Reflections on the educational principles of the Spiritual exercises

Author: Robert R. Newton

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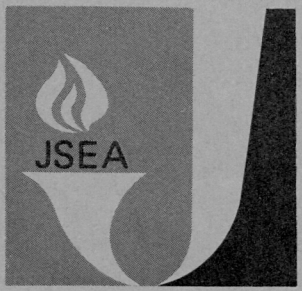

REFLECTIONS ON THE EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

By
Robert R. Newton, S.J.
Regis High School, New York

Monograph 1

JESUIT SECONDARY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
1717 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N. W. • SUITE 402 • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

PREFACE

The Board of Directors of the Jesuit Secondary Education Association on February 21, 1977 discussed the need and feasibility of expanding its regular publications. Although the Board was not ready to accept the role of publishing a magazine or occasional papers or monographs, they did vote to print Father Newton's paper because of its immediate relevance to Jesuit education. They had a second hope--that making this article available to our membership would encourage others to put into writing studies they have made on Jesuit education.

Reverend Robert R. Newton, S.J. is a Jesuit of the Maryland Province. After graduating from the University of Scranton in 1957, he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Wernersville and followed the Jesuit course of studies until his ordination in 1967. As a scholastic, he taught Classical Languages at Loyola High School, Towson, Maryland. One year after his ordination he received a S.T.M. Degree from Yale University in Social Ethics and immediately began studies at Harvard. In 1971 he received his doctorate from Harvard University in Educational Administration.

For two years he was Associate Director of Secondary Education for the Maryland Province and joined J.S.E.A.'s Commission on Research and Development in 1971. He has been Headmaster at Regis High School, New York, since 1972. He has written and lectured extensively on educational issues and religious education.

Washington, D.C.
March 20, 1977

Edwin J. McDermott, S.J.
President, J.S.E.A.

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PRENOTE

The following reflections on the educational principles of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius grew out of the question: is there a specifically Jesuit method in education? The answer was not sought in order to reassure educators in Jesuit institutions that they were doing a task which was different, unique and therefore worth continuing. Rather the intent was to re-examine and to restate traditional Jesuit strategies in education in order to outline norms by which Jesuit schools and colleges could discern both whether they are being faithful to and drawing full value from the Ignatian spiritual and educational tradition.

The method involved a careful reading and personal reflection on the text of the Spiritual Exercises against the background of current educational practice and theory. Though the focus of this analysis is education, the conclusion that there is an authentically Jesuit method suggests that the norms articulated here could be applied analogously to other Jesuit apostolates.

The Exercises are both substance and process, i.e., they contain a definite set of religious ideals and also a methodology by which a person can grow towards those ideals. The reflections which follow focus on the process rather than the substance of the Exercises.

Robert R. Newton, S.J.
Regis High School, New York

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OF

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I. INTRODUCTION

Renewal of Interest in the Spiritual Exercises

There are critical moments in the history of any organization when it becomes imperative to return to the insights which gave rise to the organization, to rediscover and recreate the charism at the heart of its foundation. Such a process is taking place in the Jesuit Order through a renewal of interest in the Spiritual Exercises.

The Exercises are a carefully arranged series of activities or exercises by which a retreatant is brought face to face with basic religious realities and is challenged to respond to those realities. The Exercises were based on Ignatius' own spiritual experience and were modified and refined by him through a lifetime of directing others (both lay and religious) in making the Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises were also the process which Ignatius

used to lead individual Jesuits to the same experience of God which had moved him to found the Society of Jesus.

Over the years the methodology of giving the Exercises wandered from its original form and, in the opinion of most, became a less effective instrument to recreate the values and charism which animated Ignatius. The underlying assumption of the movement to emphasize the Spiritual Exercises is that, by closer adherence to the founder's principles and prescriptions on process and method, the religious experience which is the vital core of the Jesuit vocation and its apostolic works can be better communicated to Jesuits and laypersons involved in Jesuit apostolic works, and thus be the source of the renewal of spirit both within the Order and within the institutions which derive a sense of direction and purpose from the Society of Jesus.

An Analogous Situation in Jesuit Education

The insight which prompted Ignatius to found a religious order was the same one which led him to conclude that education was an appropriate and important instrument to accomplish the goals of the Society. It is natural that both the substance and process of Jesuit spiritual formation would be reflected in the educational thinking and organization of Ignatius and his early companions.*

Even a superficial comparison of the ideals and procedures of the Spiritual Exercises and the principles and directives of the educational documents of the Jesuit Order reveals obvious similarities. Consequently, what follows is a brief re-examination of the Spiritual Exercises and the educational methodology they contain. The assumption is that the Exercises incorporate a series of norms which can be

used both to evaluate current educational practice and to give direction to a faculty seeking to discover how to make the educational process specifically Jesuit in character.

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*The relationship of the Spiritual Exercises, The Constitutions and the Ratio Studiorum. In exploring the original principles of Jesuit education, it is valuable to keep in mind the purpose and relationship of the three documents mentioned above. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are a series of directives for leading a person through a process of religious development.

