

Towards a Lasallian Pedagogical Framework of Transformative Learning
by the Committee on Lasallian Pedagogical Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In general, the revised General Education Curriculum (GEC) aims to expand the students' critical and creative thinking skills by engaging in various modes of inquiry. The attainment of this general goal requires a new paradigm of instruction. The enclosed Lasallian Pedagogical Framework provides teachers a comprehensive discussion of the scope of the new paradigm. Teachers will need to understand the framework's focus on transformative learning and its view of the nature of knowledge, the teaching and learning process, the role of the teacher, classroom management, and assessment.

With regards to the nature of knowledge, knowledge in the traditional transmission model is defined as a set of information waiting to be acquired. In transformative learning, knowledge does not exist as a given truth before the process of learning. Students develop knowledge as a result of their inquiry, action or experimentation.

In terms of the teaching and learning process, the teacher in a transmission system of education works as content expert and positions himself or herself as the primary or only source of knowledge. The teacher organizes and delivers information and procedures and expects students to throw back the given ideas. The teacher is deemed effective if he or she is able to present information in a clear and comprehensive way. The lecture format is the preferred and most often used method in class. Students appear passive and are hardly encouraged to question the information.

On the other hand, the teacher who is engaged in transformative learning works with the students' questions about a particular topic. The teacher facilitates the students' identification of questions and develops with them a plan for answering their questions. While the teacher's own expertise remains a valuable resource, the teacher also employs a wide variety of resources and interventions to help students understand the questions they need to ask and change or deepen their own prior knowledge. The teacher challenges students to uncover facts and concepts in interdisciplinary contexts and build knowledge by observing, hypothesizing, experimenting, and discovering. The teacher prompts students to take risks and explore multiple viewpoints by interacting and collaborating with one another. The teacher is considered effective if through such activities, the students are able to accomplish their plan of inquiry and consequently, change or deepen their prior knowledge. With this process of collaborative inquiry, self-assessment and reflection, students lay the foundations for lifelong learning.

For students to succeed, the teacher has to create an atmosphere in the classroom that enhances the students' sense of self-worth, increases their self-confidence and motivation to do their best and affirms their efforts towards self-improvement. The teacher also has to make the students feel that they can discuss or test their ideas and questions freely without fear of being reproached, embarrassed or reprimanded. With this supportive atmosphere, the teacher is able to encourage critical and creative thinking and the expression of a variety of viewpoints and approaches to different issues or problems.

In the area of evaluation, the common practice at DLSU-Manila is that student performance is based on some absolute standards. The passing grade is prescribed and points are distributed according to standard weights. In departmental examinations, the passing mark is usually determined in terms of the mean or median of the scores.

One of the main criticisms of these practices is that they encourage rote instead of meaningful learning. In a system of transmission, such tests would be expected since instruction consists mainly of providing factual information and prescribing procedures. But within the perspective of transformative learning, results from such tests yield little information about the kind of cognitive growth that has taken place in the students, the changes that have occurred in their conceptual representations, or their ability to solve problems in the field. One solution that has been proposed to solve the inadequacy of these traditional testing formats is to apply the concept of authentic assessment to classroom testing.

Authentic assessment tasks stress real-world application and promote divergent thinking. In authentic assessment, the teacher asks students to apply skills and abilities as they would in real life. Authentic assessment can also take the form of performance assessments. Performance assessments require students to demonstrate their ability to complete a task by integrating their knowledge and skills from several areas rather than simply show rote learning such as recalling information or following “cookbook type” procedures prescribed by the teacher. The evaluation of performance comes in the form of qualitative descriptions of possible outcomes written in a rubric or in the students’ presentation of a portfolio of his or her works.

The application of the framework’s focus on transformative learning in the classroom will not be easy nor immediate due to varied factors such as administrative concerns (e.g. class size, the trimester schedule, facilities), preparation of students for board or licensure exams, and faculty load and readiness. Transitioning from a system of transmission to transformation will bring about changes in curriculum design, syllabus construction, lesson planning, use of class time, grading system, faculty evaluation and others. Doing the changes will be a difficult but not an impossible process. Extensive consultation with the faculty about implementation issues will have to be done. Departments will have to discuss among themselves how to translate the framework into their respective disciplines. Training as part of faculty development will also be needed to understand and plan for the changes. Given this roadmap, the challenge for every teacher is to begin the journey for transformative learning.

I. Background

Last schoolyear 2003-04, the University's Lasallian Core Curriculum Committee published a preamble describing a revised program of studies and guidelines for the General Education Curriculum (GEC). A key part of the preamble emphasized the development of various modes of inquiry within the students as well as critical and creative thinking and skills related to lifelong learning (see Appendix).

