. They invariably answer with a list of **thoughts** they call "knowledge" culled from every academic discipline: ideas from philosophy, concepts from theology, laws of natural science, theories of psychology, facts of history, etc. An analogy leads them to the compound act of thinking: what are you doing when you are *eating*? They offer a menu of *food*. Prodding gets them to identify the **actions** they perform in the compound act of eating: looking, smelling, putting in the mouth, tasting with the tongue, tearing, grinding, mashing with the teeth, swallowing, digesting—in that specific order. No one disagrees about the invariability and universality of the structured pattern of the compound act of "eating." Few, however, can or will ever agree about the best *food*.

Analogous to eating, **critical thinking** or **knowing** can be taught across disciplines and assessed as the conscious performance of a compound, cumulative, invariable and dynamically structured activity. It is **critical** when the student-knower <u>as</u> performing **subject** reflects on, and appropriates for her/himself the structure and operations of her/his own consciousness. It is **naïve thinking**—and not critical-- when knowing is a matter of taking a picture of an object "out there already now." A robot can take that snapshot. My students smile when I call their attention to products of "picture-thinking." They know what they are **doing** when they are naively thinking! The concern of teaching critical thinking as performative act of a person is the **person *as* subject** and **source** of revisions, additions, and development of all objects known or still to be known.

Rationale: Why Teach Critical Thinking *as* Performative Act?

Different academic disciplines teach critical thinking as content or specialties of thought. It is impossible for students to master how to **critically think** when a literature class defines it solely in terms of objects of interest to its discipline, quite alien to the objects of interest to nursing or criminal justice. When students leave the halls of academe, will they retain the myriad thoughts that professors packed into their barns of consciousness? Is there something common and verifiable in experience that is **critical thinking** for our students' conscious lives beyond the classroom? The neglect of the **person *as* subject** continues inspite of the "turn to the subject."

I can only present here an outline of a theory of cognition (what am I doing when I am knowing?). There will be a hint of an epistemology (why is that knowing?), and a metaphysics (what do I know when I am knowing?). I direct the interested reader to the first magnum opus "Insight: A Study of Human Understanding" of the Jesuit philosopher-theologian Bernard Lonergan. In it, he analyzes the phenomenon of "insight" as an event. Lonergan's analysis reveals a pre-conceptual and permanent **cognitional structure** that provides for determinate conceptual content without determining it. The dynamic structure of cognition is **isomorphic** with the structure of the unknown or to-be-known or being (reality, truth, fact), and the structure of the concrete good. These structures are **heuristic** and **unrestricted**: they anticipate all the unknown or to-be-known in their terms and relations without determining them. Here lies Lonergan's genius: the natural and social scientist, historian, criminologist, poet, theologian and philosopher can intend all the objects of interest to their discipline. **It is critical thinking as performative act of the student *as* subject that remains their constant!**

A Classroom Experiment: Critical Thinking in Slow Motion

The purpose of this simple experiment is to make students aware of, and own the dynamic, structured operations of knowing as a compound act. I show them a non-descript object they had never seen before. I ask them to pass it around after inspecting it. I instruct them to write step-by-step what they do before they try to 'guess' what the object is. In a matter of minutes, the guesses come-- all wrong of course. (Unless they learned to smoke a pipe in The Netherlands, the chances are very slim that they can accurately name the object!) I ask the object to be passed around again. I redirect them to the **thinking activity they are performing.**

Slowly, and with infinite patience on my side, students identify the **operations of knowing** that they perform in order: (1) they touch and view the object carefully; (2) they describe it to themselves and compare it with similar objects from their memory bank, theorize what it is, formulate a hypothesis about its utility; and then (3) they decide which of many possibilities the thing is, and name it. Since human knowledge is by nature social capital, I direct them to compare their answers by discussing among themselves

what they just did and where they ended. When I list on the board what they said they did (thinking!), the conscious operations they performed fit a structured pattern, some more clearly than others in the sequencing of the **series and cumulative performance of *one* compound act of knowing.**

Does it matter *what* the object really is? Yes and no. Yes, because it draws their attention. The students *as knowing subjects* consciously intend something outside of themselves. (Did Kant ever cross the chasm between *noumenon* and *phenomenon*?) C**ritical knowing is an act of conscious intentionality by the knower *qua subject*.** And, no, it does not matter their answer was incorrect because they can revise what they know. They can obtain more data to get a better grasp of the object. In fact, they all know one thing for certain: *that* they did not know the object.

A Precis from *Insight*: Knowing as Intentional Performative Act

What am I doing when I am *knowing*? The question is one Lonergan himself poses. By "knowing," Lonergan means a whole structure in all its operating parts. He posits in a theory of cognition the dynamic, invariant, and transcultural structure consisting of three sets of ascending and cumulative, conscious and intentional operations: (1) **experiencing,** (2) **understanding**, and (3) **judging**. The cumulative ascent of the operations is driven by different **types of questions**. The first three sets of operations are "cognitional" arising from rational consciousness. When rational consciousness becomes self-consiousness at the existential or moral level, a fourth operation unfolds (4) **deliberating** or d**eciding value**.

The cognitive structure is dynamic materially because it is a pattern of operations "like dance is a pattern of bodily movements" and it is dynamic formally because it is "self-assembling," putting itself together, one part summoning forth the next. It is "self-constituting" because it proceeds consciously and intentionally, driven by questions of intelligence and reflection. The structure is "invulnerable" because one cannot repudiate the structure without employing the very same structure to undermine itself. It is also "irretrievably habitual" since we can make acts of judgment only one at a time. It is "trans-cultural" because it is a structure of human acts or performances, not culturally conditioned concepts.

Fully Human Knowing: One Act in in 3 Levels

The dynamic structure of a single, whole act of knowing consists of all three component levels of operations—**experiencing**, **understanding**, **judging**— coalescing cumulatively into one. They correspond to three levels of consciousness: **empirical/biological**, **intellectual**, and **rational**. Different **types of questions** drive the lower level to the next higher level. Each level consciously intends a different object, cumulating into a "known" (or, "unknown").

None of the three operations in the structured process of cognition on its own is human knowing, nor a combination of any two. Fully human knowing is all three.

(1) **Experiencing** is on the first level of empirical or biological presentations. Operations of experiencing include sensing, perceiving, and imagining. The operations attend to the data given in sense and in consciousness as "raw material" presupposed by the next level of intelligent consciousness. Experiences are empirical, merely given to sense, open to understanding and formulation, but in themselves, they are not understood.

Questions for intelligence—what, where, when, how, why, how often—drive human knowing to the second level of the structure. This type of questions acts as "operator" promoting consciousness from sense experience to "insight" in an effort to understand.