The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, composed by Ignatius during the last nine years of his life, are the basic code of rules and statutes which govern the Jesuit Order. Part IV of The Constitutions includes the practical arrangements Ignatius prescribes for Jesuit seminaries and for colleges and schools for the general public. The Ratio Studiorum after a lengthy period of trial and error, was composed and revised after the death of Ignatius and reached its final form in 1599. The Ratio contains directives on the curriculum and teaching methodology to be followed in Jesuit educational institutions.

While the Constitutions and the Ratio contain many direct and indirect observations on the principles of Jesuit education, they would be more accurately described as documents concerned with practical decisions and procedures rather than statements of values or principles. The Spiritual Exercises can be seen as the spirit which animates and, through the experience it creates, provides the value structure for these more practical educational documents.

II. EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

A. Education as an Instrument

Though the aim of this analysis is to describe the methodology of the Exercises rather than the religious overview they contain, the concept of education as an instrument to achieve religious goals is, I think, both the pivotal substantive and methodological component of the Exercises.

The aim of the Exercises is stated in the first introductory observation of Ignatius--to rid the person of those habits and actions which keep him from God; then to help him to seek and find the will of God for the salvation of his soul. Both the substance and the process of the Spiritual Exercises, the activities and exercises, their order and arrangement, are subordinated to this goal. The "Principle and Foundation" which precedes the First Week of the Exercises states this assumption--man is created to praise, reverence and serve God and by this means save his soul; everything else has been created to help man achieve this goal.

There is a singlemindedness in Ignatius' directives and exercises. Each activity is judged by one criterion: will it be effective in moving the person to discover and serve God in his life? This question is not a static backdrop but an active concern, explicitly considered in every decision and activity.

Jesuit educational institutions were founded on the identical assumption which gave purpose to the Spiritual Exercises. Schools and colleges were not intended to be ends in themselves but instruments to

aid Jesuits and their fellowmen to attain the purpose for which they were created, the knowledge, love and service of God. This becomes the ultimate norm for determining the level of success or failure of a Jesuit school or college.

Operating excellent schools is important and necessary but, in the end, the level of academic success is not the final measure of effectiveness; it is the degree to which the apostolic goal--the greater glory and service of God--is achieved.

Ignatius intended that this concept of instrumentality would permeate the entire organization and motivate the staff of Jesuit schools and colleges. It would be in the forefront of policy and planning decisions; it would give perspective and purpose to the role of each staff member and each course and activity. Ideally, each faculty member consciously would see his efforts aimed at an apostolic goal which both supported and went beyond the immediate end of his activity.

Such a lofty goal needs refinement and specification if it is to have any practical significance. A series of second level objectives which seem applicable to today's schools and colleges might include the following:

--a faculty for whom religious questions are vital concerns, though their answers to these questions might vary; further, a faculty who are willing to share their concerns and experiences with students;

--a strong and effective academic program in theology which promotes religious values and literacy;

--a special concern in the curriculum for sensitizing students to the issues of social injustice on national and international levels; and

--a pastoral program which sponsors an effective retreat program, provides opportunities for worship in schoolwide and small group settings, and creates opportunities for student involvement in Christian service.

Obviously these are examples. Further specification could be achieved by reviewing the normative documents published by Jesuit high school and college associations. The purpose here is merely to emphasize that the goal of a Jesuit school or college goes beyond humanistic education to an ultimate purpose which is explicitly religious. It is a goal which should be part of the consciousness and explicit operating philosophy of a determining number of the faculty, both as individuals and as a group; it should emerge in the life of the institution in the reality of concrete, actively supported programs.

B. The Learning Goal - Developing Independence and Responsibility

One who carefully analyzes the Spiritual Exercises will likely conclude that they are structured to be an intensive "laboratory" experience aimed at two objectives:

1. through an experience of God in prayer, personal acceptance of the Christian message and commitment to the service of God, and

2. through repetition of a patterned approach to prayer, development and habitual practice of

a. various forms of prayer (e.g., meditation and contemplation), and

b. interpretation of important activities, events and choices in one's life from a religious perspective.

Ideally the retreatant emerges from the Exercises committed to a set of religious values which will give direction to his life and future decisions. He has also, in the form of different approaches to prayer and a developed habit of monitoring and evaluating his actions and decisions, emerged from the Spiritual Exercises with a built-in mechanism for renewing and deepening his religious understanding and commitment. In a sense, the Exercises aim at a perfect, self-correcting system which, through regular review, continually adjusts direction and stimulates further growth. The retreatant has become a self-initiating and self-renewing "pray-er" and discerner.

Taken as an experience which both encourages and insists that the learner (retreatant) internalize definite principles of continuous self-development, the Spiritual Exercises seem to offer a possible solution to a very contemporary problem--the rapid increase in the quantity of knowledge and its equally rapid obsolescence. No longer is a person in any discipline able to rely on what he has learned in his formal education; the knowledge he has acquired will not prepare him to face future problems, most of which are currently unknown and cannot be anticipated. Rather today's education should develop the capacity for continuous self-development through an educational process which promotes the internalization of the skills required to continue to learn. Such skills are generally regarded to be among the higher level cognitive objectives, i.e., capacity to apply, evaluate, synthesize, compare, etc. (in contrast to the more basic skills of knowledge and comprehension). What is called for in many cases is a shift in emphasis: putting primary emphasis on

how to learn rather than on what is learned. Content is not being discarded but the development of the skills required to continue to learn is receiving more emphasis.

