

ON EXCELLENCE & ACTION

Excellence is “constantly striving to gain a more thorough understanding of the world around us so as to be able to effectively use our knowledge, skills, and understanding in their work, their community, their life.”

~ Refractive Learning



In Jesuit education, **the criterion of excellence** is applied to all areas of school life: **the aim is the fullest possible development of every dimension of the person, linked to the development of a sense of values and a commitment to the service of others** which gives priority to the needs of the poor and is willing to sacrifice self-interest for the promotion of justice. **The pursuit of academic excellence is appropriate in a Jesuit school, but only within the larger context of human excellence.** (CJE #107)



The ultimate aim of Jesuit education is, rather, that full growth of the person which leads to action - action, especially, that is suffused with the spirit and presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Man-for-Others. (IPP #12)

Reflection should be a formative and liberating process that so shapes the consciousness of students—their habitual attitudes, values and beliefs as well as ways of thinking—that they are impelled to move beyond knowing to ACTION. It is then the role of the teacher to see that the opportunities are provided that will challenge the imagination and exercise the will of the students to choose the best possible course of action to flow from and follow up on what they have learned. (IPP #28)

ACTION: For Ignatius the acid test of love is what one does, not what one says. "Love is shown in deeds, not words." Ignatius wanted Jesuit schools to form young people who could and would contribute intelligently and effectively to the welfare of society. (IPP #59)



“There has never been a time of greater promise, or one of greater potential peril...

In the end, it all comes down to people and values. We need to shape a future that works for all of us by putting people first and empowering them.

In its most pessimistic, dehumanized form, the Fourth Industrial Revolution may indeed have the potential to “robotize” humanity and thus to deprive us of our heart and soul. But as a complement to the best parts of human nature—creativity, empathy, stewardship—it can also lift humanity into a new collective and moral consciousness based on a shared sense of destiny. It is incumbent on us all to make sure the latter prevails.” (Schwab, 2016)

Schwab, K. (2016, January 20). Klaus Schwab: Navigating the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Retrieved September 2, 2016, from <http://www.biznews.com/wef/davos-2016/2016/01/20/klaus-schwab-navigating-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/>



Today, knowledge is [everywhere], constantly changing, growing exponentially... Today, knowledge is free. It's like air, it's like water. It's become a commodity... There's no competitive advantage today in knowing more than the person next to you. The world doesn't care what you know. What the world cares about is what you can do with what you know.” (Wagner, 2012)

Wagner, T. (2012, August 24). Graduating all students innovation-ready. Tony Wagner, Transforming education Blog. Retrieved in March 2016 from <http://www.tonywagner.com/tonys-latest-ed-week-commentary-graduating-all-students-innovation-ready-now-available/>



Experience, Reflection, and Action towards Becoming a Responsible Citizen

Have you heard of expressions like “learning the hard way” or sayings like “Experience is the best teacher”?

An EXPERIENCE can “teach a lesson” if it is followed by a REFLECTION on the experience, which in turn can lead to a transformation or some form of ACTION. Thus, learning occurs when there is an interplay between EXPERIENCE(S), REFLECTION(S), and ACTION.

For example, towards the goal of becoming a responsible citizen, an Experience – Reflection – Action interplay for a Grade 2 class is:

EXPERIENCE – Walk-through around the school grounds to note down suggestions for school improvements

REFLECTION – Class discussion, small group activity, and individual reflection on the prompt “If we don’t do it, who will?” and “Why should we care?”

ACTION – Interview other students to see if they have ideas and suggestions to solve the problem you have identified.

REFLECTION – After interviewing other students, reflect in small groups and individually on the prompt “Why should citizens work together if they are to develop their community?”

ACTION – Propose a solution. Explain your proposal in a letter to the school Principal.

Think of another example towards the goal of responsible citizenship.