During the first term of this schoolyear 2004-05, the Office of the Vice-President for Academics and Research formed a Committee on the Lasallian Pedagogical Framework to articulate a framework of instruction which will help achieve the goals and objectives of the revised GEC. The framework is needed to act as a basis for changes in classroom instruction, integration of various disciplines and assessment.

The Committee was chaired by Dr. Miguel Q. Rapatan (CLA) and composed of representatives from the various Colleges. Task Force members were Millet Zamora (CBE), Oliver Malabanan (CCS), Dr. Auxencia Limjap (CED), Dr. Luis Razon (COE), and Voltaire Mistades (COS). The Committee met several times during the term to share ideas from personal and professional experiences and research regarding the issue of effective teaching. Concerns from faculty members about existing classroom practices, departmental programs, school facilities, and institutional policies related to instruction were also tackled.

From these discussions, the Committee members realized and agreed that traditional views and methods of teaching and assessment practiced by many faculty in the university may not be able to adequately respond to the demands of the revised GEC. As explained in the succeeding sections of this paper, the attainment of the goals and objectives of the revised GEC requires a new framework of instruction where the student is the primary agent of learning. Unlike the traditional paradigm where the student is expected to memorize a given set of facts and concepts, patterns or procedures, the new paradigm aims to develop within the students learning skills which enable them to generate knowledge from various sources of information and in different circumstances.

The scope of this new paradigm which this paper calls as the Lasallian Pedagogical Framework of Transformative Learning (in contrast to the traditional paradigm of Transmission) includes the following areas: the nature of knowledge, the teaching and learning process, the role of the teacher, classroom management and assessment. The discussion of these different areas is based on various perspectives drawn from research on learner-centered education and transformative learning. In the discussion of these different areas, the Committee has aimed for a comprehensive rather than an exhaustive view. The Committee is aware that not all of its recommendations may be immediately implemented because of various constraints in school resources and policies. Be that as it may, the Committee hopes that the explanations for each part of the framework will serve as a reference for discussion by the faculty of the different colleges or function as a common starting point for dialoguing about changes in classroom instruction, conceptualizing new practices consistent with the revised GEC and developing innovations in existing course designs and departmental practices, procedures and requirements.

II. Views on The Nature of Knowledge

The exercise of the teaching profession has often been associated with the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Many teachers think that students begin their course with very little or no knowledge at all of the subject matter. Teachers then consider it their task to fill the students' minds with knowledge and prescribe procedures for obtaining the needed information. In this traditional view, knowledge consists of receiving and accumulating information. Students are said to know the subject when they are able to recall and recite a given set of information or discuss a given set of procedures for finding the answer to a particular problem. This view of knowledge has led many teachers to characterize instruction as a system of transmission with the teacher as the main source of the subject's facts and concepts.

Other teachers have a different approach to the students' development of knowledge. Other teachers think that students have some initial ideas about their subject matter. These initial ideas are part of the students' prior knowledge. Teachers look upon their work as designing learning experiences where students examine their prior knowledge and change them into new knowledge based on their interactions with the world and use of different learning resources. Unlike the transmission approach where knowledge is considered as a body of information waiting to be acquired, this approach looks at knowledge in a transformative way. Knowledge emerges from doing. Knowledge does not exist as a given truth before the process of learning. The students revise their prior knowledge during their interaction with the world and exploration of questions. Learning is regarded as a process of inquiry and meaning construction. Hence, the extent of the students' new knowledge is defined by the depth of their inquiry or experimentation. In this context, students encounter facts and concepts not as isolated pieces of information but locate their significance in the discipline's network of ideas. Students examine the scope of this network and determine how this network defines the meaning of these facts and concepts.

Given that the revised GEC aims to develop the students' capacity for engaging in various modes of inquiry, teachers conducting GEC courses will need to look at knowledge in transformative rather than transmission terms. With this view, teachers will be able to help students shift from being passive receivers of information to becoming active producers of knowledge. A change in thinking about knowledge also leads to changes in the teaching and learning process, the teacher's role, classroom management and assessment. Just what these changes mean for the teacher will now be discussed.

III. The Teaching and Learning Process

In terms of the teaching and learning process, the teacher in a transmission system of education organizes and delivers information and procedures and expects students to throw back the given ideas. The teacher is deemed effective if he or she is able to present information in a clear and comprehensive way. The lecture format is the preferred and most often used method in class. The teacher covers the information required by an established curriculum or syllabus. The teacher provides very few or no opportunities at all for students to make connections between the lecture and events in the real world. As a result, students are not able to translate the class discussion and transfer the concepts to practical real-life applications. The students also rarely interact with one another. Most of the time, students listen to or answer the teacher when called. Students appear passive and are hardly encouraged to question the information. In exams, the

teacher asks students to repeat or retrieve from memory their lecture notes. Thus, learning is reduced to the rote memorization of information.