The process of producing self-initiating learners is not only a fundamental goal of the Spiritual Exercises but also a pedagogical ideal which is consistent with the Jesuit educational tradition and one of today's urgent educational needs. In a sense, the Spiritual Exercises can be seen as a practicum in how to pray and Jesuit education as a practicum in how to learn; and the product of both is a person who can pray and learn in the face of new opportunities and challenges to his growth.

C. Systematic Organization of Successive Objectives

History has judged Ignatius to be not only a significant religious leader, but also one of modern times most efficient and effective organizers. Those who study the Exercises are impressed by their carefully constructed logical and psychological organization, designed to move the retreatant gradually towards the one, all embracing goal of the experience. The early educational documents of the Jesuits, Part IV of The Constitutions and the Ratio Studiorum reflect this same skill and propensity of Ignatius and his early companions for careful organization. They believed that the overall coherence and structure of the process would have a powerful impact on the educational experience.

The Spiritual Exercises could be compared to a teacher's manual or a course outline for a well-organized learning experience. The Exercises propose directives on both the substance and process of the experience. The retreatant begins with the

Principle and Foundation, a comprehensive worldview specifying the relationship of God to man and the world; this statement provides the presupposition for all that follows. The retreatant proceeds through a consideration of sin and punishment, and is asked to make a thorough examination of conscience and confess his sins. Then, by means of a series of imaginative exercises, he is challenged to consider greater commitment to the service of God in imitation of Christ. To give strength to this resolve, the retreatant contemplates the events and mysteries of Jesus' life--his birth, hidden life, public ministry, passion and death, resurrection and ascension. Finally, he contemplates God's presence in all things and is challenged to offer his life completely to the service of God.

The Exercises promote a process of organic growth. Each stage focuses on specific objectives; what follows depends on what precedes and is appropriate only if the goals of the previous stage have been firmly established. At each point the retreatant is expected to:

1. sharpen his skill in prayer and the interpretation of various feelings connected with the experience of prayer,

2. deepen his understanding of the material or mystery which is the subject of his prayer, and

3. strengthen his commitment to the will of God for him.

Through trial and error over a period of years, Ignatius constructed a systematic process which reflects and incorporates both a psychological and religious logic. If faithfully applied, he found that the Exercises could be an experience of such intensity that religious growth, which might other-

wise have taken years, could be effected by a serious retreatant in a relatively short span. Though all would readily admit that the ultimate cause of this growth is God's action on a well-disposed person, it is also generally agreed that the order and design of the Exercises are an essential ingredient in the "leap" in growth which many experience through the Exercises.

Though the content and sequence of the educational plan or course of studies of a Jesuit institution today must differ substantially from that of past eras, the underlying principle of successively arranged objectives and an overall coherent plan into which all parts fit should remain an important feature of Jesuit education. In reality it is one of the most perplexing and unresolved problems in contemporary Jesuit educational institutions. When Jesuit schools and colleges ceased using a more uniform and generally accepted course of studies, few institutions had a clear grasp of the underlying rationale of the curriculum or a mechanism within the institution to review and develop its own rationale. As segments of the curriculum became dysfunctional and pressure to change increased, piecemeal changes were made; this or that course was added or omitted but frequently without reference to or evaluation on the basis of an overall plan or generally accepted rationale.

The tendency in American education has been to reduce to virtual elimination the core of sequentially ordered and required courses and to allow students increasingly to choose whatever courses they wish. This is not to deny the value of all elective choices but to suggest that in many cases elective opportunities have become such a significant proportion of the educational program that the underlying structure and impact of the curriculum has been seriously weakened or lost. The responsibility and opportunity for the design of the substance and sequence of the program has shifted in

large measure from the faculty to the individual student, sometimes even at the beginning of his educational experience. If direction is no longer provided by a clearly defined structure inherent in the program, then it must be provided to the individual student by a director or advisor who:

1. understands clearly the rationale and educational goal of the curriculum, and

2. can firmly assist the student in the adaptation of the overall goal and rationale to his individual needs and talents.

It is obvious that a rigid curriculum for Jesuit schools or colleges similar to the original Ratio could not be applicable on a national or international level. However, it does seem important and consistent with the Jesuit tradition to have a systematically organized curriculum whose substance and order expresses the explicit vision of the contemporary Jesuit educational apostolate, and whose comprehensive framework provides the structure within which proposals for adaptation can be evaluated.

D. Flexibility and Adaptation within Structure

Though the Spiritual Exercises contain an overall purpose and rationale and incorporate a structure moving the retreatant towards a definite goal, it is also well known that one of the more frequently repeated directives of the Exercises is that at every point the activities and exercises are to be adapted to the individual retreatant.

Though the Spiritual Exercises are divided into

four weeks, Ignatius points out that a week does not necessarily consist of seven days. He observes that some retreatants may be slower in achieving the objectives of the particular week, e.g., contrition and sorrow for sin in the First Week. Others may be more diligent; still others may be disturbed by a particular problem.

