



Spring 2017

## Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm at Arrupe College

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### Recommended Citation

Ahumada, Minerva; Gore, Shannon; Raees, Aisha; and Tarantino, Carlo, "Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm at Arrupe College" (2017). *Ignatian Pedagogy Educational Resources*. 9.

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**Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm**  
**at**  
**Arrupe College**

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Arrupe College is a major initiative at Loyola University Chicago, as outlined in the Strategic Plan 2020. Loyola seeks to provide access to higher education to students whose educational path has underprepared them to pursue a Bachelors degree. Arrupe College will serve students who would “otherwise attend community colleges” (Plan 2020 1). Arrupe College opened its doors in August 2015. A mission was written in that first academic year. Arrupe’s mission states that,

Arrupe College is a two-year college of Loyola University Chicago that continues the Jesuit tradition of offering a rigorous liberal arts education to a diverse population, many of whom are the first in their family to pursue higher education. Using an innovative model that ensures affordability while providing care for the whole person—intellectually, morally, and spiritually—Arrupe prepares its graduates to continue on to a bachelor’s program or move into meaningful employment. Heeding the call of its namesake, renowned Jesuit leader Pedro Arrupe, S.J., the college inspires its students to strive for excellence, work for justice, and become “persons for others.”

The mission clearly establishes that Arrupe students represent a diverse population and that most of these students are the first ones in their families to pursue higher education. Arrupe vows to be Affordable, Accessible, and Achievable. In order to prepare and better serve the students who attend Arrupe, professors and staff would benefit from a more contextual understanding of who these students are.

While there is information about students—breakdown by race and by school of origin, for example—such information does not provide information that is pertinent to the work professors will engage with in the classroom and as advisors. In order to care for students’ intellectual, moral, and spiritual development, those working at Arrupe need to develop an approach that is more student centered. Having a pedagogy that is student centered will also allow us to consider Arrupe’s pillars of affordability, achievability, and accessibility in relation to individual students and/or classes being taught.

The Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm (IPP hereafter) offers a unique approach that those working at Arrupe might want to pay attention to, especially in order to develop relationships that embody *cura personalis* and allow the students to graduate from the program and continue onto the next goal in their life, whether that is obtaining a bachelors degree or meaningful employment.

The IPP consists of five different yet interrelated domains: context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. The focus of this project is the domain of context, as it is necessary for those of us working at Arrupe to know who our students are so we can teach them from where they are, as well as to develop a trusting relationship so students know they are recognized as individual students with a particular background and needs. It is this connection to the students' context that can help Arrupe faculty and staff provide better and more suitable ways of accompanying our students.

Susan Mountin and Rebecca Nowacek's chapter entitled "Reflection in Action: A Signature Ignatian Pedagogy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" highlights the way in which Ignatian pedagogy can be used even in institutions that are not Jesuit. Mountin and Nowacek focus on two points in their argument: 1) the cross-disciplinary nature of the IPP and 2) that the IPP will appeal to those who "link the cultivation of intellectual accomplishment and scholarly expertise to the moral and spiritual dimension" (131). This later point seems to speak to Arrupe's mission in a direct way.

Mountin and Nowacek boldly establish that "at the center of the Ignatian paradigm is 'context'" (135) thus clearly marking this pedagogy as one that is student-centered. The authors mention that, "We understand 'context' in two dimensions. There is the context of the student's own life situation, who he or she *is* coming into the classroom. This can include a sense of self-

identity as well as the student's personal context: economic pressures, relationships with loved ones, and so on" and the "concentric circles" in which the students move—i.e. their classrooms, local, national, and global environments (135). This knowledge of the student's context should allow faculty and advisors at Arrupe to get to know who we are working with, so we can truly care for the whole person. The question becomes: how does one gather this knowledge? What are activities and/or moments through which we can understand our students' context better?