(2) **Understanding** is on the second level, presupposing and complementing the first. It involves inquiring and thinking, making distinctions, naming, grouping, and correlating the data of experience. They intend **intelligibility** by discovering "insight" into the data, discovering relations within and between different sets of data, systematizing these relations, then formulating ideas, theories, hypotheses, and concepts (the combination of ideas and images), and systems. There can be understood more than one insight or discovered more than one intelligibility intrinsic to a set of data. **Questions for reflection**— Is it so? is it correct? Is it adequate? Are you sure? — drive human knowing to the third level in the mind's exigency or *eros*, in the words of poet Marianne Moore, for "truing by regnant certainty" its "iridescence, inconsistencies and confusion."

(3) **Judging** is on the third level, presupposing and completing the first two. It involves marshaling and weighing the evidence understood, then critically reflecting on the correctness of the understanding. It seeks to give a 'yes' to the question for reflection. If it is a 'no,' then more pertinent questions for intelligence are raised and explanations

that leave too many unanswered questions are weeded out until one explanation practically accounts for all data.

Judgment is judgment of what **is** or what **is not**, i.e. **fact**, not fiction; the **real** not the imaginary. Notions of truth and falsity, certitude and probability emerge here. Personal commitment is involved; one becomes responsible for one's judgments. At this level, statements and utterances express affirmation or denial, assent or dissent, agreement or disagreement.

Fully human knowing, then, consists of the unity of all three levels of experiencing, understanding and judging. It is a compound act of different operations, each contributing only a part to the whole. It is a cumulative process, every stage sublating the earlier one, adding new elements provisionally for insight to occur, until something distinctive emerges that makes the level different from the previous one, and the process comes to term. The entire dynamic structure of knowing intends what it is that *is*, or what it is that *is not*, that is, *being*.

The Critical Knower: Self-affirming, Self-possessing

What am I doing when I am knowing? I am knowing when I am performing the full range of cognitional operations: being attentive to the data of my experience, being intelligent by asking questions about it, and being reasonable by judging my understanding of my experience. **Why is that 'knowing?'** It is knowing because until I judge if something *is* or *is not* so, I only understand what may or may not be; before I understand, I only experience data of sense and consciousness. **When do I know *that* I know?** Once I judge, I know.

Is that so? Isn't all this merely theory? Philosophers will cite many theories of cognition. Is Lonergan's theory just one more? Lonergan invites the practical engagement of the knowing subject in an exercise to affirm or deny his theorem of a dynamic structure. One must try judging for oneself by answering the question **"Am I a knower?"** In the subject's performative act of "self-affirmation" lies the grasp of the fact that, even if I did not know that I performed activities of knowing, I would still be a "knower" by having raised the question and answered with a denial. Silence would be my only alternative. If I deny that I am a **knower**, I would be affirming in performance what I am attempting to deny (retortion). I contradict myself in performance.

Judgment is, therefore, a **self-constituting** performance. I may indeed not be a knower, I may be other than I am, but as things stand, my self-assertion as a "knower" -- I perform activities of knowing-- possesses "conditional necessity." One concrete instance of knowing has taken place. If one instance of it can happen, so can others. The "knower" as *subject* makes himself or herself the reference point of all other instances. I /we can know! I/we do know!

The Objects Known/To-be-Known: Identical Heuristic Structure of Knowing

Once students grasp and self-affirm that they are *knowing subjects*, then I can direct their attention to objects or contents of thought. Intended objects of interest will vary from discipline to discipline, like food and menus of the act of eating. But their structure is **isomorphic** to the levels and operations of conscious intentionality. Below is a table of some examples of known/to-be known objects that consume the interest of the usual approach to teaching critical thinking. The first three levels are cognitional. (The fourth is existential or moral. The moral is crowned by religious consciousness, where the act is loving.)

Final Word: Assessment, Assessment, Assessment?

Where would teaching be without assessment? When we strip the work of assessment of all "needless aporia," we find that it arises from the immanent demand of reason for the whole in knowledge: knowing subject and known/to-be-known object. Alas, until educators make **a turn to students *as subjects*** who perform the basic act of human self-transcendence in performing question-driven knowing, then assessment will concern itself with less-than-the-whole. It will obsess with *what* to count as objects taught and learned, and *how* to measure them. But, what about the common and permanent base that revises and develops all that is known or to be known? If we only realized how few objects of thought students retain in their "barns of consciousness" once they leave our classrooms, we would spend as much effort in making them more self-conscious, self-possessing, self-transcending **critical thinkers**. Lonergan offers this slogan-sounding line in his introduction to *Insight*: ***Thoroughly understand what it means to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further development of understanding.***

Title V Grant: Summary, Results, and Thanks!

David Surrey, Ph. D., Professor and Chair, Sociology and Urban Studies Departments

As we enter the last few months of our five-year Title V Grant: I*ncreasing Achievement Among Hispanic and Other Minority Students*, I'd like to reflect on the efforts and results of the grant and take the opportunity to recognize a number of the key SPU personnel who developed what I believe are a series of remarkably successful programs.   With 2.68 million dollars from the federal government, and substantial matching funds from the university, as well as over $100,000 in supplemental funding from the William Simon Foundation, our grant engaged in a multifaceted approach to improving the success of Latin@, all first generation, and generation 1.5 (where English is not the first language at home) students, as well as reaching most other students at Saint Peter's.

The results speak for themselves.

Objectives	Base 9/10	9/11 Projected	9/11 Actual	9/12 Projected	9/12 Actual	9/13 Projected	9/13 Actual	9/14 Projected*	9/14 Actual
1. Increase the overall first-year retention from 72% to 75%	72%	72%	**74.2%**	73%	75.7%	73%	74.3%	74%	82.3%
2. Increase Hispanic first-year retention from 71% to 75%	71%	71%	69.9%	72%	78.2%	73%	73.7%	74%	81.5%
3. Increase overall six-year graduation rate from 45% to 48%	45%	45%	51%	45%	52.5%	46%	53.3%	52.9%	53.4%
4. Increase Hispanic six-year graduation rate from 45% to 48%	41%	41%	49%	41%	56%	42%	52.6%	45%	49.3%
5. Increase average first-year **GPA** of all Hispanics from 2.50 to 2.65	2.50	2.52	2.46	2.55	2.72	2.58	2.48	**2.61**	**2.71**

Below are the key components of the grant with the names of those primarily responsible for each task. Again, I want to thank them personally for their efforts.

The Center for English Language Acquisition and Culture (CELAC): Alicia D'Amato and Nicole Hauser (initially under LaWanna Shelton). With grant and SPU monies, a center for ESL students was established that provides specialized classes, tutoring, and workshops while also working with admissions to identify students who will benefit from our services at the beginning of their university careers. Two language labs and two state-of-the-art classrooms were also created. We also provide specialized training for faculty who work with this student cohort. This center will continue after the funding ends

Faculty Cultural Inclusionary Training: David Surrey: Over the course of the grant, 80 of our 115 full-time faculty have participated in weeklong workshops on cultural inclusion (with another 20 expected this summer) with follow-up conversations occurring throughout throughout the academic year. Facilitators included external experts, our own diverse students, as well as participants from earlier workshops. In addition to achieving a greater understanding of the strengths and challenges of our students, outcomes included faculty members developing or revising the content of at least one course to reflect and better reach SPU's diverse student population.