The director also takes into consideration the age, educational background and ability of the particular retreatant. In some cases, where it seems to the director that no good will be accomplished, the person is not permitted to go beyond the First Week. In the arrangement of the exercises and the possible inclusion of some which would be more demanding physically, Ignatius observes that the physical constitution of the retreatant should be considered and appropriate adjustments made. Similarly, the choice or amount of time spent on particular events of Christ's life should be adjusted to what is more appropriate or worthwhile for the individual. There is no doubt in the mind of Ignatius that what is important or perhaps essential for one person may be unprofitable or unnecessary for another.

The concept of adaptation to the individual's needs is an essential component in the current movement towards individualization in American education. It is based on the same assumption that motivated Ignatius to insist on the adaptation of the Exercises to each retreatant--in any learning situation the teacher must take into account the obvious differences in the educational backgrounds and abilities of students.

In an individualized system a teacher seeks to adapt to individual students the components of the learning experience:

1. objectives - the immediate purpose

of the learning unit,

2. activities - the instructional program designed to achieve the objectives, and

3. pace - the rate at which the individual achieves the objectives and moves from one objective to another.

The teacher initially sets the objectives, program and pace for each student. However, in accord with the concept of the self-initiating learner, the decisions in these areas, to the extent possible, are gradually shifted to the student himself so that, to the degree possible, he emerges from the educational experience as an independent learner, i.e., one who can set his own objectives, organize his own program and set a pace which is consistent with his ability and background.

The concept of personal concern of the teacher for the individual student has always been perceived as a mark of Jesuit education. Today more than ever, because of the possibilities offered by an emerging technology, this concern is demonstrated by adjusting the educational program to the uniqueness of each student. Personal concern and working with individual students is an ideal which must be adjusted to the realities of staffing ratios and financial constraints. However, it is an ideal which emerges as an essential element in the educational philosophy of the Exercises and which poses the question: to what extent is the school environment and are individual courses, in goals, program and pace, adapted to individual students?

The Spiritual Exercises provide an excellent example of structured flexibility, i.e., within a highly organized pattern of successive objectives, substantial freedom for the adapation of the Exer-

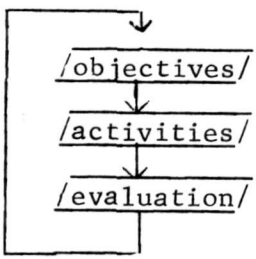
cises to individual needs and talents. The process presumes, as noted previously, the guidance of a director or advisor who has internalized the values and purposes of the total experience and thus is able to adapt the components of the experience to the individual. Ignatius is equally insistent on structure and flexibility; both, in proper proportion, are essential to the effectiveness of the Exercises.

E. Systems Designed Units

The concept of structured flexibility also characterizes the style and approach of the individual units with the Exercises. Each exercise follows a set pattern:

1. remote preparation,
2. preliminary exercises,
3. statement of objectives,
4. an outline of the important points of the matter to be considered,
5. performance of the activity, and
6. evaluation of performance in the light of objectives.

This outline contains the essential elements of a "system":



(analysis of whether activities have achieved the objectives; feedback of evaluation into the system)

Ignatius stresses the importance of the preparatory concentration and recollection on the exercise to to be performed. He recommends that the retreatant focus on the main points of the exercise at an interval before the actual performance of the exercise, e.g., before retiring for an exercise to be made on rising. During the period immediately preceding the exercise, the retreatant is told to turn his mind to the subject he will consider. Before beginning the period of prayer, he concentrates completely on what he is about to do and then, through some outward sign (e.g., the sign of the cross), begins the exercise.

Within the prayer itself the method of Ignatius likewise follows a set pattern:

1. preliminary prayer - that the prayer may be directed towards God's praise and service,

2. composition of place - a representation in the imagination of the actual scene of the subject to be considered, e.g., the stable in which Christ was born,

3. the objective - a statement in the form of a petition of what the retreatant wishes to gain by the exercise,

4. foci of the exercise - a prayerful consideration of the important points which have been previously selected, and

5. summary prayer - a concluding prayer which summarizes and focuses the insights and feelings of the exercise.

Immediately after the conclusion of the exercise, Ignatius directs the retreatant to spend a quarter of

an hour evaluating the period of prayer. If he has fared poorly, he is advised to seek the cause so that he can correct it in future exercises. If he has succeeded, he is instructed to use the same method in the following exercise.

Though the pattern recommended may seem confining, it is important to remember that the bulk of both time and effort are concentrated in prayer itself; it is here that each person can exercise initiative and experience great freedom. All other elements, whether preliminary or subsequent to the prayer itself, are calculated to assist the retreatant to derive the greatest possible benefit from each exercise.

The paradigm--definition of objectives, performance of the activity, reflection on success or failure--is mirrored in contemporary approaches to educational planning which have penetrated every level of education from guidelines issued by the federal government to lesson plans for the first grade teacher. It has become the underlying structure of courses, textbooks, classroom supervision, packaged learning materials, teacher training programs, educational finance, etc.

Ignatius realized that the retreatant would learn or grow more both within the retreat experience and afterwards if he internalized the method of the Exercises. He saw clearly that a patterned approach to activity had two major advantages:

1. it directed attention to purposes and to reflection on the degree to which purposes were being accomplished, and

2. it created a "freeing rhythm" which reduced aimless activity and allowed the person to enter immediately and fully into the activity.