In "Depth, Universality, and Learned Ministry: Challenges to Jesuit Higher Education Today," by Fr. Adolfo Nicolás, S.J., the Jesuit strengthens the value of looking at the dimension of "context" in ways that seem to befit Arrupe's mission. He asks, "How then does this new context of globalization, with the exciting possibilities and serious problems it has brought to our world, challenge Jesuit higher education to re-define, or at least, re-direct its mission?"(2). It is this new globalized context to which Loyola is responding by creating Arrupe College. The students who attend Arrupe are challenging us to re-define how we see, and do, education. However, we cannot simply observe from the distance and come to conclusions about who these students are and what their needs, wants, desires, and aspirations are. If we are responding to these students, if that is the challenge we have taken upon us both as Loyola University Chicago and as Arrupe College, we are obligated to listen to them and respond to who they are. Therefore, we need to know their context, and as we do not live their lives, we must open up opportunities for them to teach us about their lives.

This is a portfolio of different activities one can do with students in order to learn more from them. The portfolio also offers some helpful information about students who are currently attending Arrupe College. Right now the portfolio only offers pieces collected by the four

authors of this final project. However, the goal is to ask other faculty and staff at Arrupe to share activities, assignments, and projects that they have found allow us to develop a clearer idea of who the students are and/or of how they have used the knowledge of the students' context in order to provide opportunities and challenges that are responding to this particular student or group of students, especially if addressing a class or a student organization.

It is important to mention that although the portfolio focuses on assignments and activities that address the dimension of “context,” students and faculty and staff will also engage with the other four dimensions of the IPP. For example, if a professor asks students about their access to internet at home or their preferred pronouns, the professor will—after receiving the answers from the students—engage in a process of reflection (what am I learning about my students?), follow unto a process of action (what can I do with these answers in my interaction with students?), and allow for a constant process of evaluation of this experience during the interactions with the students (how has my approach to my class benefitted my students?).

Students can also engage in the IPP, probably in a different order than the faculty of staff. Students will think about their experiences in order to answer prompts about their context, but once this context has been provided to faculty and staff, students can reflect on and evaluate whether or not the information they are providing is being addressed in successful ways; students could then decide to let the people they are working with whether they have benefitted or not, but they could also provide new ideas as to what might be helpful when working in a relationship that embraces *cura personalis*. It would look something like the following representation:

### **Faculty/Staff IPP cycle**

Context → Reflection → Action → Experience → Evaluation

## **Student IPP cycle**

Experience → Context → Reflection → Evaluation → Action

It is our hope that faculty and staff at Arrupe will use the examples here included as a way to come up with new and innovative ways to get to know the students we serve. We want to use this project both as a way to learn from our students and from our colleagues at school. Arrupe faculty and staff are mission driven—we have seen these throughout our first years of operation—but sometimes responsibilities become too overwhelming to come up with a tool or activity that can have high impact in the developing of trust in the classroom or at school. These samples are a way of helping each other and of creating a more conscientious approach to the students we accompany.

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# Getting to Know Students

This is a questionnaire that aims to obtain three pieces of information about students: what is their preferred name (maybe a nickname, or a middle name that does not appear in the roster), their preferred pronouns (as they will be used in the introduction the craft; this is both a nod to students who are LGBTQ and/or gender non-conforming and a non-intimidating way to have students think of ways in which they identify); lastly, it also has students think about the content of the class and the knowledge they are already bringing to it.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.

- **Preferred Name:**
- **Think of a way in which you would like to be introduced by someone else.** What would they say about you that is personal, unique, and important?  
Write it exactly as you wish to be introduced (use third-person pronouns, have them mention your preferred name, and some information you want your professor and peers to know about you).
- **Define “person”:**
- **Define “society”:**
- **What do you think we will be studying in a Philosophy class called “The Person and Society”?**
- **Is there anything else you would like me to know about you?**

Since we are both professors and advisors to some students at Arrupe, it is helpful to differentiate the information we might need from them in each one of these roles. The following is a writing exercise advisors can give their students toward the first weeks working with them. The exercise and discussion ask students to consider what information might be helpful for the advisor to know so that they can do a better role working with advisees. An example of information that might be helpful but that the advisor cannot get if it is not disclosed by the advisee is whether the student is DACA or undocumented, or whether the student has any financial needs that will affect them while at Arrupe.

