**STUDENT ACCOMPANIMENT PROGRAM**

**An Empathy Exercise   
for JCAP Workshop Participants**

**A GUIDE**

**Rationale and Objectives**

In the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, we are reminded that “teachers are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual development of every student.” Moreover, Ignatian Pedagogy is fundamentally rooted in the *context* of the learners, not just their prior knowledge, but even more fundamentally, their world. Most recently, among the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) of the Universal Society of Jesus is “to accompany the youth in the creation of a hope-filled future”: an invitation to listen to the young people and to learn from them.

The Student Accompaniment Program is precisely designed for Ignatian educators to walk with our students on a typical day of their education in order to get to know them personally and to understand their world. The program is yet another expression of the Ignatian value of *cura personalis* which is rooted in empathy. After all, taking personal care of our students is made possible only by a familiarity with them and their context and empathy for the students.

The Student Accompaniment Program also aims to foster understanding of teaching and learning by a teacher accompanying a student for a day. Also known as “student shadowing,” this type of Professional Learning is documented in educational research, exemplified by Margery B. Ginsberg: *Stepping into a Student's Shoes* (Educational Leadership, February 2012 | Volume 69 | Number 5). While Instructional rounds and walk-throughs provide teachers a big picture view of instruction, this program offers the Student Companion an in-depth encounter with a single student not just in the classroom, but outside as well.

**Benefits of the Program**

* Facilitating conversations between student and teacher
* Observing the relationship of student well-being and learning
* Gaining a new perspective on how a student learns and lives a typical schoold ay
* Awareness of conditions under which students lives and empathy for them
* Promotes teachers as learners
* Promotes partnership in learning

**Some Guidelines for Implementation**

* Protocols and privacy requirements are studied and discussed with the participants.
* A diversity of students will be identified for the program. They need to give their consent to be part of it. Students are also told that they are free to withdraw from the program at any time during the morning of the program.
* Students, parents, teachers and administrators are given the necessary information/orientation, and their consent are obtained via letter or email.
* The participants—to be called “Student Companions”—are expected to accompany their designated students for an entire morning: Acting like students, they participate in the class activities and lessons and join them for recess. Classroom teachers are expected to treat the Student Companions in this manner.
* A camera crew will be documenting the activity. The Companions and students are requested to ignore the camera as much as possible.
* The Student Companions will be instructed to observe the students and their classmates, recording their most important observations and insights—e.g., how is the student learning, how is he coping with the workload, etc.
* The Student Companions and students will take lunch together in the workshop venue at 12:13 pm. During lunch, they all take turns for a brief video interview about their experience. Lunch break will last until 1:13 pm.
* The Student Companions will write their reflections down, and these will be shared with the school community and parents, if desired by the administration.

**Guidelines for Student Companions during the Student Accompaniment Program**

* Take notes on what you observe. Refrain from making judgements about the students or the teachers.
* You are encouraged to participate in the class activities, but please do NOT take the lead or take over.
* Focus your attention on your student and you may want to observe the following:

1. How engaged are the students in class? How interesting is the class from the student perspective?
2. How many times and in what way does the student interact with others in class and during the break?
3. How physically active is the student – (e.g., body language)?
4. Touch base with the student at the end of each lesson: Does the student feel that s/he learned something valuable? How does s/he feel about the class?

**Reflection Questions for Student Companions**

* What did it feel like to be a typical student in school this morning? What did you enjoy? What did you find challenging?
* What insights into Jesuit education did you gain from your experience this morning?
* Based on your experience as a Student Companion, how can you become a better Ignatian educator?
* What helpful feedback can you offer to school in terms of learning, formation, and the general climate of the school from the perspective of a student?

**Note to the Administration**

* Identify the students who will participate in the program.
* Inform their parents about the program goals and details, and obtain their consent.
* Orient the teachers whose classes will be involved in the program.
* Make sure the students meet their Companions on Tuesday 4 pm.
* Feel free to meet with the students to get their comments and suggestions after the program. Do share these with us, if you think they will help us in the future.