Ignatius knew that the patterned activity approach would promote purposeful and concentrated activity as well as build into the learning experience the mechanism for further growth.

F. Self-Activity and Self-Discovery

Among the first and most important principles of the Spiritual Exercises is the emphasis Ignatius places on the self-activity of the retreatant within each exercise and the corresponding restraint urged on the director. If, as previously stated, the ultimate goal is to produce self-directed learners, then it is obvious that the activity of the retreatant is of primary importance. The director is instructed to narrate accurately the facts of the meditation, but to adhere to the points and add only a short or summary explanation. Ignatius reasons that a person who goes over the material and reflects on it for himself is more likely to achieve greater clarity and deeper understanding. The result will be more profound spiritual development than if the director had explained and developed the meaning of the exercise at great length.

The Exercises are meant to be a direct experience of God in prayer, an experience which demands intimate personal involvement and effort. Another person may help, but what is achieved is accomplished either from "his (the retreatant's) own reasoning or from the grace of God enlightening his mind."

A corollary of this principle is Ignatius' insistence that the process of the Exercises should not be controlled by the necessity of covering a large amount of matter. He advises directly that it is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the person, but an intimate understanding and love of the truth.

This same concern is evident when Ignatius

discusses the advisability of returning to further consideration of the matter of previous exercises. The retreatant is told to concentrate on the most important points which previously have had some personal impact on him, where he has in a special way experienced consolation, desolation or greater understanding. The Spiritual Exercises are exercises and are meaningless unless the activity of the retreatant is both the core and substance of the experience.

The pedagogical implications of this principle require little elaboration. The truth is not transferred from the mind of the teacher to the mind of the student but is discovered by the student through his own effort. The teaching method should promote self-activity and discovery in every possible way.

One of the sharpest criticisms of schools today is that they rarely stimulate students to "think for themselves." Teaching methods stress the lower level cognitive skills of memory and comprehension rather than moving to the higher level skills of application, evaluation, comparison and synthesis. The ideal the Exercises propose is that the teacher exercise great restraint in doing the student's thinking for him and that the bulk of his effort and planning be focused on how to motivate and guide the student to personal discovery. As in the Spiritual Exercises, the intellectual and personal satisfaction that the student derives by discovering for himself is a more profound and effective learning experience than what would have resulted from a more polished and sophisticated teacher explanation of the same matter.

G. Reflection and Accountability

Throughout the Exercises Ignatius insists on constant reflection and analysis of the progress of the

retreat. The retreatant is first of all accountable to himself. Immediately after the conclusion of each exercise, Ignatius directs the retreatant to spend a quarter of an hour evaluating the period of prayer. If he has succeeded, he is instructed to use the same method in the following exercise. In addition to the reflections after prayer, Ignatius directs the retreatant to examine his activity twice each day to uncover and correct any faults or negligence in his performance of the exercises and in his observance of the other directives recommended in the retreat.

Another focus of accountability is the daily conference of the retreatant with his director. In this conversation the retreatant gives to his director an account of how he has understood and used each point of the exercise and describes the positive and negative feelings he has experienced. The director expects full disclosure of the retreatant's mood as well as his successes or failures. It is on the basis of this information that the director is able to assist the retreatant in the evaluation of what has occurred as well as propose to him exercises which are now appropriate.

In his insistence on regular and thorough evaluation of activity, Ignatius recognized one of the most persistent problems in any human endeavor--the tendency towards either stagnation or gradual deterioration of performance. The constant effort to review and improve performance and to be accountable is also currently one of the more fashionable concepts in contemporary education. It fits naturally with the systems orientation. The basic insight of this procedure is that performance should always be measured against goals and that the process of improving learning efficiency and effectiveness should remain a continuing concern.

The approach taken in the Exercises, expressed

as an educational norm, demands two things:

1. that the teacher build into the learning experience a clear expectation of regular accountability of the student to the teacher, and

2. more importantly, that the learning experience provide the student with an opportunity for self-reflection and encourage in the student the development of the habit of personal reflection not only on the quality of his learning but also on the effectiveness and efficiency of his method of study. The second element is obviously the essential element since it provides the key to continuous self-improvement and releases the student from dependence on the teacher.

H. The Teacher--An Experienced Guide

From what has been said above concerning both accountability and self-activity, the role of the director or teacher has to some extent already been delineated. The director is to guide, but the guidance he gives should be based on:

1. a concern to preserve the centrality of the retreatant's self-activity, and

2. a careful and empathetic listening to the retreatant's description and interpretation of his experiences.

The focus of contact between the director and retreatant are the out comes or results of the retreatant's activity during the periods of prayer. Together they examine what has happened aiming to actively adapt the process of the Exercises to the unique experience of the individual.

The director is ideally a spiritual man skilled in interpreting the meaning of the insights and moods emerging from the retreatant's prayer. He must also know when to encourage or console, when to admonish or caution, when to advise further consideration of a topic or to advance to new areas. In his role as an experienced guide, he is able to reaffirm the retreatant's own evaluations and strengthen what he believes to be valid.

The director can be compared to an experienced companion who sets out on a journey with the retreatant, making sure to keep him on the right path and gradually but definitely accustoming him to find his own way by insisting he assume more and more responsibility for the interpretation of his experience and the appropriate next steps. By the end of the retreat, the director has made his constant help unnecessary.

