

Jesuit Education and Ignatian Pedagogy
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***"We aim to form leaders in service, men and women of competence, conscience
and compassionate commitment."***

Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.
Superior General of the Society of Jesus

Since the time they launched their first school in 1548, the Jesuits have believed that a high quality education is the best path to meaningful lives of leadership and service. They have understood that the liberal arts, the natural and social sciences, and the performing arts, joined with all the other branches of knowledge, were a powerful means to develop leaders with the potential for influencing and transforming society. Committed from the very beginning to educating the whole person, the Jesuits adapted the best educational models available while developing their own pedagogical methods to become the "schoolmasters of Europe."

Jesuit education has been historically successful in many cultures because it is eminently adaptable to the environment of the learner. Jesuit education is adaptable to many diverse learners--traditional age and adult, full-time and part-time, on-campus and online. Present and future learners can expect Jesuit education to continue to adapt in appropriate ways to meet their evolving needs.

Some Characteristics of a Jesuit Education

Jesuit education is a call to human excellence, to the fullest possible development of all human qualities. It is a call to critical thinking and disciplined studies, a call to develop the whole person, head and heart, intellect and feelings.

Jesuit education systematically incorporates methods from a variety of sources which better contribute to the intellectual, social, moral, and religious formation of the whole person. In the underlying principle of *Tantum Quantum*, that which may work better is adopted and assessed while that which is proven ineffective is discarded.

Jesuit education presents academic subjects out of a human "centredness", with stress on uncovering and exploring the patterns, relationships, facts, questions, insights, conclusions, problems, solutions, and implications which a particular discipline brings to light about what it means to be a human being.

Jesuit education strives to give learners ongoing development of their imagination, feelings, conscience and intellect, and to encourage and help them recognize new experiences as opportunities to further growth. Learners see service to others as more self-fulfilling than personal success or prosperity.

Jesuit education moves the learning experience beyond rote knowledge to the development of the more complex learning skills of understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Learners write and speak about subject matter with stylistic excellence--*Eloquentia Perfecta*--and engage in public debate.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Model

The *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 provided a coherent statement of operating methods and objectives for the hundreds of Jesuit colleges in Europe, Asia and the Americas that constituted a vast and growing education operation. While such a universal curriculum is impossible today, a systematically organized pedagogy whose substance and methods promote the explicit vision of the contemporary Jesuit educational mission is consistent with the Jesuit tradition. The Jesuit tradition of Ignatian Pedagogy is a

process by which teachers accompany learners in the lifelong pursuit of competence, conscience, and compassionate commitment. Such an Ignatian pedagogical paradigm can help teachers and learners to focus their work in a manner that is academically sound and at the same time formative of persons for others.

In order to translate the Jesuit educational characteristics into action, the International Commission on the Apostolate of Jesuit Education (ICAJE) issued Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach in 1993 as a model that speaks to the Jesuit teaching-learning process, that addresses the teacher-learner relationship, and that has practical meaning and application for the classroom.

Ignatian Pedagogy embodies five key teaching elements--Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation.

Context - What needs to be known about learners (their environment, background, community, and potential) to teach them well?

Cura personalis--personal care and concern for the individual--is a hallmark of Jesuit education, and requires that teachers become as conversant as possible with the context or life experience of the learner. Since human experience, always the starting point in a Jesuit education, never occurs in a vacuum, educators must know as much as possible as mu

initiative. It allows teachers to expect more of students, to call upon them to take greater responsibility for and be more active in their own learning. It helps teachers to motivate learners by providing the occasion