On the other hand, the teacher who is engaged in transformative learning works with the students' questions about a particular topic. The teacher facilitates the students' identification of questions and develops with them a plan for answering their questions. The teacher may as part of the plan may provide a learning environment where students can examine important resources and real world examples which can help them conduct their inquiry. The teacher challenges students to uncover facts and concepts in interdisciplinary contexts and build knowledge by observing, hypothesizing, experimenting, and discovering. The teacher prompts students to take risks and explore multiple viewpoints by interacting and collaborating with one another. The teacher also asks students to reflect on their work and their own process of learning so that they can see and recover the learning path that they took. The teacher is considered effective if through these activities, the students are able to accomplish their plan of inquiry and in the process, change or deepen their prior knowledge. Consequently, students gain skills in conducting their own inquiry and take responsibility for their own learning. With this process of collaborative inquiry, self-assessment and reflection, students lay the foundations for lifelong learning.

These directions in transformative learning are actualized in practices known as student-centered teaching or in the design of a learner-centered learning environment. These practices are drawn from constructivist learning theories. In recent years, a number of specific approaches have been done applying the findings of research on learner-centered or constructivist classrooms. Some of these approaches involve problem-based learning, anchored instruction, collaborative learning, coaching, scaffolding, modeling, goal-based scenarios, and reflective learning. Research about courses using these approaches shows learners more engaged with their studies and able to form concepts and solve problems with a variety of thinking strategies.

IV. The Role of the Teacher

Research has also shown a distinct shift in the teacher's role. In the transmission model, the teacher works as content expert and positions himself or herself as the primary or only source of knowledge. However, in a learner-centered learning environment, the teacher acts as a facilitator by working with the students' questions, prior knowledge and misconceptions and by leading them towards a creative and critical analysis of their understanding of the concepts they want to learn. While the teacher's own expertise remains a valuable resource, the teacher also employs a wide variety of resources and interventions to help students understand the questions they need to ask and change or deepen their own prior knowledge. These resources and interventions are deployed through all available means and they include field trips, audio-visual materials, interactive online programs, readings, tutorials, student group discussions, interviews with outside resource persons and others. Some resources from outside the actual field of study may also be used because they provide valuable analogous and alternative insights or approaches.

The range of resources and interventions that the teacher uses and the quality of his or her skills in facilitating students' self-directed inquiry and cognitive change also depends to a large extent on the teacher's understanding of his or her students' diverse learning styles and sensitivity to their interests, personal concerns and learning situation. This awareness enables the teacher to

tap and realize the potentials of the students. In a transformative learning process, the teacher clearly communicates to the students a genuine concern for their success. The teacher makes himself or herself available for student consultation to address individual learning problems. The teacher actively monitors the students' performance and provides varied guides and helpful interventions ensuring mastery and proficiency. In the words of St. John Baptist de la Salle, these efforts enable the teacher to "touch the hearts" of the students.

V. Classroom Management and Discipline

For students to succeed, the teacher has to create an atmosphere in the classroom that enhances the students' sense of self-worth, increases their self-confidence and motivation to do their best and affirms their efforts towards self-improvement. The teacher also has to make the students feel that they can discuss or test their ideas and questions freely without fear of being reproached, embarrassed or reprimanded. With this supportive atmosphere, the teacher is able to encourage the expression of a variety of viewpoints and approaches to different issues or problems.

Recognizing that the class is a complex mixture of individual personalities, a guiding principle needs to be expressed regarding discipline. The relationship of the teacher to the students is that of an adult dealing with other adults. The teacher facilitates discipline through direct communication with behavioral expectations clearly stated at the start of the class. The teacher and the students mutually respect each other. The teacher and the students also recognize that third-party intervention may be necessary but will be required only in extreme cases.

In a climate of openness and acceptance, much of the classroom time may be used for higher-level discussions such as critiquing and problem-solving. Instead of spending most of class time for repeating content in assigned readings, the teacher uses the period for transformative learning by elucidating subtleties, facilitating students' synthesis of acquired knowledge, resolving differences in opinion, showing the application of certain principles in a given class problem or providing feedback on one's progress.