**Possible Letter/Email to Parents**

Dear

The Jesuit Conference for Asia Pacific has selected Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu to host its upcoming **Workshop on the Principle and Foundation of Jesuit Education**, to be held from the 15th to 21st of September 2019. We are expecting over fifty Ignatian educators from Jesuit schools in Asia Pacific, who will, in their days together, study and discuss the history, goals, and foundations of Jesuit education. Needless to say, we are honoured to be hosting such an important gathering.

One of its most important activities is the **Student Accompaniment Program**, during which each participant will join a student in all his/her classes and break for one morning with the goal of gaining insight into our students’ educational experiences and to reflect on how the school can improve in responding to our students’ needs. As you know, *cura personalis*—i.e., the personal care of our students—is one of the most defining characteristics of Jesuit education.

In the *Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, we are reminded that “teachers are involved in the lives of the students, taking a personal interest in the intellectual, affective, moral and spiritual development of every student.” Moreover, Ignatian Pedagogy is fundamentally rooted in the *context* of the learners, not just their prior knowledge, but even more fundamentally, their world. Most recently, among the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP) of the Universal Society of Jesus is “to accompany the youth in the creation of a hope-filled future”: an invitation to listen to the young people and to learn from them.

This program has been conducted in other Jesuit schools, and has received uniformly positive feedback. Hence, we are confident that the insights gleaned from this activity, which will give the participants a first-hand experience of a student’s life in our school, will serve as valuable feedback for us in our constant effort to improve the way we are serving the needs of our students.

We are inviting your son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to be one of the students who will accompany the Student Companions. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Best regards, Principal/Administrator

**Possible Memo/Email to Faculty and Staff**

Dear Faculty and Staff,

The Jesuit Conference for Asia Pacific has selected Sacred Heart School-Ateneo de Cebu to host its upcoming **Workshop on the Principle and Foundation of Jesuit Education**, to be held from the 15th to 21st of September 2019. We are expecting over fifty Ignatian educators from Jesuit schools in Asia Pacific, who will, in their days together, study and discuss the history, goals, and foundations of Jesuit education. Needless to say, we are honoured to be hosting such an important gathering.

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This program—also known as “student shadowing”—has been conducted in other schools around the world, and has received uniformly positive feedback. Research indicates that student shadowing is a valuable form of inquiry-based professional learning. (Ginsberg, M B, February 2012 ‘Stepping into a Student's Shoes’ *Educational Leadership* Feb| Volume 69 | Number 5). Hence, we are confident that the insights gleaned from this activity, which will give the participants a first-hand experience of a student’s life in our school, will serve as valuable feedback for all of us in our constant effort to improve the way we are serving the needs of our students.

The following students have been designated as participants in the program:

(Names and Years/sections)

This means that each of them will be accompanied by a JCAP workshop participant for all classes and during recess on the morning of the 19th September (Thursday). Should they be attending your class, please try your best to treat the workshop participant as an ordinary student. They are expected to sit beside their designated student, participate and join in the activities—without taking over or taking the lead. They are supposed to keep a low profile as an observer-participant.

Note that you are not expected to make any special preparation or adjustment for this program. Implement whatever you have planned for the day. If you have scheduled a lecture, please proceed with it (it is your option whether or not to call on the workshop participant during the class discussion). If you have planned an assessment, please go ahead with it, giving the workshop participant a copy of the test paper and expecting him/her to submit it just like the rest of the class.

Please make sure you have an extra worksheet or handout if you are using those for your class. In some classrooms, an additional table/chair may be needed as well, so do let us know what we need to do.

(Name of videographer) may also show up to videotape portions of your class. Please let me know if you have any difficulty about being part of this program.

The focus of the program is not only how our students are learning, but also how they are being formed. The first-hand experience of the workshop participants as well as their insights will be shared with us, so that we can together reflect on and learn from them.

Thank you for your much needed cooperation!

Best regards, Principal or Administrator