Campus Programming: Alex Trillo: With grant monies, we provided on-campus programming that reflects who our students and their families are: including an annual Latino expo, poetry slams, speakers, health and AIDS awareness events, plays, banned book exhibits, financial aid workshops, and conversations on migration issues. We also provided 300 computers for incoming Latino/a students in need (loaners that were re-distributed or recycled when students graduated) and $25,000 each year for textbook purchases (again based on need).

High School Student Outreach: Joseph McLaughlin and Jennifer Ayala: Under the auspices of the grant, we worked on college preparation with high school Latino/a cohorts from five schools beginning in the 9th grade up through the senior year. In the fall, our focus was on writing and mathematics skills and, in the spring, the students developed group-based projects using skills introduced and practiced during the fall. The high school and university faculty worked collaboratively to design the curriculum. A number of rising juniors and seniors in the program took a college summer class for credit. The participants are given a special adminissions category and the first cohort added to our first-year class in 2014 with many more expected in the fall of 1915.

External Community: Alex Trillo and Alicia D'Amato: We provided multilingual workshops for high school families on financial aid, applying to college, and what the college experience means; we offered—and continue to promote—adult ESL classes for families of students and members of the community at large. In addition we provide community SAT courses. Finally, as a crucial component of the grant and SPU's own practice, we advertise and open university events to members of the community.

Summer Scholars for outstanding Latino/a students: Jennifer Ayala: Our program also paired outstanding Latina/o students with university faculty from a variety of departments to do research, offering them invaluable experience on academic engagement and practice. A number of the students presented findings at various professional conferences and some are co-writing papers on the research.

Technology: Fred Bonato. Andrea Bubka, and Maryellen Hamilton: The grant enabled us to add a number of smart classrooms per year and created three new computer labs. As well it has provided a number of resources and databases for the library, software across the campus and white boards for a number of classrooms.

Open Access Scholarship: The History of A Movement

Daisy DeCoster, Senior Assistant Librarian

Just as the proliferation of the Internet rocked economic models of popular media, such as newspapers, the world of scholarly publishing has also been transformed by this now seemingly mundane mechanism of information-transfer. From the outset, groups of scholars, researchers, and librarians--often with very different agendas--began to advocate for an open access movement, a new philosophy of scholarly communication enabled by the World Wide Web.

How has the open access movement evolved and where does it stand today, almost 20 years since its inception? What does open access scholarship look like?   And how can Saint Peter's University faculty engage in and promote open access scholarship today?

Scientific and scholarly research can be defined as "open access" (OA) when it is made freely available to potential users immediately upon publication, either through open digital repositories or open access journals. Librarians--their budgets crippled by the rising costs of journal subscriptions--were excited by the possibility of OA to free up dollars for other resources while providing an even wider array of research articles for their patrons. Scholars were excited that their research would reach a much wider audience when freed from both print medium and electronic pay-walls. Researchers without institutional affiliation, or working at small institutions with limited library resources, were excited about gaining access to a giant body of research once beyond their grasp. The OA movement seemed to have phenomenal potential to improve scholarly communication and foster scientific progress globally. The most radical proponents of OA demanded that research in peer-reviewed journals be immediately made open to all, via the internet, without price or permission barriers. This would come to be known as "Gold OA." Not surprisingly, publishers of traditional journals were not eager to start giving their product away for free online. Most maintained print editions of their journals, and there was appropriate concern that if content were available freely online, they would lose subscription revenue. Publishers acknowledged that online access to journals would eventually be norm, but their preferred model was to sell electronic subscriptions, either individually or to libraries through database journal bundles such as EBSCO and Pro-Quest. Some chose to make older scholarship OA, while embargoing more recent issues (usually 6 months to 2

years of content) to incentivize subscriptions. At the same time some publishers, such as Elsevier, began granting individual articles Gold OA status if accompanied by an Open Access Publication Fee to be borne by the authors themselves or their home institutions. Today very few of the long-standing, reputable, peer-reviewed journals faculty traditionally look to when publishing their research meet "Gold OA" standards.

Despite resistance to OA from publishers of existing titles, in the last fifteen years we've seen significant numbers of OA journals appear online with new economic models to support them. A variety of new OA journals were established by colleges, universities, nonprofits, and government organizations which provided web-hosting, editorial staff, and managed peer-review and referee processes. Simultaneously a much smaller number of "predatory" for-profit OA journals (that publish for a fee and have little or no genuine editorial or peer-review process) appeared online. I do not recommend publishing in these journals which exploit faculty and muddy the scholarly/scientific conversation. Unsure of which publications to avoid? Librarian Jeffrey Beal maintains a list of predatory publishers at http://scholarlyoa.com/publishers/. To locate genuine Gold OA journals visit the Directory of Open Access Journals (https://doaj.org/) which currently links to more than 10,000 high-quality, open access, peer-reviewed journals with over 6,000 searchable at the article level.

While Gold OA remained the benchmark for scholarly communication, a model of self-archiving, called Green OA, evolved simultaneously as an alternative method to achieve the basic goal of the OA movement: free global access to research and scholarship.   In the Green OA model, scholarship and research is submitted by authors and copyright holders directly to an institutional repository, usually maintained by the scholar's home institution. The types of scholarship archived in institutional repositories tends to fall into one of several categories:

1. Published articles in existing OA Journals (contingent upon publisher's policy)
2. Pre-print or post-print versions of manuscripts (contingent upon publisher's policy)
3. Creative works to which the author maintains copyright
4. Theses and dissertations

5. Other "grey literature": non-conventional, fugitive, and sometimes ephemeral publications not published commercially.

By collecting articles in institutional repositories, colleges and universities not only increase access to (and therefore citations of) their faculty scholarship, they can also build a discrete collection of faculty publications that can be viewed as a collection and accessed through the library catalog. (And even if the articles do exist elsewhere online, such as in Gold OA journals, the repository provides a redundancy which increases the chances for long-term digital preservation.) Moreover, Green OA repositories allow librarians to collect unpublished scholarly information that is easily lost, such as conference proceedings, preliminary research studies, and student/ faculty collaborations.

In 2002 MIT and HP Labs bestowed a gift upon the OA movement by releasing the first public version of DSpace, an open source (free) software package used to create open repositories. Today there are over 1,000 DSpace repositories globally, including the Saint Peter's University Digital Repository, started in 2011. We initially created our repository to achieve a single goal: to gather undergraduate Honors Theses for the purpose of digital preservation and access. Since then we have expanded to include doctoral dissertations from our new E.d.D. program and materials from the University Archives, including student newspapers and selections from the Congressman Frank J. Guarini Papers. This summer we hope to expand the SPU Digital Repository to include faculty scholarship. This is where we need your help.

