

THE BAILEY SCHOLARS PROGRAM Its Ethos and Ethics

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(The Bailey Scholars Program, located in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) at Michigan State University, is a 21 credit supplemental program expressive of the experiential, collaborative learning, and learning community movements in Higher Education. This four year program is built around four required courses: ANR 210, ANR 310 & 311, and ANR 410 totaling nine credits. These courses are designed collaboratively by the scholars, students and faculty, who engage in them. The other twelve credits are in courses or independent studies chosen by the student scholars in fulfillment of the Learning Plan they initiate during the first semester, modified and carried out as a part of a lifelong learning journey. John Duley is an emeritus faculty of Michigan State University, a pioneer in Service/Learning, and a Bailey Scholar)

The Ethos of Bailey

In Pragmatic terms the Bailey Scholars Program is a 21 credit supplemental program available to students in each of the several majors in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at Michigan State University. It is an academic program with a major focus on personal-professional growth and development. But, the Bailey Scholars Program cannot be described as a collection of courses.

The Bailey Scholars are a community on a learning journey, blurring the distinctions between faculty and student learners and seeking to build upon the different learning and communication styles of its members. Because it is a community it is important to understand the ethos and the "principles of good practice" which assure its health.

In an effort to grasp an understanding of its ethos and ethics I sought its inner dynamics by reflecting on my participation in its common life and by interviewing the student and faculty convenors/facilitators of the "launch" course for the Bailey program, Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) 210.

I have come to the conclusion that the best analogy for the Bailey Program is that of a living plant; its emerging nature being determined by its genetic inheritance and the environment created by its participants. The DNA of the Bailey Program consists of three strands; the Declaration of Bailey created by its first scholars, the five questions of the fundamentals of self-development, and the five threads associated with social and ethical development.

The Declaration of Bailey:

“The Bailey Scholars Program seeks to be a community of scholars dedicated to lifelong learning. All members of the community work towards providing a respectful, trusting environment where we acknowledge our interdependence and encourage personal growth.”

The Fundamentals of Self Development: Five Questions

- Who am I?
- What do I value?
- What is my worldview?
- How do I learn?
- How do these connect with my life?

Five Threads Associated with Social and Ethical Development

- Personal development
- Interpersonal development
- Personal and professional identity and integrity
- Communication competence
- Critical, creative and reflective thinking

The Bailey Program’s genetic heritage is a sound, vibrant, and resilient one of pioneer stock. Its emergent growth and the quality of its fruit is dependent upon the richness and diversity of its environment. Its seedbed is a Land Grant University with a history of pursuing learning in the service of the larger society and providing the experience of it for people from all walks of life. The community of scholars is connected, and nurtured by the rich subsoils of a network of national and international scholars involved in the rediscovery of passion for learning and teaching such as Parker Palmer, and the discovery of new paradigms a la Fritjof Capra and Margaret Wheatley.

The climate for its development is the nurturing environment provided by the co-learners who participate in its life. These co-learners continually seek to be informed and grounded in the literature of collaborative learning and the dynamics of dialogue as a way of learning.

While it is a more mechanical model than that of a living plant, the analogy of the loom and the weavers suggests another way of understanding the ethos of Bailey. The loom, an ancient device for producing cloth, is a simple, yet versatile instrument of creative expression. It consists of a frame with two sets of rollers; the rear one on which the threads that form the horizontal plane or “warp” of the cloth are originally placed and then attached to the front roller. These threads, according to the design to be created, each pass through one of several sorting devices called “heddles” which are operated by footpedals. Each heddle, when the footpedal is depressed, raises a series of threads allowing the shuttlecock, which carries the cross threads or “woof” of the pattern, to pass beneath some of the warp threads and over others, thus creating the design.

In the life of the community some things are fixed, such as the warp of the loom, but the pattern which emerges is fresh and different as each weaver or set of weavers picks up the shuttlecock of experience and works the heddles of life. The warp which provides the framework upon which the creative patterns of each learner's and group of learners' journeys emerge consists of the Declaration of Bailey, which is the outer boundary of the work of the community, comparable to the selvage of the cloth, the five questions and the five threads. Like the warp in a woven garment, these three strands are hidden from view but are the ever present structure which permits and supports the creative patterns of life and learning that emerge.

