

**Moreau's Miracle: The Whole Student**  
**Daniel J. Myers**  
**Sheedy Award Address, 2007**

It is really an extraordinary honor to receive this award and to be placed in the company of teachers who I greatly admire greatly, and from whom I have learned much as well. Just this past year, I had the opportunity to team-teach a course with the 2002 Sheedy recipient, Andy Weigert, who is an absolutely extraordinary pedagogue and who taught me more about teaching than anyone ever has, simply by letting me watch him choose the right times to be silent.

But this is not the time to be silent. I have been given this rare opportunity to reflect on teaching and share those reflections with you. And reflect I have. During the past few months, this address has almost constantly been on my mind. I've read the prior Sheedy addresses (and Christian's last year was a doozie, if you ever feel the need for some inspiration!), reviewed articles about pedagogy, discussed the address with friends and colleagues, and even read a couple of teaching memoirs, all in an attempt to come up with something truly meaningful that would be worth your listening time.

As if I weren't heaping enough pressure on myself, I recently ran into a Wall Street Journal article about "Last Lecture" series that have become popular on some campuses. In these lectures, professors are asked to give the lecture they would give if they knew it would be their last ever. And I asked myself, if I were giving my last lecture, would it be about teaching? After some consideration of the alternatives, I decided, yes, I think it just might be. Teaching, after all, is probably one of the most important ways our lives make a difference.

At this point, however, I had almost completely handcuffed myself! A lecture on teaching meaningful enough to warrant your attention, to be a worthy representative of my final thoughts, and to live up to the standards of the past addresses, which have been called "the best lectures on campus of the year?" A tall order—one that was starting to produce serious writer's block!

But then, out of my immobility and near despair, arose *Moreau's Miracle*.

As we approached the Beatification of Father Moreau this year (the founder of the Congregation of the Holy Cross), I spent some time reading about his life and ideas. In his fundamental philosophy of education, I found a deep resonance with my own ideas about education. You see, Moreau believed and preached that our responsibility as teachers was to educate the "whole person." "Education," he wrote, "is the art of helping young people to completeness." As Father Jenkins said in his homily at the opening mass this year, institutions of higher education should be dedicated to the "highest level of education of the intellect," but at the same time devoted to

“spirit, and to both moral and physical well-being. Educate the mind...but never at the expense of the heart.”

I couldn't agree more and this orientation toward education is one of the reasons I have been so committed to my experience at Notre Dame. The students who come into our lives for a few years have huge agendas on their plates. They have intellectual work to do, which is the major, manifest purpose for coming to Notre Dame. But really, that's only the tip of iceberg. Compared with all of the other developmental tasks of moving into adulthood that are coming at them, you, the professor in the classroom, are a pretty small piece.

Arthur Chickering, writing in 1969, identified seven different “vectors” of personal development that are intensely experienced by most students during the college years. At the time of entry, new students are heavily focused on grappling with the first three: developing a sense of competence, learning to manage their emotions independently, and developing an appropriate balance between independence and interdependence.

Following a peak in their focus on those three vectors, students usually move into a period of integration, in which they more firmly establish their own personal identities. They work hard during this period at defining, understanding, and accepting who they are as individuals.

Three more simultaneous vectors begin toward the end of the undergraduate years and typically peak in salience in the 2-5 years following graduation. The first of these Chickering calls “Freeing Interpersonal Relationships” and reflects deeper commitments to friendships, family members, and life partners. Second, students (and ex-students) develop a stronger sense of life purpose and make initial (but almost never permanent) vocational and avocational commitments. The seventh vector Chickering calls “Developing Integrity” which involves a process of humanizing and internalizing values, along with greater attempts to bring behaviors in line with these values.

That, my friends, is a lot of work!

If I can back up to the first vector, developing competence, for just a minute, I'd like point out that this vector is divided into three different components: Intellectual Competence, Physical Competence, and Social-Interpersonal Competence. That's right, our classroom instruction, geared toward intellectual competence, is only one of three pieces of this single vector and that vector is only one of seven! If we limit ourselves to the substantive content of our courses, we're only thinking about one-third of one-seventh of our students' lives! I don't believe Father Moreau would be pleased with such an approach to the role of teacher! Even if I'm exaggerating a bit here with my quantitative reduction, we'd certainly be falling considerably short of addressing the whole person with such an approach.