Since students can share sensitive information about themselves, it's a good idea to keep that information private as an exercise of the trust students are starting to develop on the advisor.

Preferred name: \_\_\_\_\_ Summer 2017

Instructions: getting to know a person takes time and trust. In this exercise, I am asking you to let me know a bit about yourself. I am asking not because I want to pry into your life, but because knowing certain things about you can be helpful in developing a strong and helpful relationship between the two of us. Please be as open and honest as you wish as you answer the following questions. It is also ok to not answer some of them.

What is something you are proud of? Tell me why this is a source of pride

If you could teach something to me and your peers, what would that be?

Why did you choose to come to Arrupe College?

According to you, what is my role as your advisor?

Based on your answer and our group discussion of what an advisor at Arrupe does, what would you want me to know about you, so I can serve you better? You could think about it as short answers to the following questions: what academic goals do you have? Will you need help navigating financial aid or campus resources? Are there any personal or familial stories that might help or detract from your goals at Arrupe?

The following list of statements could be helpful to get to know whether a student has reliable access to the internet or whether to connect them to Student Success to ask for funds to buy books early on in the semester (especially important for students taking Math, Stats, or Pre-Calc classes). Some of the questions can be cross-referenced to develop a clearer understanding of the financial needs a student has.

Preferred name: \_\_\_\_\_ Summer 2017

Instructions: The following statements aim to provide some basic understanding about you and your surroundings. These statements address issues that have been important to Arrupe students in the past.

Please mark the following statements as True or False according to your current experience. Be as open and honest as you wish as you answer the following questions. It is also ok to not answer some of them.

- |  |      |       |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. I live close to a train station.  | True | False |
| 2. I work more than 20 hours per week.   | True | False |
| 3. I have reliable internet access at home.  | True | False |
| 4. I feel supported by my family while pursuing a degree at <u>Arrupe</u> .          | True | False |
| 5. I need to work to pay my own bills.   | True | False |
| 6. I know what my books for this semester are.                                       | True | False |
| 7. I am good at getting organized.   | True | False |
| 8. I pay attention to deadlines ahead of time.                                       | True | False |
| 9. I need to work in order to help my family pay bills.                              | True | False |
| 10. If I don't understand something in class, I will ask my professor about it.      | True | False |
| 11. I understand that it is important for me to read the syllabi for all my classes. | True | False |
| 12. There's a place near me where I can have access to the internet.                 | True | False |
| 13. I depend on the <u>UPass</u> to get around.                                      | True | False |
| 14. I take more than one bus or one train to get to school.                          | True | False |
| 15. I take care of small siblings or relatives.                                      | True | False |
| 16. I know who can help me if I feel unmotivated in school.                          | True | False |
| 17. Work needs to be a priority for me.  | True | False |
| 18. I can buy my books for this semester.  | True | False |
| 19. I keep a planner.  | True | False |
| 20. My commute to school is over 40 minutes long.                                    | True | False |

Would you want to expand on any of the answers you provided before?

Do you think this questionnaire is missing something important? If so, tell me what that is.

Would you want us to have a conversation about any of the responses you provided? If so, just say yes as we'll schedule an appointment.

# Active Reflection

The signature Ignatian pedagogy, which moves through a cycle of experience, reflection, action, and evaluation can (should?) apply to both students and teachers. One way that both teachers and students can use this Ignatian pedagogy cycle is to incorporate weekly (or regular) course reflection activities. The “metacognition” that the questionnaire encourages, also works to help teachers reflect on and evaluate their own experience as teachers, and consider what changes may need to be made in light of students’ own reflections on the course.