To a significant degree, this same ideal can be translated into the school context; the ideal teacher is one who helps the student become an independent learner--someone who can set his own educational objectives, organize a program of activities to achieve them, and accomplish his goals at a pace suited to his ability.

The teacher prepares and encourages the student to learn, and then watches and analyzes his performance. But it is the student who must perform. In reality, the teacher is conducting a practicum on how to learn, focusing more on method than on content. He activates the student and gives him a plan of action; but the teacher can only launch him on the path of self-activity and self-discovery.

The degree to which a teacher can shift to a less directive and more helping role depends on the ability, level, and personality of the student as

well as on many other factors. However, the ideal of continually promoting greater activity on the part of the student remains a constant aim.

I. Variety of Techniques

In the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius describes and proposes to the retreatant a large number of techniques. Many have already been described, e.g.,

--repetition (of important points of previous exercises),

--composition of place,

--precise definition of objectives, and

--regular reflection and evaluation of progress.

A number of other techniques or exercises merit brief mention.

Application of Senses. This is a procedure where the retreatant attempts to participate in a scene of Christ's life by applying in imagination his senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch to the event. Through this technique the retreatant becomes more actively present to the event and can draw greater profit from its consideration.

Methods of Prayer. Besides the process of meditation and contemplation mentioned above, Ignatius proposed three other methods of prayer. The first focuses on a thorough examination of the major areas of one's life; the second on careful consideration of each word of a prayer; and the third on measured rhythmical repetition

of single words of common prayers.

Systematic Elimination of Weaknesses. Ignatius proposes a methodical process for deducing or eliminating weaknesses which have been identified by the retreatant. The procedure is characterized by systematic and relentless attention to a particular fault, including a procedure for a twice daily measuring and recording progress.

It would be possible to mention many other techniques or procedures which Ignatius adapts and includes in the Spiritual Exercises. The description here and in the previous sections should be sufficient to suggest that Ignatius was willing to include in the Spiritual Exercises any procedure or means which helped the retreatant make spiritual progress. As a result, the Spiritual Exercises contain both a large number and wide variety of techniques.

In the founding of the original Jesuit schools and colleges, it is said that the genius of the system did not involve creation of new methods but careful selection and systematic organization of the best educational methods and techniques available at that time. An educator in the Jesuit tradition is encouraged to exercise great freedom and imagination in the use of techniques he employs to accomplish his educational aims; he is expected to search out and adapt the best available methods of the age in which he finds himself. He is also encouraged to use those which are likely to involve as many as possible of his students' powers and abilities.

Consistent with the spirit of the Exercises and its focus on method, the faculty of a Jesuit school or college should not only be up-to-date in their awareness of traditional and emerging methodologies, but also to be in a position to influence

education generally in their creative application and organization of method.

J. Personal Appropriation

The methods used by Ignatius to intimately involve the retreatant in the contemplation of the events of Christ's life bring into play the whole person--his intellect, imagination, emotions and will. Ignatius is not seeking purely intellectual assent but a renewal of the person, a reordering of his attitudes and a deepening of his commitment.

The retreatant should emerge from the Spiritual Exercises converted and transformed, a new man. Ignatius calls the retreatant to a "primary" experience where he will actually encounter the reality of God rather than "learn about" it. He is convinced that unless the retreatant's effort involves his emotions and will, unless there are definite positive or negative feelings connected with fuller understanding, then the retreatant is not really "experiencing" the retreat and little is being accomplished.

Though the primary purpose of schools is cognitive rather than affective, the early Jesuit educators realized that intellectual assent without emotional involvement or response would not change a person. Information, analysis and reflection could enlighten the mind, but unless the educational process involved the whole person, mind, senses and heart, they realized that it would not be a truly human experience which could transform the individual. They concluded that the training offered in a Jesuit school or college should be both intellectual and moral.

In accord with this principle, teaching methodologies today should incorporate an insistence on the personal appropriation of the material by the student. The teacher should expect the individual

not merely to absorb but to react and respond. Through a technique like repetition, he should encourage the student to select ideas which have been challenging or disturbing or enlightening, and to synthesize these concepts into a framework meaningful to him. To a degree, the student should be expected to turn each book he studies into a personal document and each paper or project into a highly personal expression.

Obviously, this ideal is one which must be adapted to individuals and situations. But personal response and discovery by the student remain persistent goals, no matter what the subject or level. Jesuit education, consistent with the ideals of the Spiritual Exercises, aims not at quantity of material but at the quality of learning, not at objective information but at personalized truth.

III. SUMMARY CONCLUSION

The purpose of this analysis was to explore the educational principles which underlie the learning experience of the Spiritual Exercises. An assumption was made that, since the Spiritual Exercises provided the experience which formed the Jesuit spirit and gave it method and direction, an analysis of the Spiritual Exercises as an educational treatise would shed light on the fundamental principles of Jesuit education. This exploration is given added impetus by the realization that the contemporary rediscovery of the original method of the Spiritual Exercises has led to a renewal and rearticulation of the authentic Jesuit charism and vocation. A return to the Spiritual Exercises as the original source of the Jesuit educational tradition could be expected to generate analagous benefits.