Laboratory subjects provide another venue for transformative learning when the laboratory subjects are re-oriented away from the traditional recipe-oriented experiments. Rather than following a fixed set of instructions on a set of equipment previously laid out by technicians, the teacher can set-up laboratory class times which encourage active student participation in the planning of experiments, the acquisition of resources for these experiments and the development of procedures to acquire sufficient information to verify or refute a hypothesis. The teacher directly involves the student in determining what equipment he or she needs from a given catalog of available resources at the specific laboratory's stock room. This approach may lessen the number of experiments done in one term but the drop in the quantity of performed experiments will ultimately be more fruitful and sharpen the student's skills in scientific inquiry..

VI. Assessment

Given these approaches, what type of assessment should teachers conduct to properly determine the kind of cognitive changes the students experienced? Assessment of learning is a process used to obtain data about how well students performed in the class. Should students be graded in relation to an absolute standard? Or should students be graded in terms of their cognitive growth? What kind of grading system should be adopted which is consistent with transformative learning and principles of learner-centered education?

The common practice at DLSU-Manila is that student performance is based on some absolute standards. The passing grade is prescribed and points are distributed according to standard weights. Oftentimes, there are departmental examinations at the end of the term which is an aggregate of the grade of the students. There are also departmental quizzes in some departments. In departmental examinations, the passing mark is usually determined in terms of the mean or median of the scores.

One of the main criticisms of these practices is that they encourage rote instead of meaningful learning. In a system of transmission, such tests would be expected since instruction consists mainly of providing factual information and prescribing procedures. But within the perspective of transformative learning, results from such tests yield little information about the kind of cognitive growth that has taken place in the students, the changes that have occurred in their conceptual representations, or their ability to solve problems in the field. Few teachers would dispute these criticisms since a close look at tests reveals how limiting traditional pencil and paper testing can be. One solution that has been proposed to solve the inadequacy of traditional testing formats is to apply the concept of authentic assessment to classroom testing.

Authentic assessment tasks stress real-world application and promote divergent thinking. In authentic assessment, the teacher asks students to apply skills and abilities as they would in real life. Instead of asking students to circle answers to “factual” questions on nonexistent ideal situations, the teacher requires students to solve problems that are ill structured. Since these problems are not usually found in the textbooks, they are non routine, non standard and may have many possible solutions and answers. These problems may be used to build concepts or to provide situations where students may use facts in a context where they apply. As an example, the students may use grammar facts to write a persuasive letter to a software company or an individual sponsor, requesting donations for the class computer center. Or the teacher has students answer inquiries where facts and procedures are used in the context of solving a real-life problem in order to introduce and define a concept.

Authentic assessment can also take the form of performance assessments. Performance assessments require students to demonstrate their ability to complete a task by integrating their knowledge and skills from several areas rather than simply show rote learning such as recalling information or following “cookbook type” procedures prescribed by the teacher. The choice of the type of performance assessment should fit the goals of the curriculum framework’s learning targets. The evaluation of performance comes in the form of qualitative descriptions of possible outcomes written in a rubric. Categories of performance are described and may be given quantitative values.

Portfolios and evaluation using the rubrics are some of the new approaches to assessment that require performance in context. With these new approaches, it is difficult to tell where instruction stops and assessment starts because the two processes are interwoven. Since in transformative pedagogy, instruction becomes diagnostic focused on the thinking skills of the students, then assessment of learning takes place during instruction. Consequently, instruction also follows every inquiry into the students' thinking. The nature of portfolios and rubrics will now be discussed.

Portfolios

A portfolio has been defined to be a collection of student work aimed at exhibiting the student's educational growth, efforts, progress, performance and achievements in one or more areas. Aside from exhibiting such significant accomplishments as the best work or most challenging work of a student, a portfolio should show evidence of the student's participation in selecting contents, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection and self-criticism.

To show students' involvement in selecting the pieces that will make up the portfolio, the teacher should solicit suggestions on the criteria that must be used. These criteria are evidences that best show how much students have learned. Usually, these include a student's best work, most improved work, most challenging problem, set of steps on ways to perform a certain task, etc.

To show a student's self-reflection and self-criticism, each portfolio should include the student's statement of goals for the whole course and rationale for his/her selections. The student should write a preface, which serves as a guide for the use of the portfolio. It will be good to see an explanation of the strengths and weaknesses of the work, copies of peer evaluation or criticism, and a section on student's self-criticism of own work.

To show the achievement of the target learning outcomes of the course, the portfolio should reflect the student's activities in learning such as solutions to word problems, projects, reports, writings used for dramatizations, case analysis, debates, and panel discussions. The report may include the history of the progress of the student with growth demonstrated by specific works at a particular period of the learning phase of the student. This history may illustrate how a student changes his/her conception of a scientific phenomenon before and after instruction. If there are outside class activities, then accounts of those activities that facilitated educational growth may be included.