**Note:** The responses can also be collected and read back at the start of each week as a way to share out student views on the class and course content, and to include voices that prefer to remain anonymous. Doing this might also contribute to a larger project of democratizing some aspects of the classroom.

### How it Works

1. At the end of each week, students are given a short “Weekly Course Reflection Questionnaire,” which asks them to reflect on their experience of class that week.
2. Questions are designed to facilitate metacognitive awareness about both a student’s individual engagement with class, and about the collective class environment as a whole.
3. The teacher then types up all or some of the comments and reads a “CRQ Report” back to the students at the start of the following week. The old reports are then filed away.
4. Around mid-semester, and again at the end of the semester, the teacher can then look back at old reports and provide a meta-report on larger trends or themes or changes that have occurred.

### Examples of Some Common Outcomes

Instituting a Weekly Course Reflection and Report process can...

1. Change my perception of how a week went.
2. Change a student’s perception of how a week went.
3. Provide material to improve my own teaching.
4. Encourage a student to engage course further.
5. Provide opportunities for affirmation.
6. Provide opportunity to model democratic pedagogies by explicitly changing or addressing something in class in light of student voices.
7. Provide opportunity at the start of each week to evaluate collective experience of course content (also provides built-in content review).

### Future Application

The aim of engaging context “is to help students move beyond a preoccupation with individual context and become responsive to larger social contexts and to the needs of others” (p. 135 from Nowacek and Mountin’s “Reflection in Action”). Questions could be added that would start to engage this element by widening the class context to include other classes: For example:

“Think of all the other courses you were in this week. Do you see any needs or any opportunities for you to help improve the class environment?”

*WEEKLY COURSE REFLECTION QUESTIONNAIRE*

Please **DO NOT** write your name on this!

Please write something for each question (no "nothing" or "doesn't apply" responses).

1. When in class this week were you most engaged as a learner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. When in class this week were you most distanced as a learner?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What action (including speaking) that anyone in the room (e.g., a fellow student) took this week do you think helped us to create a better classroom environment for lively, democratic discussion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What might need to be changed in our class to improve our discussions? (For example, anything I, we, or someone should start doing, stop doing, rearrange, or switch?)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What surprised you most about the class this week?

Note: if there is anything you are concerned about - either something with our class, or about your involvement in the class - please come by my office to talk and/or send me an email.

HAVE A GOOD WEEKEND -- SEE YOU NEXT WEEK!

This exercise was originally designed for a communication class focusing on the connection between understanding self-image and interpersonal communication. Using Psychologists Joseph Luften and Harry Ingham's Johari Window model, students begin to think about how they see themselves and how others see them. This introspection includes examining personality, likes and dislikes, culture, experiences, talents and shortcomings and how these things influence interpersonal interactions. The exercise promotes student engagement and emphasizes the importance of learning from the student and about the student.

The Johari Window model complements the Ignatian Pedagogy paradigm and offers an opportunity for teachers to understand how students perceive themselves. This may prove useful when attempting to help the student succeed in class. The student provides context via the explanation of his or her individual Johari Window. Moreover, the exercise requires reflection on self-concept. Finally, the task may lead to more self-awareness and an adjustment of actions due to that awareness.

The model can be introduced towards the beginning of the semester and revisited later to discuss areas of growth.



Created in 1955, the **Johari Window Model** represents your self-image via four quadrants or four window panes. The **Open Self** pane includes messages you convey to people about yourself, what you know about yourself and what other people know about you. This information may include your age, gender, culture, marital status, personal views, etc. The **Blind Self** pane represents information that others know about you but that you do not know about yourself. The **Hidden Self** is the information you hide from other people for one reason or another. In this instance, you know something about yourself but others do not know it. Finally, the **Unknown Self** pane represents information that you do not know about yourself and others are not aware of this information either. One example would be a hidden talent. One objective is to examine the messages that you put out into the world and how these messages influence relationships, well-being and personal goals. Additionally, we are taking a closer look at what we choose to communicate and what is left "unsaid."