These are not the images which reflect the reality of traditional educational programs. Traditional education programs are better represented by the images of marvelous buildings, syllabi designed by excellent architects and built by highly skilled engineers to whom students come to absorb and master the realities presented in their designs and the foundations upon which they rest. Here students are taught the already discovered principles of design, structure, materials of value, and the foundational knowledge that support the monuments of our culture. The students are the recipients of knowledge acquired and documented by experts in their fields of inquiry who have devoted their lives to the acquisition of this knowledge. We owe them a great debt for they have brought us a long way and we benefit greatly from their authority and the knowledge they have amassed. This traditional mode of education is very important but it differs radically from that of the Bailey Scholars Program.

There is another dimension of the Bailey ethos which needs to be high-lighted. Since the Bailey Scholars are seeking "to be a community working together towards providing a respectful, trusting environment where we acknowledge our interdependence and encourage personal growth," in its best moments it provides the potential for experiencing the fruits of contemplation: an understanding of the self, the world, and Ultimate Reality. Parker Palmer in his book, The Active Life: Work, Creativity, Caring, indicates that the fruits of contemplation are not only available through the practice of the monastic life, but are also accessible through an active life. He tried the monastic way and found that he was ill equipped for the contemplative life and that it was not true to who he was. He found the fruits of contemplation, being in touch with reality through the elimination of illusion, came to him through the active life.

There are two ways of acting in the world. One, the instrumental way, is the dominant mode in our culture and does not lead to the fruits of contemplation. It is the way we act when we have specific tasks to accomplish. These acts are focused on results to be accomplished. We organize them into lists and check them off as we accomplish them. Our satisfaction comes from getting them off our list of things to do.

The other way of acting is the expressive way. This is an action that stems from our values, commitments, from our integrity and authenticity, from who we are. The primary measure of this act is our faithfulness to who we are. These actions have intrinsic

worth—they are valuable in and of themselves and are undertaken whether we will be successful or not. The outcomes are not the sole measure of the worth of the actions.

It is the expressive acts which can be the source of the fruits of contemplation, of being more fully in touch with reality. There are many impediments to expressive acts, most of them based on fear: fear of being ridiculed, criticized, rejected, and fear of failure and of appearing foolish.

There are qualities of life and social environments that support expressive acts such as trust, acceptance, respect, freedom, compassion, humility, interdependence, love, faith, and hope. The Bailey Scholars Program, on the basis of its organizing statement, is a self selecting, voluntary group of folks committed to the positive supportive sources of expressive acts. It is therefore a potential source of the fruits of the contemplative life.

But there is a warning in this. The fruits of contemplation often are disillusionment, dislocation and an involuntary solitude. When we are freed by an environment supportive of expressive acts, we uncover the negative sources of expressive action in ourselves and in the world, and our comfortable understandings of God, or Ultimate Reality, may be challenged. We may find that because of our action that a trusted friend may turn her back on us, a vision we had believed in turns out to be a hoax, an institution we had relied on fails us, or we may discover ourselves to be less than we thought. We may also experience dislocation: we may lose our job because of a stand we took, organizations we were once welcomed in now exclude us from their membership, people we have felt close to now make us feel unwelcome, we may feel alone and isolated because of our actions.

The challenge is: “Can Bailey be the kind of community that accepts the negative side effects of expressive action and help its members face them rather than avoid and deny them?” Bailey provides an environment of positive sources of expressive action, but the jury is still out on whether or not the members of the community can be faithful to the Bailey Declaration and to each other in moments of crisis and negative opportunities for learning and growth.

Principles of Good Practice The Ethics of Bailey

Turning the World Upside Down:

Participation in the Bailey Scholars Program requires of both faculty and students a radical shift from the behaviors and attitudes that work well in the traditional higher education environment. Students are required to shift from a docile, compliant, and dependency mode to a self-initiating mode in which they are in charge of their own learning. Our highly individualized, hierarchical and competitive culture, and, for some students, the k-12 experiences have built in the expectancies that the faculty person will be an authority figure who controls the syllabus, delivers the information, and determines the

worth of the student's efforts in mastering the material delivered. Students educated in this mode tend not to take initiative, wait for direction, and psyche-out how to get an "A" with the least amount of effort. The operational goal of this mode is often to be credentialed, not to learn.