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Jesuit education is instrumental. Education is not an end in itself but a means to the service of God. This is an insight which must have its explicit expression in the motivation of the faculty and the planning of programs.

Jesuit education is student-centered. Its goal is to produce an independent learner who internalizes the skills of learning and eventually is able to act without the support of the formal educational environment. The educational process is adapted to the individual and, to the extent possible, responds to his abilities, needs and interests. Jesuit education emphasizes the self-activity of the student and attempts to make him the primary agent in the learning situation. The goal of the teacher is to decrease

while the student increases in direction of his own learning.

Jesuit education is characterized by structure and flexibility. The organization of the educational process is systematic and sequential and aimed toward a definite overall purpose. However, within the general framework, significant freedom and adaptation is both expected and encouraged. Flexibility within structure also marks individual units which both follow a definite pattern and procedure and promote personal response and self-direction within the prescribed framework. The structure always includes a definite statement of objectives and systematic procedures for evaluation and accountability, for constant reflection on how to improve performance.

Jesuit education is eclectic. It draws on the best methods and techniques available and incorporates into its method whatever helps towards towards its goals.

Jesuit education is personal. Rather than a superficial grasp of a multiplicity of ideas, it emphasizes profound penetration of essential truths.

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Jesuit education, like the Spiritual Exercises, is a curious blend--structure and flexibility, prescription and adaptation. It is a living tradition which, like any other form of life, carries with it an internal structure which gives it definition and identity. At the same time, it has the capacity, without violating those fundamental principles which define it, to adjust itself to new situations and times. The experience of the Spiritual Exercises was intended to produce persons who, though singleminded in their pursuit of the greater glory and service of God, are flexible rather than brittle. The spirit of Jesuit education is the same. Though supported and sustained by

permanent ideals and principles which give its identity, it is able to adapt itself to new challenges and situations. Jesuit education is at the same time both a clearly defined and a flexible ideal; it is this combination of apparently opposed characteristics which is the source of its strength.

Perhaps the simplest way to view the Spiritual Exercises is as a treatise on process and method. It is founded, to be sure, on the assumption that, given careful attention and a generous openness, an individual can hear in himself the voice of God speaking to him in a personal way. But power of the Spiritual Exercises also lies in the carefully devised method by which the person can dispose himself to achieve this understanding and awareness; and further, in the subtle but masterful way in which the method itself is internalized by the retreatant and taken from the retreat as one of its primary outcomes. Ignatius has so devised the experience that not only has the person experienced God but he has also emerged from the retreat having absorbed and practiced the means by which he can renew and deepen this experience.

The goal of Jesuit education might be stated in a similar manner. It is a practicum in method. It is based on the assumption that the person can discover and personalize the truth. But its power lies in the method which brings about the confrontation of the person with what is true; and further, in the way in which the method of discovering the truth is itself internalized and taken from the formal learning experience as one of its primary benefits. Ideally the student has emerged from his Jesuit education having practiced and absorbed the means by which he can enlarge and deepen his grasp of the truth.

The Spiritual Exercises produce in the retreatant an enriching experience of God and a method to encourage and enable further growth; Jesuit education produces in

a student a satisfying experience of the truth and a method to promote and enable continued learning.

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To help readers focus attention on the principles of Jesuit education described in this booklet, Father Newton prepared a supplement.

> "Questions for Teachers" may be used by faculty members to evaluate whether their efforts in teaching reflect the educational principles flowing from the Spiritual Exercises.
>
> "Journalizing," "The Prelection," and "A Study Pattern" may be used as specific methodologies to help students use the principles of Jesuit education as described in this monograph.

SUPPLEMENT

A. Questions for Teachers

Education As An Instrument

Do you have an active awareness of your day-to-day efforts as aimed explicitly at an ultimate goal which is religious?

Do you sense that you as an individual and your faculty as a group are consciously aware of this ultimate goal in both everyday and major decisions?

Is the instrumental character of your personal work and that of the school in general evident to the students and their families--both in what is said to them and in what they can observe?

Developing Independence and Responsibility

Is more of the initiative in your course transferred to your students as the course develops? Do students become less dependent on you and visibly more self-directed? Is this goal built into your course objectives and reflected in your teaching methodology?

Do you regard as equally important or more important than content the development of method by which students can continue to learn in your subject?

Systematic Organization of Successive Objectives

Is the structure and sequence of the educational program in your school based on a coherent, explicitly articulated rationale which is known and accepted by the faculty? Is there an awareness of how the different disciplines and courses fit into an overall rationale?

Are proposals for adaptation of the overall structure or innovations (e.g., new programs) judged

in the light of their consistency with the accepted rationale and plan?

Structured Flexibility

Wherever possible and reasonable, do you adjust your course to the needs and capacities of your students--so that within the overall plan and educational experience, there is adaptation to individuals or subgroupings of students? Are there alternative objectives for different students, provision of different ways to accomplish objectives, and adjustment of the rate of learning to students of varying abilities?

Patterned Activity

Do you promote in your classes patterned activity which allows the student to develop systematically the most efficient and effective way to approach learning in your subject?

Do your students take this "patterned approach" from the course as one of its primary outcomes?

Self-Activity

Are you consciously seeking ways to minimize your activity as teacher while simultaneously expecting students to increase their level of initiative and activity in classes and the course?