Some of you have been fortunate enough to publish your scholarship in Gold OA journals. Others have published in journals that are not fully OA but permit the archiving of pre-print (i.e. pre-refereeing) or post-print (i.e. final draft post-refereeing) versions of articles in institutional repositories. Unsure of the publishing rights associated with your scholarship? Luckily, the University of Nottingham maintains RoMEO (http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/), a searchable database of a publisher's policies regarding the self-archiving of journal articles on the web and in Open Access repositories. I have started searching RoMEO to determine which of SPU's recent faculty publications can be legally included in our repository. To this end, I may be contacting you to see if you can provide a pre-print or post-print version of your article for inclusion in the SPU Digital Repository. If you have unpublished scholarship or creative works you wish to include, please e-mail me, Daisy DeCoster, at ddecoster@saintpeters.edu to make arrangements.

The sands of the digital media storm are still settling, yet I hope that faculty members will be aware of access and intellectual property concerns as you consider outlets for publication. Joining the OA movement allows your scholarship to reach a wider audience, increases citations, and contributes to the global scholarly conversation. The SPU Digital Repository—with its emphasis on open-access but thoroughly peer-reviewed scholarship—is one way to join the movement, and, with your help, I'm excited to see it grow and evolve.

Faculty Scholarship

As always, we're excited and proud to highlight faculty accomplishments. Congratulations to our colleagues' efforts recognized below. As a reminder, please help us share your scholarly work—conference papers, publications, exhibits and the like—by sending notice of them to us (palmonte@ saintpeters. edu).

Michael Held, Biology
Dr. Michael Held, Professor of Biology (along with co-authors, Dr. Joe Winstead, Southern Arkansas University, and Dr. William Bryant, Thomas More College), presented a paper entitled "Long-Term Recovery Dynamics of a Tornado-Damaged Forest in Boone County, Kentucky" at the An-

nual Meeting of the Association of Southeastern Biologists held this past April in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Dr. Stephanie Bryan, Health and Physical Education (along with co-author G. Pinto Zipp) had an article, entitled "The Effect of Mindfulness Meditation Techniques During Yoga and Cycling, published in the J*ournal of Alternative and Complementary Therapies*, 20(6) 306-316 (2014).

Weidong Zhu, Applied Science and Technology
Dr. Weidong Zhu, Associate Professor of Applied Science and Technology, along with co-authors K.H. Becker, J. Pan, J. Zhang and J. Fang, had their research article, "Dental

Applications of Atmospheric-Pressure Non-thermal Plasmas," published in *Complex Plasmas: Scientific Challenges and Technological Opportunities*, edited by M. Bonitz, K. Becker, J. Lopez and H. Thomsen, Springer, 2014.

Jessica Epstein, Chemistry
Jessica L. Epstein, Associate Professor and Chair of Chemistry (along with co-authors Michael Castaldi, Grishma Patel, Peter Telidecki and Kevin Karakkatt, published "Using Flavor Chemistry to Design and Synthesize Artificial Scents and Flavors, in the *Journal of Chemistry Education* in December, 2014.

Cynthia Walker, Communication and Media Culture
Cynthia Walker, Associate Professor and chair of Communication and Media Culture, had her article, "Mr. Bond's Neighborhood: Domesticating the Superspy for American Television," included in J*ames Bond and Popular Culture: Essays on the Influence of the Fictional Superspy*, published by McFarland Press, 2014.

John Wrynn, History
Dr. John Wrynn, S.J., Professor of History, had his article, entitled "Charles O'Conor as a 'philosophical historian'" published in *Charles O'Conor of Ballinagare, Life and Works*, Gibbons, Luke and Kieran O'Conor, eds., Dublin, Ire: Four Courts Press, 2015.

Brian Hopkins, Mathematics
Dr. Brian Hopkins, Professor of Mathematics, had an article, entitled "Expanding the Robinso-Goforth System for 2x2 Games," included in *The Mathematics of Decisions, Elections, and Games*, published by the American Mathematical Society, 2014.

Mark DeStephano, Modern and Classical Languages
Dr. Mark DeStephano, S.J., Professor and Chair of Modern and Classical Languages, had his article, "Catholicism in China, 1900-Present – The Development of the Chinese Church," published in A*merican Jesuits and the China Mission: The Woodstock Letters, 1900-1969*, published by Palgrave MacMillan New York, 2014.

A Celebration of Faculty Scholarship

On April 22nd in the O'Toole Library, a reception was held to honor faculty who have published work during the last two years (March 2013-February 2015).

Publications included journal articles, books, book chapters, edited books, newspaper articles, book reviews, magazine articles, essays, editorials, documentaries, and full peer-reviewed papers in conference proceedings. Thirty-one faculty members from Accountancy and Business Law, Applied Science and Technology, Business Administration, Chemistry, Communication and Media Culture, Economics and Finance, Education, English, Fine Arts, Health and Physical Education, History, Mathematics, Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures, Nursing, Philosophy, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology and Urban Studies, and Theology were celebrated.

Three of the honorees—Nicole Luongo, Education, Fatima Shaik, Communication and Media Culture, and Daniel Wisneski, Psychology—gave presentations on their research. The entire list of publications can be found on the OFRSP webpage under Faculty Scholarship.

Daniel Wisneski
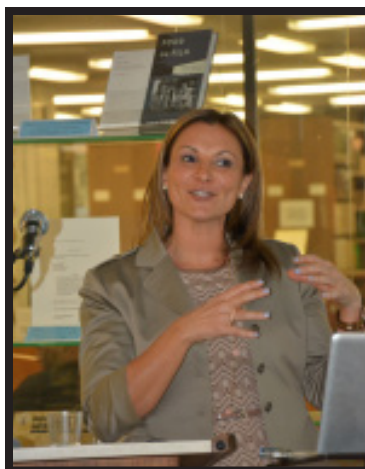
Nicole Luongo

Fatima Shaik

Using Rubrics to Measure Student Learning

Nicole Luongo, Ed. D., Associate Professor, School of Education

In today's world, most educational institutions are focused on maintaining and documenting their accountability and assessment measures. At Saint Peter's University (2015), assessment is "perceived as integral to the rhetorical tradition of teaching and learning, testing ideas and the evolution of knowledge" (para. 3), and defined as the "comprehensive and systematic process of gathering and analyzing information through multiple measures and methods for the intentional purpose of incorporating the results into the improvement of services and programs that achieve our mission" (para. 2). Moreover, much of the faculty and administration is committed to the dialogue of assessment as it renews the institution's Jesuit past, informs the current mission, and engages the university in its goal of service to all.