And, I'm happy to report, we do not ignore all of these other aspects of student life at Notre Dame. There are many dedicated professionals on our campus who minister to students' needs across all of these dimensions of their lives. I would like to draw particular attention to those who serve in the student affairs division, including campus ministry, residence life, the counseling center, and the student activities office. These staff members end up spending a lot more time with students than the faculty does and they are the ones who guide (and prod) our students along the paths through Chickering's vectors. They deserve our thanks, our admiration, and our help—and as true teachers, in Father Moreau's sense of the word, they probably deserve this Sheedy award more than I do.

I've asked Farther Mark Poorman to be with us today and would like to recognize him and his staff for all that they do in educating the whole student.

All of this isn't to say that the classroom experience or the professor is unimportant, of course. The classroom is the hub of the college experience and as professors, we can have a profound impact on almost all of the aspects of our students' lives. But it takes more than just knowing that there's more than intellectual challenge going on, or just being aware of the services to which we can refer students as they confront different challenges. In fact, I would like to try to expand your notion of "educating the whole person" before I'm finished with you today and I hope, send you away considering a recommitment to Moreau's ideal.

The first aspect of my enhanced notion of educating the whole person is at the center of the activity that I suspect drove my selection for this award: My involvement in, and commitment to, undergraduate research. I believe (as deeply as I can without empirical proof!) that a meaningful educational experience is not just about learning, or even discovering, what is already known by others. Rather, a complete and fulfilling education is generative--New knowledge brought about through our own natural propensity to explore. If there is one thing that is hard-wired in humans, it is our need to seek the unknown.

Too often though, undergraduate education is devoid of novel inquiry and instead is almost completely characterized by recitation—sometimes it's extremely complex recitation, but recitation nonetheless. On the other hand, when undergraduates produce a truly unique piece of research, based on their own personal excursion into the unknown, the joy and satisfaction they feel is nothing short of profound. And if we fail to provide this kind of experience for our students, we have failed to engage a fundamental piece of the whole person.

The second way I would like to expand our practice of engaging the whole person, is to think about our students and their lives in a more integrated, holistic way. It strikes me as a poverty of interaction if I engage students on intellectual turf and leave their emotional welling-being to the rector or the counseling center, their vocational decision-making to the career center, their

engagement in their spiritual life to campus ministry, and their physical well-being to the staff at the Rock. If I were to take this approach, it's obvious that I wouldn't be engaging the whole person, but even worse, the part I would engage would be not be genuine, even in a limited way.

Instead, teachers need to break through status barriers and false images to make real connections with students across all these different aspects of their lives (and our lives). Make yourself real to your students and allow them to be real to you. Remember Moreau's big five: intellectual, spiritual, social, physical, and artistic. If you even try to engage a student on all of these planes, you'll end up doing pretty well!

Of course, when you decide to take this approach, you'll find yourself doing things that weren't on the official list of professorial duties...So be prepared!

In my time at Notre Dame, I have attended my students' dance recitals, art exhibits, choral performances, plays, and yes, even the Keenan Review. I've been to Mass with students. I have participated in the African-American students' annual fashion show and I am the year 2000 champion of dancing the Tahitian at the Hawaii Club's annual Luau! I have taught innumerable students how to play racquetball and one year had a small running club that stayed together for an entire year. I've had students crying in my office after break-ups and had them develop friendships with my kids. I've had their parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, and sweethearts at my house. We've played video games, board games, and touch football. Once, a student proudly invited me to his dorm room to check out his new stereo system. Another took me roller-blading, and in an unusual combination of the physical and spiritual, we stopped at the Grotto to pray as we skated by the lakes.