The traditional higher education environment is created by faculty members and the administrative structures of the institution. In this setting the faculty members control all facets of the educational environment. They determine the content of what is to be learned, the delivery method and the means of measuring how well the students have mastered the material. Faculty members are required to make a radical shift from the authority figure and controller of the learning to that of a co-learner, collaborating with the students in developing the syllabus and discovering the resources necessary to accomplish the learning desired by all of the scholars. Their role becomes that of an enabler, catalyst, or facilitator and most importantly, a co-learner. This facilitating role is also one which undergraduate participants perform in all Bailey courses but especially when they serve as co-facilitators in ANR 210.

Because of the ingrained nature of the traditional educational attitudes and behaviors on the part of both student and faculty considerable time and effort are required in structuring the learning environment. This begins in ANR 210. The task is to demonstrate that the world of learning is, in fact, turned upside-down. For this reason the development of the syllabus and course content is in the hands of the members of each section of ANR 210. The group process used in the development of the course content is designed to force all participants to take responsibility for their own learning and provides the opportunity for the development of the skills needed for co-learning and learning facilitation. The roles participants need to fulfill in these co-learning experiences are:

Interactor: Relates effectively with fellow learners and learning facilitators and is able to stay in touch with them and work through emotionally difficult relationships

Initiator: Identifies, seeks, finds and secures the information and cooperation needed.

Strategist: Understands the cultural context in which learning and/or service is being done sufficiently to function effectively in it.

Decision Maker: Functions well in an open system, defining and solving the problems as they arise.

Information source and network developer: Develops personal and technological information sources instead of relying solely on those sources provided by others.

Free agent: Functions independently in a support system where rewards are given for workable solutions to particular and often unforeseen problems rather than for

predetermined correct answers to set problems, and in an unstructured setting without the classroom support system of assignments, syllabi, and tests.

Co-operator: Works in a collaborative, non-competitive way for the accomplishment of the learning goals of the group.

Value clarifier: Clarifies his/her own values and uses them in arriving at decision or solving problems.

Communicator: Communicates effectively through the spoken and written word and through listening and reading non-verbal communication and is able to be emotionally involved in interpersonal interaction.

Recipient: Receives and uses criticism constructively.

When comparing these role descriptions with the usual classroom experience, significant contrasts emerge.

- For most undergraduate students, the usual classroom is a familiar environment in which a course outline is handed out at the beginning of the term with the course requirements listed. All of the needed information is provided in lectures and textbooks, or through the Internet and the reserve shelves in the library. It is not so in Bailey. The participants in the Bailey Program begin with a blank syllabus and must find the resources they need to acquire the learning they identify.
- The traditional classroom is a competitive environment in which there are winners and losers, in the Bailey Program it is a co-operative, collaborative environment in which the object is to accomplish together the learning the group has identified. In Bailey participants rely upon dialogue as a learning medium, allowing themselves to be influenced by others rather than trying to win an argument.
- The problems that are assigned in the traditional classroom course have predetermined correct answers. In Bailey, since no one knows what the syllabus will be, the problems and workable solutions are discovered by the collaborative efforts of all of the participants.
- In traditional courses, students have little need to develop interpersonal skills but, in Bailey scholars must work co-operatively and sometimes through emotionally difficult relationships. In Bailey the life-skill of "learning in community; learning with, through and from others, is of critical importance.
- The payoff in the usual classroom-based course is in grades and credits earned by each individual for getting the predetermined work done well and on time. In the Bailey Program the payoff is through joint accomplishments, self and peer assessment, and the sense of achievement in a commonly developed and carried-out syllabus for learning and/or service.

- In traditional classroom related learning, a high value is placed on objectivity and emotional detachment, in Bailey the highest value is placed on active, personal involvement.
- In Bailey the learning is “from the inside out,” starting with self, and grounding learning decisions in what each person wants to learn. In the usual classroom setting the students learn what the professor says they should learn.

The Role of Learning Facilitators:

The other radical departure from traditional higher education is that in the Bailey experience every participant is potentially a facilitator of learning. This is a new role for undergraduates so they do not have many attitudes or behaviors to unlearn. But for the faculty scholars this shift in roles is extremely difficult. This is because most of their teaching experience has been in the hierarchical mode. In the co-learning environment of Bailey, when silences often occur as participants think their way through before speaking, the faculty are tempted to fall back into the comfortable, less vulnerable, pattern of giving answers rather than sharing in the question raising and the sharing of insights.