In order to meet various accreditation requirements and fulfill its mission, all Saint Peter's University instructors are asked to include a list of official Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) in each course syllabus. According to the official Saint Peter's University Assessment Plan (2015), SLOs should engage University personnel who are in a position of assisting in the attainment of student outcomes. The SLOs should address a dialogue among students, faculty, and administrators to determine how well students are learning. Furthermore, the instructors are expected to explain how the SLOs involve students in the assessment process as well as how they will measure each outcome.

Developing SLOs and Assessment Measures

As I develop SLOs for each of my courses, I ask myself some important questions. Mainly, what do I want each student to be able to do as a result of taking this course? What action verb will describe the outcome, and how will I measure it? These questions lead me to the development of my assessment measures. What assessment instrument will I use? Will I employ a test, a quiz, or require a product for each SLO? If I assign a product, how will I evaluate it? As you can see, each question leads to another one. Next, I ask myself where in the semester will the outcomes be addressed? How will I explain and evaluate each SLO? Following the Saint Peter's University Assessment guidelines (2015), I ask myself how will I engage the students in this process? What tools will I use to measure the outcomes? Many times, I find that I need to use a rubric to assess any SLOs that are indistinct and subjective.
What is a Rubric?

Since many of my SLOs cannot be numerically measured using tests or quizzes, I often choose to use a rubric as an assessment tool. A rubric is a scoring instrument used to assess subjective assignments (Brookhart, 2013; Brookhart & Nitko, 2008; Lepi, 2014). It is a set of criteria and standards linked to learning objectives that is used to assess a student's performance on papers, projects, speeches, and other assignments (Andrade, 1999). A rubric allows for standardized evaluation according to specified criteria, making grading simpler and more transparent. Brookhart and Nitko define a rubric as a "coherent set of rules to evaluate quality of a student's performance (either trait-by-trait or as a whole), usually with descriptions of performance at each level" (p. 306). Professors can use rubrics to evaluate assignments such as papers, essays, and other projects.

Effective rubrics focus on measuring SLOs (Brookhart & Nitko, 2008), and use a defined range to rate performance. Often, rubrics contain specific performance characteristics arranged in levels indicating the degree to which a standard has been met. Instructors can use rubrics to develop structured, unbiased scoring procedures for projects, essays, and papers (Reynolds, Livingston, & Willson, 2009). Rubrics have the potential for helping a professor formatively assess a student's performance by clearly establishing standards and quality expectations. They assist in customizing the student feedback: what a student has done well; what weaknesses exist; and how or what might be done to correct or improve the performance. Additionally, rubric use assists students in the fair and honest opportunity for self-assessment of their work and allows them the opportunity to set, monitor, and achieve their personal learning goals.

Above all, the main purpose of rubrics is to assess performances (Brookhart, 2013). For some performances, the professor observes the student in the process of doing something, such as exhibiting a presentation or reciting a poem. For other performances, the instructor examines the product that is the result of the student's work such as a completed paper or laboratory report. Rubrics can be used to clarify for the learner what qualities the work should have for the completed product. Therefore, students can use rubrics to focus on the SLO and criteria for success. According to Suskie (2009), rubrics can:

• clarify vague goals
• explain the teacher's expectations to students
• help students self-improve
• inspire better student performance
• make scoring easier and faster
• render scoring more accurate, unbiased, and consistent
• improve feedback to students, faculty, and staff
• reduce arguments with students

Developing Rubrics

Anyone can develop a rubric (Andrade, 1999; Brookhart & Nitko, 2008). An excellent idea is for a professor to develop and modify a rubric with his or her current students. First, the professor must decide what assignment he or she wants to assess. This assignment should be directly linked to a course SLO. Then, the professor should have his students examine models of good versus "not-so-good" work. The professor could provide sample assignments of differing quality for students to review. Next, the group could list the criteria to be used in the rubric and discuss what counts as quality work. Andrade stressed that student feedback during this stage in the process allows for judgment of the students' experiences. As the group decides on the levels of acceptable merit, the professor can start to develop the hierarchy of values. These categories should describe the levels of quality (ranging from unacceptable to excellent).

After a rubric is developed, Andrade (1999) suggested that the instructor have the students practice using the rubric on models. Essentially, this exercise will aid in testing the rubric's reliability. Subsequently, the professor can ask for self and peer-assessment of the rubric. Afterward, the group can revise the rubric based on that feedback and try it again. This process can be repeated until the rubric seems acceptable to all. Finally, the professor can begin using the designed rubric to assess student work.

Online Rubric Generators

There are many websites that offer free tools to generate rubrics, which can help a professor measure SLOs (Lepi, 2014):

• Rubistar http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php: This is a free online rubric maker that offers rubric templates and pre-made rubrics for a variety of subjects. Personally, I use Rubistar to create most of the rubrics I use in my courses. After I develop the rubric using Rubistar, I cut and paste it into a Microsoft Word document. Then, I modify the rubric to meet my specific assessment needs.

• eRubric Assistant http://emarkingassistant.com/com-pare-emarking-assistant-and-erubric-assistant-essay-mar-king-software/erubric-assistant-free-rubric-generator/: This is free, downloadable software used to create automated grading rubrics in Microsoft Word. This software allows a teacher to input weighted assessment criteria in rows, and the performance standards with marks in columns. The software is available for Windows and Mac.

• iRubric http://www.rcampus.com/indexrubric.cfm: This free site offers rubric building tools, a gradebook, and a searchable database of pre-existing rubrics. It allows professors the option to work on a rubric from the gradebook, where rubric scores are automatically adjusted to the coursework grading scale and posted on the gradebook. Students get a copy of the scored rubric securely.

• Rubrics4Teachers http://www.rubrics4teachers.com/: This site offers many pre-made rubrics covering a wide variety of subjects that are available for use. Individuals can search by subject matter. There is a lot of free content on this site, which focuses on already-designed rubrics.

• Teach-nology http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/: This site offers a variety of pre-made rubrics, rubric makers, and templates for all subject areas. Instructors can search by age level, subject matter, or keyword.

Types of Rubrics: Analytic & Holistic

The two main types of rubrics that professors can use are analytic rubrics and holistic rubrics (Brookhart, 2013; Brookhart & Nitko, 2008). An analytic rubric is a specific grading tool that looks like a table with the criteria for a student product listed in the first column and with levels of performance listed across the top row (DePaul University, 2014). Often, analytic rubrics contain numbers and descriptive tags. As seen in Figure 1, the professor can use numbers or descriptors ("needs improvement", "developing", "sufficient", "above average") to evaluate student work. Furthermore, analytic rubrics provide specific advice to students "regarding the adequacy of their responses in different areas" (Reynolds, Livingston, & Willson, 2009, p. 227). This feedback can help students focus on their strengths and weaknesses when they modify the assignment or complete a future one.

