

Resource Guide

Online Teaching Through a Jesuit Lens

Ignatian pedagogy emphasizes the transformational power of education through student-centered learning experiences. In on-ground courses, this might manifest itself through service-based learning opportunities or group-based examinations of social justice issues. But, how can Ignatian pedagogy translate to the online classroom, when participants are distanced by time, place, and screens? Below are suggestions for incorporating the five key elements of the [Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm](#) in an online course:

- **Get your students talking about their individual learning contexts.** Consider using discussion boards, surveys, polls, and icebreakers to get students to share information about their background and individual learning situations (e.g., work spaces, schedules, prior online learning experience). Back-channeling through social media (e.g., Twitter), holding virtual student hours, or organizing virtual coffee talks might also allow you to learn about, and interact with, your students in an informal manner. You can then use this contextual information to show care, empathy, and relate with students when responding to emails, interacting in discussions, or providing feedback.
- **Guide students in connecting prior and learned experiences.** Design learning activities that get students to connect their prior beliefs, values, and insights concerning at topic with new information and learning opportunities. This might take the form of current event discussion boards, portfolio assignments, or group case studies. These activities help students internalize and process information in relation to existing belief systems, while challenging these beliefs and invoking curiosity, interest, and “controlled confusion” as powerful emotionally-based learning stimuli (Cavanaugh 2016).
- **Highlight reflection and repeat it in the learning process.** Online formats provide multiple opportunities for reflection, which allows students to think about how they process and retrieve information. This might take the form of practice exercises or ungraded quizzes after readings or following a key assessment. Peer review activities and peer-based discussion boards allow students to reflect on their individual choices while providing constructive feedback. Asking students to chronicle their individual progress and learning achievements, through journaling or blogging, are also options. Reflection may even be as simple as incorporating pauses in video lectures or audio recordings to give students space to check their understanding.
- **Get students to act on their learning in varied ways.** An important aspect of the learning process is getting students to act on and create their own learning experiences.

Student-facilitated discussion boards, readings, or recorded demonstrations are just one option. Students can act on their learning outside of your classroom -- and bring those experiences back in -- by conducting interviews with professionals, attending virtual town hall meetings, or participating in streaming deliberations of non-profit groups. In addition, you can mimic real-world applications by incorporating virtual labs or simulations.

- **Remind students of their learning progress.** Just as important as it is to connect learning activities with specific course outcomes, remind students of their progress through check lists, affirming announcements that draw attention to student work, and feedback provided within rubrics. This formative feedback encourages students to think about their learning and its application in future settings. Designing ways for students to inform you of what was beneficial to their learning, through surveys, self-assessments, or module evaluations, is also extremely valuable feedback you can use in future course design situations.

Resources

Cavanaugh, S.R. (2016). *The spark of learning: Energizing the college classroom with the science of emotion*. Morgantown, W.V.: West Virginia University Press.

Reinert Center: [Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm](#)

Segerman, J. (2018). [A best practice checklist for Jesuit education and online learning](#). Center for Mission and Identity: Xavier University

For more information or to discuss how you might incorporate these ideas into your courses, contact the Reinert Center by [email](#).