Why do I tell you all this, other than to demonstrate that I've had a lot of fun as a professor? Each of these activities brought these students closer to me. I learned more about what motivated them and how to engage them. I was able push them harder in their academic work because we had build trust and they knew I cared about them. They were more attentive to my ideas and were better able to integrate everything we discussed—academic or not. I was able to participate in their development both as thinkers and as people, in a way I never would have if I'd just left the rest of their Chickering vectors to someone else. When I recognized and addressed the whole person, the whole person responded—and much more powerfully than just the academic piece of them could have.

I grew up as the son of a Baptist Minister, and one thing I learned from him was that sermons should have three points. So, I've given you two, and I'm going to give you just one more before releasing you to everyone's favorite part--the reception. But, I'm also first required, by his homiletic technique, to review points one and two which were: First, produce learning situations which involve genuine invention, creativity, and knowledge generation. Second,

approach student's lives in an integrated way that recognizes and engages all parts of their personhood.

The third extension of educating the whole person really challenges us to think beyond the student's time at Notre Dame. It might seem fairly natural to think about our students after they graduate. After all, we have an active alumni association, we attempt to track our alums in various ways to see who is doing what, how many are pursuing advance degrees, and so on. We also get a lot of them back to campus to continue their participation in campus life in a variety of ways. These are all efforts I applaud and I believe that Notre Dame does a much better job of maintaining engagement than just about any other university.

But educating the whole person can hardly begin when students arrive on our doorstep. If educating the whole person doesn't begin until our admissions process begins, we're not only playing a lot a catch up with our own students, but we are also avoiding our responsibility to spread Moreau's message beyond those who actually attend Notre Dame.

As I look around at our primary and secondary school systems, I cannot help but be troubled by the continual constriction of education to the point where students seem to be primarily viewed as test scores that are needed to prove that no one is being left behind, while the personhood of children is neglected and even suppressed. I'm proud of Notre Dame's ACE program as one way our university extends its educational mission beyond our campus and to students who may never have the opportunity to attend Notre Dame. But I also worry about the schools in our own backyard and the disintegrated approach to education they often seem to take.

There is, however, a movement in our community toward a pedagogy that reflects Moreau's notion of educating the whole person: The Montessori Method. Montessori schools explicitly engage the whole child: Physical, Social, Spiritual and Intellectual, and do so with a deep and abiding respect for the individual's needs and abilities. In South Bend, we now have a Catholic Montessori school, the Good Shepherd Montessori School, that carefully follows this philosophy, and in part because it is so congruent with my experience of the educational philosophy at Notre Dame, I have been happily contributing my efforts to support this school and I now serve on the board of the school--although I must say that my contribution in that role pales in comparison to the year I served as a volunteer Physical Education Teacher. As a result, I have a whole new appreciation for third grade teachers, each of whom should be immediately leapfrogged right over beatification into sainthood! I asked Dan Driscoll, the Head of the Good Shepherd School (who also earned a Masters of Divinity from Notre Dame in 1997) to attend today's presentation and I hope you'll have a chance to greet him during the reception.

If our commitment to educating the whole person is strong, then we must find ways to support enterprises like the Good Shepherd Montessori School, which will not only feed well-prepared

students into colleges and universities like Notre Dame, but also help us spread our educational philosophy to other schools in our community and beyond.

So, I'm going to put my money where my mouth is. I'm deeply appreciative to the Sheedy Award Committee, the College of Arts and Letters, and the University for giving me the opportunity to make a bigger difference in the life of this school. I will be donating my award to the school and Norma Frank, who is also in the audience today, has generously agreed to match the award amount such that we will be donating almost \$30,000 to the school.

In keeping with Father Moreau's defense of art and music as essential components of education, this donation will be used to seed an endowment to support the art program at the school.

I want to close by giving thanks. Thanks to you for coming to listen to me today; thanks to my students for being a part of *my* life; and most of all, thanks to Notre Dame for giving me the opportunity and the platform to become the teacher I am.

As I was finishing writing this talk, I was reminded that unless something tragic happens at the reception, this is not my last lecture. In fact, it is the first lecture of the rest of my life, and preparing it has renewed my commitment to educating the whole person. I hope you will join me in pursuing Moreau's Miracle.

Thank you.