Figure 1: Analytic Rubric: Paper Rubric

	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT (1)	DEVELOPING (2)	SUFFICIENT (3)	ABOVE AVERAGE (4)
Clarity (Thesis supported by relevant information and ideas.)	The purpose of the student work is not well defined. Central ideas are not focused to support the thesis. Thoughts appear disconnected.	The central purpose of the student work is identified. Ideas are generally focused in a way that supports the thesis.	The central purpose of the student work is clear and ideas are almost always focused in a way that supports the thesis. Relevant details illustrate the author's ideas.	The central purpose of the student work is clear and supporting ideas always are always well focused. Details are relevant, enrich the work.
Organization (Sequencing of elements/ideas)	Information and ideas are poorly sequenced (the author jumps around). The audience has difficulty following the thread of thought.	Information and ideas are presented in an order that the audience can follow with minimum difficulty.	Information and ideas are presented in a logical sequence, which is followed by the reader with little or no difficulty.	Information and ideas are presented in a logical sequence, which flows naturally and is engaging to the audience.
Mechanics (Correctness of grammar and spelling)	There are five or more misspellings and/or systematic grammatical errors per page or 8 or more in the entire document. The readability of the work is seriously hampered by errors.	There are no more than four misspellings and/or systematic grammatical errors per page or six or more in the entire document. The readability of the work is seriously hampered by errors. Errors distract from the work.	There are no more than three misspellings and/or grammatical errors per page and no more than five in the entire document. The readability of the work is minimally interrupted by errors.	There are no more than two misspelled words or grammatical errors in the document.

A holistic rubric consists of a single scale with all criteria being considered as one score (DePaul University, 2014). Reynolds, Livingston, and Willson (2009) explained that a "teacher assigns a single score based on the overall quality of a student's work" (p.227). In essence, most holistic rubrics are less detailed than analytic rubrics. Generally, holistic rubrics can be constructed more rapidly, and used in a quicker manner than analytic rubrics to assess student work (Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2009). The teacher matches an entire piece of student work to a single description on the scale. In Figure 2, the teacher would use this rubric to assign one score to a piece of writing based on the general comments for each number.

Figure 2: Holistic Rubric: Paper Rubric

4. Above Average: The audience is able to easily identify the focus of the work and is engaged by its clear focus and relevant details. Information is presented logically and naturally. There are no more than two mechanical errors or misspelled words to distract the reader.
3. Sufficient: The audience is easily able to identify the focus of the student work which is supported by relevant ideas and supporting details. Information is presented in a logical manner that is easily followed. There is minimal interruption to the work due to misspellings and/or mechanical errors.
2. Developing: The audience can identify the central purpose of the student work without little difficulty and supporting ideas are present and clear. The information is presented in an orderly fashion that can be followed with little difficulty. There are some misspellings and/or me-

chanical errors, but they do not seriously distract from the work.
1. Needs Improvement: The audience cannot clearly or easily identify the central ideas or purpose of the student work. Information is presented in a disorganized fashion causing the audience to have difficulty following the author's ideas. There are many misspellings and/or mechanical errors that negatively affect the audience's ability to read the work.

Conclusion

In conclusion, SLOs and rubrics should work together to make your life as a professor easier. As you develop each SLO, consider using a rubric as the assessment tool. A rubric can be used in such varied ways that it can really change the way a professor teaches and assesses. Since students know what to expect, the instructor can guide them easily to the intended outcome. Rubrics can be used to assess almost any type of student work and SLO.

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Seeing Through Water

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Sister Michael Patrick waited at the corner of Bayou Road for the Broad bus to Canal Street, and she sweated the whole hot time. She soaked through the layers of her long black habit, and, every few minutes, she pulled a white, man's handkerchief from its hiding place under the cuff of her sleeve. With the cloth, she patted her skin—which was quickly becoming rashy and red—near the hard, starched edges of her white coif. After 20 minutes, the handkerchief too was wet and heavy, and the bus finally arrived.

Sister pulled on the handrails and mounted the first, high step, then launched herself onto the bus. She took an empty seat in the front, but the window was jammed. Not just her pride forced her to stay in her place with the closed window as the sweltering bus jutted up the street. The virtues of faith and self-sacrifice kept her glued to her seat while she alternately felt faint and nauseous.

Through the window, Sister examined the native people of New Orleans. Their various states of dress showed the ways that they had adapted to the climate.

The children wore hardly more than underwear and were always barefoot. Their grandmothers wore big, flowered muumuus that let in the air. The young women, about Sister's age, had billowy, cotton shirtwaist dresses that showed off their hourglass figures. The housewives, standing in open doorways as the bus sped by, exhibited themselves in cotton dusters, often transparent, which differed little from Sister's nightgown.

And the men, who boarded the bus for work and whom Sister hardly dared to examine, wore work pants slung around their hips and undershirts that draped over their strong torsos. They hooked their index fingers in the collars of their laundered white shirts to carry them behind their backs or held them starched, clean and folded over their arms as precious as a maniple as they traveled to their jobs in the kitchens of restaurants.

Closer to the center of town, people walked with opened umbrellas to keep the sun at bay. In the neighborhoods nearer to uptown, far away from where Sister Michael Patrick worked, the women called the umbrellas parasols. Uptown was where the privileged and, not incidentally, white people lived. They were across from Canal Street, a cherished, local paradox.

The canal had never existed. Still, the street operated as the city's main artery from the lake to the river. And streetcars as nostalgic as ocean liners disembarked passengers at the entrances to the grand department stores. Then, as they had since they had opened, whites entered through the front doors, and colored through the back. It was now 1956, so an Irish missionary like Sister could enter through whichever door she desired.

She chose the door by her mood. Worn out sometimes from working in the Negro part of town, she accepted her privilege and entered through the front while a good white gentleman held the door for her. Other days, she felt more solidarity with the people she served, and so she entered from the rear with humble acceptance.

Today, she hadn't thought much about her entrance, only that she was headed to Krauss to buy some heavy muslin to put in the convent for drapes to keep away the sun.

All the sisters suffered through the New Orleans summers. Sister Michael Patrick was no exception. She was a girl from South Boston like many of her compatriots. If her own story of arrival was any different, she did not know. There were many memories that the nuns told no one. She alone knew that her father had turned and walked away when she revealed her plan to join the convent. His response was so different from the way he had danced her sister around when she said she was getting married.

But that was his way with Sister: sideways glances with a smirk on his face, spinning his finger around his ear when he saw her as a young girl walking around the house with her face buried in a book. And the night after the party, when her sister's boyfriend, drunk and full of himself, pushed Sister down on the bed, her father got enraged at her.

These thoughts passed quickly like the images of odd houses that fronted the streets where the bus passed—tall, white two-story frames over little blue stuccos. They were a snapshot, then a blur.

