

Tips for Practicing Ignatian Pedagogy: Syllabus & Course Development

There are numerous ways to layer Ignatian pedagogical concepts into your course planning, and chances are, you're already doing things we might consider "Ignatian." The degree to which these elements can or should be made more explicit is dependent upon many things, including disciplinary practices and philosophy of teaching. The following tips can help you to begin to be more intentional, both in course planning and in how you communicate those plans to students.

- 1) Use the five elements of Ignatian pedagogy as a framing device for your syllabus, course, or assignments.
- 2) Translate the five elements into disciplinary concepts or terminology that might be slightly better suited to the learning you want to foster (but tell students, so they see the relevance of these concepts).
- 3) Treat the assignments / activities you design for students as both **action** (i.e., ways to apply concepts/skills learned), but also as **experiences** (i.e., processes of learning). This may mean building in an explicit question about *how* they studied for an exam, *how* they put together a report or essay.
- 4) Make the **experience** ↔ **reflection** ↔ **action** process a central feature of the learning in your course. Articulate why this sort of meta-cognitive awareness is important for deep learning, how it can help students to apply this learning in their work with and for others, and how it can help them to connect learning in one course to learning in another.
- 5) Layer in some of the more subtle aspects of Ignatian pedagogy, such as repetition, imagination, moral discernment, quiet reflection time, conversation, *eloquentia perfecta*, etc.

Sample Activities

- The basic parts of any syllabus could be made to fit the five elements fairly naturally (and using them to structure the syllabus content would give you an occasion for introducing students to them):

Context:	Course policies; learning objectives; instructor information
Experience:	Assumptions about students' previous experiences with information/discipline; descriptions of kind of learning experiences (e.g., interactive) you want to create
Reflection:	Essays or other response assignments; assumptions about how they will read/engage with course content; meta-cognitive exercises students will complete
Action:	Assignment descriptions; community based service learning expectations (if any); ways students might apply their learning (to real-life cases, perhaps)
Evaluation:	Descriptions of grading policies (i.e., how students will be evaluated); discussions of ways to provide feedback to you (i.e., how they will evaluate you); standards / expectations for providing feedback to others (peers, patients)

- In a course that aims to teach good writing skills (whether for essays or lab reports or grants, and so forth), the five elements could be used as a compositional tool. The “mapping” of the elements over the parts of the produce generated might look like this (though they may not always be in this order):

Context:	Literature review; background or plot; summary of problem to be solved; hypothesis
Experience:	Methods describing how study / analysis was performed; account of applicable personal experience
Reflection:	Accounting for what happened and what lessons were learned
Action:	Proposed future action / research; a call to arms; practical application of concepts learned
Evaluation:	Critical evaluation of existing data; critique of counter arguments; description of a “gap” in the literature

- Re: Context. . . Use the concepts of Ignatian pedagogy to set clear expectations for the *community* of the class, making sure to be mindful of all students and communicating inclusivity. One example for this came out in the May diversity/inclusiveness event: incorporate all sorts of student support services into a single section, expanding to go beyond just the disability statement.
- Re: Reflection. . . in a course that is required for the core, you might ask students to complete an end-of-semester reflection assignment in which they go back over the syllabus, aiming to draw connections between the various threads of your course, and to connect lessons learned in your course to lessons learned in other courses (maybe even other semesters). This could take the form of a concept map, a formal essay, a presentation, etc. The main thing is to get them drawing *connections* between various kinds of learning, so they can begin to identify – for themselves – what this set of courses adds up to.

Additional Information

Clarke, Kevin. “How to Build a Better Student.” *America: The National Catholic Weekly* (May 16, 2011).

Jesuit Education and Ignatian Pedagogy. AJCU’s Jesuit Distance Education Network:
<http://www.ajcunet.edu/Jesuit-Education-and-Ignatian-Pedagogy>.

Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence, Ignatian Pedagogy:
<http://cte.slu.edu/ignatian/index.html>

Teaching to the Mission. Xavier University and the Ignatian Mentoring Program for faculty:
<http://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/mission-focused-pedagogy.cfm>