### Exercise

Using giant post-its, create your own Johari Window, writing down a summary of answers to questions considered for each quadrant with the exception of the **Hidden Self** quadrant. For this special quadrant, take a few minutes to reflect on the questions but you do not have to verbally share your answers. We will not force you to reveal anything! 😊

#### **Quadrant 1 Open Self**

What does everyone know about you?  
 How do you feel about others knowing this information?  
 How would you describe your personality?

#### **Quadrant 2 Blind Self**

How would friends describe you?  
 (This question can include interviewing a good friend in class. If you are bold, and ready for the answers, you can ask about your strengths and weaknesses.)

Recently, has anyone noticed a trait, personality quirk, behavior, etc. that you were unaware of?

#### **Quadrant 3 Hidden Self**

What information do you keep hidden from others?  
 Why?  
 Do you think close friends, family or others may have some idea about information you conceal?  
 How does this discrete information influence your daily interactions/communication?

#### **Quadrant 4 Unknown Self**

If you had unlimited time, what would you do with your time?  
 What do you know about yourself *now* that you didn't know a few years ago?

American philosopher C.S Peirce, talks about how Descartes' famous doubt was problematic as a motivation for inquiry because it was not authentic. As a pragmatist myself, I am motivated by the idea that inquiry is born of true struggle against a problem that disrupts our life. In my classes I seek to uncover this unique "irritation," as Peirce calls it, for each student. The kind of doubt that Peirce describes as "irritation," will always be encountered in the person's environment and appear as an interruption, unannounced.

This assignment asks students to find one such "irritation." This is a difficult request since you cannot simulate doubt but must experience it organically. So, the question is, how do we create the conditions within which such doubt occurs? This is the application of critical evaluation. When we critically observe and evaluate our surroundings, we create the conditions, and the possibility of arriving at this feeling of doubt. This feeling of doubt or search for it, is the philosophical mindset in my view. Happily, when described, this process gives insight into what is a strong impetus for thought, freely arrived at.

What would this process look like? I think any habitual action can take this task on. The following is a three-part assignment carried out over the course of 6 weeks. The assignment is divided into **3 steps** and each step is followed by **one written reflection**. Each step is meant to take two weeks to complete.

This assignment will provide professors access to a unique window into the lives of the students they teach. By allowing students to choose the thing that jumps out to them as a problem in their communities and by having them discuss this issue with members of their community, we have the opportunity to first encounter an issue we do not have access to and to then see it from the eyes of someone who experiences the problem. Having this knowledge gives us insight into the context within which our students function and evolve. We can then use this context to plan relevant examples in class discussions/activities, texts for future classes, as well as future assignments. For example, I have used these reflections as a starting point for a research paper. Students used their "problem" as the topic of their paper and their reflections evolved into more structured and analyzed scholarship, based on research and argument.

**Step One:**

*An Exercise in Observation and Musing.*

Once an issue appears to be problematic, the student should write about this process reflectively.

- What did they observe? Describe the problem.
- What did this observation lead them to think about?
- How did they arrive at this moment?

**Step Two:**

*Asking Questions, Gathering Thoughts.*

Student should focus on describing perceptions of the observed problem. In order to do this, you will need to formulate a few questions (at least 2) around the problem you see, and ask people within the community, what they think. Here it is important to recognize the difference in perspective from within the community and without.

- How does the observed problem disrupt the community within which it is observed? Who does it effect?
- How does the observed problem manifest itself? Is it obvious to everyone or is it only internally problematic to the community?
- If it is one, the other, or both, describe how it is perceived in each case.

Once you have had a few conversations around the issue you have observed, write a short reflection about the conversations you've had.

- What did you learn?
- Is this a problem for others in your community?
- What about people not in your community?
- Is there a difference?
- Why do you think this is?