Her mother said her calling was a good thing.

"It's a vocation," she pronounced the syllables slowly to Sister's father.

"She's a lost soul, that one is," he replied. "Let her go. She

might find herself."

Sister could have seen genuine tears in his eyes when she left his house for the last time, a thin girl with an overcoat and a suitcase, but her own eyes were full of water.

The bus stopped at Canal Street and the driver handed Sister a transfer to the Canal streetcar for the remainder of the half-mile trip, even though, as a nun, she hadn't paid. Sister thanked him and bowed slightly. When she got off the bus, she gave the transfer to an old woman standing in the heat waiting. Sister decided to walk the rest of the way.

She had joined the Blessed Sacrament nuns, because she read about the Wild West as a child and loved it. The Blessed Sacrament nuns were missionaries to the Colored and Indians. Sister studied the pictures of the Indians' wise elders under the peaceful big sky. She admired the Indian children, as beautiful as baby dolls with long, shiny black hair and big saucer eyes. Their pagan names were so melodic that she could imagine herself calling them secretly like pet names before they were baptized.

After the sprinkling, they would take on the names of the Catholic saints—Theresa of the Little Flower, Poor Clare, Catherine Fed by the Dove, or Hilary of Sacred Memory.

When she became a novice, Sister imagined that she would have a life so different from everyone in her family that their talk of the old country in Ireland would pale before her frontier adventure. Perhaps there was a bit of pride in that thought, but didn't she deserve it, after the way her family treated her?

If she was a brawler, or a drinker, or had married a rough man, her family would have given her support and, sometimes, compliments on her endurance. But because she was quiet and hardworking, because she did not fuss when the soda bread was all eaten before she had dinner, and because she took out the garbage when nobody else felt like chasing the rats, her family took advantage and they made fun of her.

Now, Sister paused in the shade of a tree. She was wet and dripping. The sweat was running down her legs and she had only gone two blocks. "Jesus perspired blood," she reminded herself. She started walking again, block by block getting closer to the store.

The Order had shocked Sister by sending her to the Negro mission in New Orleans rather than Santa Fe. At the time,

she didn't believe it was possible.

She walked around the convent speechless although she was bursting with anger. Hadn't they promised her a good placement? Didn't they know her interest in the West? She wasn't like Sister Precious Blood or Sister Crown of Thorns who were always mouthing some political slogan or another under their breath that she suspected they also used for meditations in place of their prayers.

But she had already taken her vows of poverty and obedience. So she put her head down, looked at the floor, and said, "Yes," when Mother asked her if she was ready to go to the Deep South.

She read everything she could find about Negroes: the violent Native Son, the dramatic Black Like Me, and the tragic Cry the Beloved Country.

But when she arrived, she found the reality much different.

The Negro children were constantly making noise. Dancing around. Yelling and laughing. And the heat. The heat stretched from March until November and then broke only intermittently. In the heat, the children were more animated. Needing to go to the bathroom. Tugging at their shirt collars and pulling the shirt tails of their friends. Wrenching at her sleeves. Last year there was one boy in particular who seemed to be always in the back corner of her habit in her blind spot. Every time she turned, she tripped over him.

His name was Pierre Dorsay, his family apparently holding on to their remnant of French ancestry. Sister moved him from the front aisle of the first grade classroom where he kept coming up to her desk, to the back where he kept falling out of his desk to the floor. She moved him away from the windows where he kept staring out and pointing, to the opposite wall where he encouraged the rest of the class to stare out while he pointed for them.

She brought him to the principal who made him sit with her for a while in the big unpainted office. Then he was sent back to the class because he wore out the principal.

"Mr. Dorsay is your cross," Mother Superior said by explanation.

When she returned Pierre to Sister, he beamed. On another child, the look would have been beatific. But on him, it portended more misery.

And she couldn't admit to anyone the intense feelings he evoked in her, her powerlessness and ineffectiveness. And worse, her anger when she punished him, especially when he didn't respond. She gave him extra math work that he returned with missing pages. She sent notes to his grandmother, on which he engraved vulgar words and stick men. She kept him after school for chalk-cleaning sessions that exploded dust all over the room. At such times she found herself shouting at him, sometimes over the din of the laughter from the other miscreants. "Mr. Dorsay," she caught herself shouting, "Please, shut up and sit down!"

And in the fraction of a second before the sudden, stunned and frightened silence of the children, she would think of Pierre Dorsay as a messenger from Lucifer who deserved her criticism, "You are ignorant, and you deserve it." Thank God, she never let the words out.

Instead, she left the classroom to calm herself. The silence of the children was broken only by a few whispers behind her. And when she glanced back, she saw Mr. Dorsay circling his finger around his ear, leading the talk about her—crazy.

Finally, Mother Superior saw fit to place him in another classroom. That teacher broke the ruler across his hands. Sister heard that still didn't calm him.

Thankfully, now in the summer, she only encountered the children accompanied by their parents at church, and when they came to the convent, it was to help sweep, or clean windows, or dig in the garden.

Today, she had the pleasant chore of shopping, were it not for the sweltering heat.

In the cool summer of Boston she would have already taken down the damask of the winter and put up the summer sheers. Strange that, in Louisiana, the heavy curtains were used to keep the sun at bay.

The convent's parlor was kept dim so the room would stay cool. Only when a visitor entered did Sister flick on the lamp.

Once, she sat in an armchair opposite Pierre's grand-mother. They were on either side of the lamp, although only the grandmother sat in the circle of light. She questioned Sister Michael Patrick about taking Pierre out of the class and placing him somewhere else.

"Pierre say you the most nicest one," his grandmother explained her reasons for wanting him to stay put. "Why you can't keep him with you?"

The sides of her mouth had deep creases. Her cheekbones were hard cliffs of flesh.

"I can't seem to reach him," Sister said. She pictured him sinking in his desk. Her instructions floated above his head. "He needs more discipline," she added.

"I disciplining him all the time, Sister. You'll see. He be better," the grandmother said. "He do all his work and listen."

"I am sorry," Sister said. And she got up to open the curtains. The bright light shocked silence into the room. The heat entered in waves.

"Thank you, Sister. I know y'all tried," the grandmother said, rose from her seat and took out her white umbrella for the long, hot walk home.

"Don't worry," Sister told the grandmother.

But Sister knew Pierre would get no better.

By the time Sister got to Krauss to buy the fabric, the sky was getting dark as it did every afternoon. In a moment, the clouds, which had collected all the humidity of the morning, would break open. The rain would fall heavy and thick to the ground. The thunderstorm would last only about 20 minutes, but its force seemed endless and foreboding.

The first year she was in New Orleans, Sister was afraid the rain would continue all day and night, and at that pace, it would pile up four-feet high like the Boston snow. Then what would they do? Where would they go? Surrounded by the lake and river, water covering every street corner and coming into every classroom? Sister imagined that they would disappear off the face of the earth, all of them too insignificant to find.