Are students expected to "think for themselves" or is the level of activity predominately recall and comprehension?

Reflection and Accountability

Do you have built into your interaction with students regular patterns of evaluation and accountability?

Does your method of making students accountable go beyond externally imposed norms to promote in the students patterns of self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-criticism?

Are students in your courses developing the habit of analyzing and improving their own performance?

Teacher Role

Are you continually searching for ways in which you can reduce your students' dependence on you for learning in your course?

At the end of the course are your students capable of continuing to learn without your constant help? or perhaps with only occasional assistance from you?

Variety of Techniques

Are you in general alert to current developments in educational methodologies and flexible in incorporating those which will help your course?

Would you regard yourself or your school as a model for other schools of an up-to-date awareness and creative organization and application of contemporary methods?

Personal Appropriation

Do you teach in a way that challenges students to achieve a personal rather than a purely academic grasp of your subject?

Do your students see the importance of your subject and emerge from the course with more than a thorough but uninvolved grasp of the matter?

Summary

Do you consider your course a practicum in method through which the student emerges as an efficient learner who has internalized the principles of how to learn in your discipline?

B. Journalizing

This is a method which promotes self-activity and encourages personal appropriation of the material under study. It involves continuous reflection and repetition of important ideas. Adapted from a teaching technique used by W. Walsh, S.J., Wernersville, Pa.

1. Keep a running journal to record whatever develops in your active investigation in this course.

   For example:

   - ideas you find stimulating, exciting, disturbing
   - questions or doubts raised as you read and ponder
   - areas where you find you are led to investigate more fully
   - possible solutions to questions which were raised earlier

2. Use the following questions to help you identify and record what happened during your period of active study and reading:

   a. Did a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph set you thinking? Identify it. Did it interest, stimulate, excite you? Did it give you any enjoyment? Why? Or did it irritate, challenge, bewilder you? Any idea why?

   b. What insights or good ideas came to you? What sharp challenges?

   c. What effect did the insight or the challenge have on you? Where did it send you in your personal search? What

plan of action did it perhaps cause you to dream about? In what ways did it open up fresh possibilities for you?

d. In what way does the above tie in with what you already know? In what way does it challenge the position (s) you have already taken in the course of your search up to the present? In what way does it change or modify what you already know?

3. Hand in each week one page typewritten summary of what you learned in the preceding week; use your journal notes and make a personal synthesis.

4. At the end of the course or unit, write an evaluation of what you have accomplished in the course. Review the themes of your journal and synthesize your insights. This should be a personal document which expresses the ideas or insights you have discovered in the course which mean something to you.

C. The Prelection

In this traditional method the teacher follows the same procedure as the retreat director, i.e., giving a short account of the matter to be studied but being careful not to substitute his activity for the self-activity of the student. It is a patterned approach which prepares the student by giving him the tools necessary to become effectively active. Summarized from A. Farrell, S.J., Jesuit Educational Quarterly.

Among the procedures employed in Jesuit education, the prelection traditionally was a technique of major importance and wide application. It was regarded as one of the keys to the "Jesuit method" in education.

Definition. The prelection is a preview of a future assignment conducted by the teacher with the active cooperation of the class. It is not a lecture but a prelude to and preparation for private study.

Purpose

1. to interest the student in the subject under investigation

2. to see precise and obtainable objectives for the assignment

3. to point out the more important or complicated parts of the assignment.

Values

1. assists private study; starts the mind working on the subject matter

2. simultaneously equips the student with

a method for attacking the lesson and insists that the student do the work.

Procedures. The teacher carefully prepares and selects the comments he will make in the prelection; he does not merely offer impromptu remarks about the next assignment. The prelection should include:

1. the objective or results expected from the assignment

2. the connection of the lesson with previous lessons

3. the special problems in this assignment which need explanation, definition, illustration

4. the major ideas to be understood

5. the method the student should use in approaching the subject matter

6. defects of previous study or potential problems which need to be avoided

7. the criterion by which the student will know that he has mastered the lesson.

The teacher must remember that his goal is to stimulate and aid the student to self-activity; he should say no more in the prelection than what is necessary to accomplish this purpose.

D. A Study Pattern

This method promotes a patterned approach to study which take the student directly to the heart of the study with maximum efficiency. The pattern is based on the method of prayer most frequently used in the Spiritual Exercises.

1. Sometime before the study time, briefly set in mind the main points to be studied (in order to give the mind a chance to begin to work on them).

2. Arrange the environment in which you will study so that there will be minimal distractions (e.g., away from TV, radios, distracting magazines, etc.).

3. At the time of study:

    a. before beginning study, focus attention on the purpose of study and determine to get the most out of the time

    b. formally begin to study with some act, e.g., turn on the desk light, say a short prayer

    c. review explicitly the objectives you have in studying this material

    d. concentrate fully while you study

    e. at the end of the study time, summarize what you have accomplished by repeating the the main ideas or skills; do this verbally or preferably in writing, and

    f. explicitly stop studying.

4. After study, review how effective and efficiently

you spent your time; was it well spent and satisfying or the opposite? Figure out how you can improve your study habits in the next period.

5. Before class, briefly review the high points of your study (summarized in 3,e.)