**Step Three:**

*Pan Out: Should this problem be a problem for everyone?*

- If you had to introduce your observed problem to someone who has no experience with the problem, how would you do it?
- Is your problem a small example of a bigger problem?
- Is the problem translatable to a person outside the community?
- What might we need to know in order to know or at least be aware of the problem?
- Maybe relate observed problem to a larger social/political/ethical issue?

The upshot of this activity is to provide a way for students to first find novelty in what is common, open it up, give it humanity by sharing subjective experiences, give it social/historical context, be critical of themselves in relation to it, then find a practical/impactful way to move from their reflection. At the end this assignment would chart out the process of learning that needs to take place in order to revisit old ideas/norms to inject new impact and value to their use and applicability.

# **Information about Students**

(Working on it!)

## Conclusion

The examples of exercises we have covered in this portfolio are only a first step toward incorporating the principles of Ignatian Pedagogy into our individual and ever evolving pedagogies. Our hope is that we can develop this model more in depth and by way of practice, improve our understanding of the five domains we have learned about in this program. We hope also that this particular interpretation and use of the domain of “context” is taken up by other programs and departments more rigorously. By focusing overtly on the domain of “context,” we wish to see emphasis and power given to students as *persons* who belong to and are entrenched in unique histories that are not obvious to us. We believe that this approach to teaching and learning introduces humility into first interactions between professor and student and that this humility is essential for an authentic relationship between the two.

Moreover, by looking at “context” as highlighting the assets a student brings instead of deficits they possess, we choose to work with a student’s strength and use this understanding as a guide for our pedagogical experiments. The aim of these experiments being the accomplishment of knowing oneself in addition to whatever content we are being taught or teaching—self-understanding and reflection remain the core elements of education.

Furthermore, by way of emphasizing “context,” we do not wish to imply that the domains of, “experience,” “reflection,” “action,” and “evaluation” are less important. Indeed, we acknowledge that in each of our exercises, we have essential components that require these elements to be explored at length. This is to say that the five domains work together and support one another as delineating a process of learning. However, we feel that this process is least

explored in its implications for understanding “context” within academia—we are often encouraged to draw a hard line between our personal lives and what we share with our students, for example. Though there are many ways to get this wrong, we hope that we have provided examples that get at some important aspects of personal as well as shared context without necessarily asking the more sensitive and possibly difficult questions. The classroom is absolutely the place to unpack difficult personal, political, and other sensitive issues but, the thoughtfulness and care required to navigate these, is necessary to develop before successfully using “context” in a meaningful and impactful way. We hope that our thoughts provide cultivation for such ideas.

Finally, Arrupe College represents Loyola’s commitment to social justice and as a Jesuit institution, this program exemplifies a powerful engagement with “context”—Loyola’s institutional/historical context as well as the context of the needs of the institution’s community. As faculty belonging to this program, we have the rare opportunity to know our students as teachers and as advisors. As advisors we are very close to our students—we are required to know them personally. This expectation is very uncommon in academia and because we have this model in place, our pedagogy stands to gain from the context we already have about our students as advisors. As advisors and teachers, we share our insights between faculty and develop plans of action in relation to specific students, working with the student in a transparent manner. Our team consists of social workers, counsellors, and academic coaches, etc. At Arrupe, different departments work together closely to gain different perspectives about a student. In doing this, we are aiming to find a way to contextualize a student’s behavior or academic pattern. Often, we have students present at these discussions and so it becomes more important that we are mindful of who the student is and what they bring to the table. If we meet without this context, we are not

going to address the real issues that may be affecting a student and we will not do as well in helping the student—we may not be able to *listen* to the student. So, we need IPP applied broadly to other departments involved in student success. To this end, we hope that our examples of how we can better listen to our students can help not only our faculty, but also other departments focused on student care.

We need context and we need care focused on acquiring this insight. We need to give power to the student to give us this insight. This is the only way we can emulate our mission in reality.