To shift the responsibility for the direction of the learning from themselves to the group of Bailey Scholars working together, faculty members have to move from being information disseminators to becoming facilitators, enabler, and catalysts as well as co-learners. The focus has to be changed from the content of a subject matter area to an interactive process of jointly structuring experiences with students that will enable them together to accomplish the collaboratively established learning objectives.

Given the radical changes in role expectations of the scholars and the contextual changes of the learning environment of this program it is important to develop a set of “Principles of Good Practice” to assist those who chose to become Bailey Scholars.

Principles of Good Practice:

The following principles have been derived from my interviews with six faculty and three of the student convenors/facilitators of ANR 210 during 1999, and from my own participation as a Bailey Scholar during the past year.

Development of the Course:

- Provide for balance and complementarity among convenors/facilitators
- Develop close communication and a sense of collegiality between student and faculty convenors/facilitators
- Provide adequate orientation for student convenors/facilitators and good communication among all convenors/facilitators
- Select several faculty of diverse backgrounds, experience and gender for ANR 210

- The chemistry for creative facilitating requires that the convenors/facilitators know one another well from co-curricular and extra curricular involvement

Management of the course:

- Refuse to take control of the direction of the course
- Use self constraint in giving answers and in telling what other 210 sections have done.
- Believe in and act on the scholars' internal motivation to take charge of their own learning
- Be cordial, inviting, welcoming and approachable: create a "safe" place for scholars to be themselves, run risks and be vulnerable
- Search for goodness: underline, celebrate and lift it up but also acknowledge disruptive, destructive, and dysfunctional behavior and help the group deal with it.
- Know when to "stuff" irritation and anger and sensitively select when, where, and how to confront the issue in a non-judgmental way
- Speak the truth in love
- Be reflexive: confront what is going on inside of yourself, be open to new truths about yourself
- Be passionate about your views but respectful of others

Processes:

- Be fully present and engaged with the scholars irrespective of what else is going on in your life
- Listen*
 - Demonstrate curiosity, attention and respect
 - Seek first to understand what is being said
 - Be willing to engage with others on a personal level (be vulnerable)
 - Maintain strong eye contact
- See things from the other persons' perspectives
- Value the other persons' opinions even though their views differ from yours
- Ask gentle, probing questions
- Be able to correctly interpret the meaning of silences and other non-verbal communication that may signify non-participation or intense engagement
- Listen to co-convenors with respect and take their suggestions seriously
- Network among facilitators
- Do not carry on conversations solely among convenor colleagues
- Undertake your own learning journey based on the five questions and threads
- Keep in mind and find ways to keep scholars focused on the Declaration of Bailey, the five questions and the five threads

- Understand the stages of personal, social, and ethical development and be sensitive to developmental readiness
- Be aware of and accommodate to different learning and communication styles

*"For groups to develop collective intelligence and shared meaning, individual members must learn to listen across three dimensions simultaneously. First, you listen to others, to identify what you see as important and to expand your own understanding. Second, you listen to yourself, to your internal conversation and your own voice as you speak. Third, you listen for the collective themes, for the shared meaning the group is continuously creating and for new streams of meaning that may want to emerge."

Listening to another: Listening to another person is a powerful act. It is an act of respect, of valuing. Conversely, not listening is often experienced as disrespect. When we listen with a willingness to hear what is real and important to another, both of us become more real.

Listening to Self: Internal conversation often makes it difficult to create and maintain focus on what the other person is saying. It is often filled with judgments, doubts, preparation for what to say next, thinking up rebuttals, or wondering how much longer this is going to take. To listen deeply and fully to another requires focused attention and internal silence, to listen from a position of neutrality and detachment with a willingness to consider all perspectives.

Listening for Collective Shared Meaning: Listening for collective meaning assumes that what we each feel, see, hear, and perceive is one window on a common reality. If we also listen for the interrelationships among all the perceptions in a group the whole will become visible. (pages 100-106)

From Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation:

Linda Ellinor and Glenna Gerard, 1998, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., NY