On blustering overcast days in Boston, her own grammar school teacher put on the radio in the afternoon to allay students' fears while they put on their overcoats and boots to go home. The children glided to the closet on Mozart and daintily put on their mittens.

But when Sister turned on the radio in New Orleans during

a thunderstorm, the classical music never sustained. Dix-ieland soon came on and Pierre took that opportunity to lead the class in a second line.

The first time he did this, Sister was confounded. On one particular note all the children jumped out of their seats, waving head scarves and handkerchiefs. Even the quiet ones began prancing around.

"May I have order, please!" she found herself shouting as she switched off the radio.

Pierre alone didn't hear her. He was leading the dance outside into the rain.

Now, Sister arrived in the cavernous fabric department of Krauss. Silk fabric covered long cardboard tubes against the wall. Madras plaids and printed flannels, and every type of brocade and cotton sat in rows of bolts. The high-ceilinged room produced a glorious empty presence.
The cloth muffled the voices of shop-girls whose accents came from Italy by way of the swamp.

"What you want, Sister?" a voice said. It had a rhythm like the chorus of the song Steam Heat that Sister remembered from childhood. The voice belonged to a woman with yellow hair sprayed into a narrow, vertical shape above her wide head. Her nod at Sister and the scissors in her hand indicated she wanted to help.

"Do you have a dark, heavy muslin?" Sister asked.

"Mae-king curtains?" the woman asked. Sister could hear the woman was being polite.

Then she turned and called across the aisles in her normal speaking voice, "Wanda, what you got here for Sister?"

"Some few things," she replied, "Send Sister over here."

Sister crossed to the other aisle.

She had been Sister for five years now. Before that in her house she was Maggie.

"Maggie-girl" her father called her when he was drunk.

She saw him tipsy every day, dancing and singing loudly over her mother who was trying to cook and discipline the children. He didn't notice when they all went to bed.

Only Sister now slept by herself.

She struggled to breathe often at night in the convent. Even under the open window, the air sat on her chest like a hot towel. When prayer didn't help, Sister flipped on her lamp and closed her eyes. She got comfort from watching tiny dark spots scuttle across the inside of her eyelids.

The natives of New Orleans put up shutters on their hous-es to keep them cool. Door shutters locked on the inside and had slats so that the light and air could be controlled. Down in the morning. Up in the afternoon. The light stayed apart from the shadows in distinct lines.

Except sometimes, when people didn't watch their blinds, the sun moved fast and the room was completely dark in the middle of the day. But that was fine for most New Orleanians. They only needed the light for a few things—sewing, ciphering, and nourishing their indoor plants. So they postponed their activities, preferring to sit in the dark rooms and be happy.

Sister's room was often over-bright and steamy because she fell asleep with the light on. She resolved that she would get enough fabric to make drapes for herself the next time she went to the store.

The day that she stood finally waiting for service in Krauss' cool fabric department, Sister heard a commotion in housewares. There were sounds of boxes falling into the aisle and glass smashing. There was a mass of fussing and hollering. The voices came loudly over the quiet floor to her.

She heard a thump. Then silence, and a man yelling "Got-cha."

She heard the voice of a child saying, "Leave me alone."

Sister's heart suddenly went heavy.

"I tell you," Wanda said to Sister, "some people don't know what to do with their children." Then Wanda added calmly without looking up from the fabric, "They come in here by themselves all the time."

The commotion was now just a few aisles over. A tall guard stood near someone who had his hands up just barely over the bolts of fabric. Long, brown fingers pointed to the sky. Big boned, skinny arms. Ashy elbows.

Sister stared at the nearby cotton. Her heart started pounding.

Then she heard more movement in the nearby aisle as the fabric swished. She turned back to see big bolts of silk being jostled down the row like boats in a harbor when a big ship pulls in.

"You see who it is too, huh?" Wanda now nodded her head in the direction of the noise as she faced Sister.

Sister now had to look.

"Who it is" was the New Orleans' way of saying "Negroes again." Many of the shop girls at Krauss objected to the owner's policy of allowing that population into the store.

Negroes came through the back door of the store too often with wide smiles on their faces even after they got a cold once-over from the security guard. Negroes shopped plentifully at Krauss, even asking sometimes for double bags.

"Me, I don't wait on them," Wanda continued her sentiment. "Her over there," she nodded now to the blonde, "She can't walk fast so she always gets stuck." Wanda had raised her voice so that the woman with the scissors heard her and chuckled.

Sister suddenly felt a little dizzy and nauseous.

"Excuse me." She headed for the ladies' room.

But she had to walk past the aisle near the commotion. She ducked her head between her shoulders and tried to glide by unnoticed.

The noise had quieted down as Sister approached. But then she heard a loud smack. It was the sound of skin hitting skin and bone. And she turned toward it.

She heard Pierre's grandmother's voice. It said, "Boy, ain't I told you stay next to me?"

Yet Sister heard no reply, nothing from him. No talking. No crying.

Instead, her own chest heaved, and nausea, fear, and sadness flooded her. She was drawn to the scene and continued to move closer, against her better judgment.

When she got there, through her watery eyes, she saw Pierre. His face lighted up.

His grandmother was commiserating with the white guard, who was nodding in agreement.

She said, "I be asking people, what you do with a child like that?"

The guard shook his head from side to side. He didn't seem to know either.

Pierre continued to look only at Sister as if he were not in the store at all. She had seen this stare in class. He was somewhere he could not be reached. Conversation didn't work. Neither did discipline or even Sister's frustration.

Sister did not try to look back at him. When she reached them, she did not say hello to Pierre, his grandmother, or the guard. With her shaking hand, she grabbed for the boy. His palms, unlike his eyes, were wet and hot. Sister pulled him by the hand away from the group, her outstretched arm dragging him behind her, down the escalators and through the open front door of Krauss.

The rain had begun to fall on Canal Street and since it was not a true outlet to the river or the lake, there was nowhere for the water to go. It filled the gutters and puddled up to the sidewalks. It made little lakes where the tar in the streets had melted away and the shell-filler emerged.

People crowded together on the sidewalk near the outside wall of Krauss' to stay dry. But Sister brought the boy into the downpour.

Pierre brightened like a wilted plant. He raised his arms and his face to the rain as Sister watched. That's when she saw God's plan.

Pierre stood in the pose of the saints, the evangelicals and Sister herself the night she felt most alone and prayed in supplication for someone to love her.

Sister reached into her sleeve and brought out the white handkerchief and began waving it in the air as she had seen the children do when they danced the second line. Pierre became aware of her then, faced her, and shook his shoulders and hips.

They circled around one another as the rain came down, and they continued to dance as the thunder crashed and the lightening lit up the sky. Sister's faith was now renewed. It had been, for so long, bitter and dry.