Rubric

One important component of performance assessment is the rubric. A rubric is a scoring guide that evaluates the quality of a student's work or output against a set of criteria. The criterion is clearly defined and is usually assigned a weight or value. The standards for excellence in performance is set and made known to the students ahead of time with the determination of these criteria for performance. The students can plan in advance the quality of output that they intend to submit to their teacher and know ahead of time the level of performance that they can attain.

An example of a scoring rubric for a task on the application of rules of logic is given below:

Score Level	Application of Rules of Logic	Written Explanation
4	Shows complete understanding of the concepts and rules of logic resulting to a correct answer.	Gives a complete and accurate written explanation of what was done and why it was done.
3	Shows nearly complete understanding of the concepts and rules of logic resulting to an incomplete but correct answer.	Gives a nearly complete explanation of what was done and why.
2	Shows some understanding of the concepts of rules of logic with minor errors.	Gives some written explanation of what was done and why.
1	Shows limited up to no understanding of the concepts and rules of logic.	Gives vague explanation of what was done and why. The explanation is difficult to interpret.

When the student submits his or her work, the student also declares his or her rating based on the rubric. The teacher verifies the student's self-rating and arrives at a consensus with the student about the final rating. Hence, instead of merely receiving a grade, the student is able to dialogue with the teacher about the quality of his or her work and the meaning of his or her self-evaluation. The teacher may also decide to give students another round of submission where they can work on the comments during the dialogue with the teacher, revise their work and improve their rating.

VII. Summary and Conclusion

The attainment of the goals of the revised GEC requires a change of outlook on current practices in teaching and evaluation. This document on the Lasallian Pedagogical Framework for Transformative Learning has explained in detail the new perspective that teachers need to consider. The adoption by the faculty of the principles and processes described in this framework will not be easy nor immediate due to varied factors such as administrative concerns (e.g. class size, the trimester schedule, facilities), preparation of students for board or licensure exams, and faculty load and readiness.

Transitioning from a system of transmission to transformation will bring about changes in curriculum design, syllabus construction, lesson planning, use of class time, grading system, faculty evaluation and others. Doing the changes will be difficult but not impossible process. Extensive consultation with the faculty about implementation issues will have to be done. Training as part of faculty development will also be needed to understand and plan for the changes. Given this roadmap, the challenge for every teacher is to begin the journey for transformative learning.

APPENDIX

General Education Curriculum De La Salle University – Manila

Proposed Preamble

“The DLSU General Education Curriculum is a set of foundational, formative, and integrative courses intended to inculcate in students a critical appreciation of the diverse fields of human knowledge, their principles and science, and their arts and methods of inquiry. The ultimate goal of the DLSU GEC is to produce in students a nationalistic and humanistic outlook and the development of a carefully reasoned adult faith in the Lasallian tradition (charism?), promotes human flourishing and inspires dedicated service to God and the Filipino nation, especially by helping the marginalized members of our society.”

The DLSU General Education Curriculum is designed to enable DLSU college students to:

- Have the knowledge and skills to engage in more specialized study in the various disciplines and professions;
- Have the capability to use the knowledge and skills in the university to effectively participate in varied developmental pursuits in the community, the country, and the world; and
- Have the foundation for lifelong learning.

In consideration of the above goals, all DLSU students should be good at a wide variety of modes of learning:

- reading, writing, listening, speaking, and discussing in Filipino and in English;
- learning both independently and cooperatively with others;
- learning by acquiring and understanding existing knowledge in the various disciplines using a variety of learning technologies, and by exploring the relationships among the different disciplines;
- learning by exploring, experiencing, and actively participating in life and work in communities and organizations outside the school;
- learning by creating and working out their own ideas;
- learning by reflecting on their own thinking and learning processes and outputs;
- learning by exploring and appreciating points of view of other people from diverse cultures and circumstances.

All DLSU students should also be good at engaging in a variety of modes of thinking:

- historical inquiry;
- scientific and quantitative inquiry;
- humanistic, interpretative, and aesthetic inquiry, and
- ethical, value-based, or faith-based inquiry.

PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORKS	
TRANSMISSION	TRANSFORMATION
Perspective on Knowledge Acquisition	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge is a set of information waiting to be acquired by student from teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge does not exist as a given truth before the learning process Students develop knowledge as a result of their inquiry, action or experimentation
The Work of the Teacher	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher works as content expert and positions himself or herself as the primary or only source of knowledge The teacher organizes and delivers information and produces and expects students to throw back the given ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher works with the students' questions about a particular topic. The teacher facilitates the students' identification of questions and develops with them a plan for answering their questions. While the teacher's own expertise remains a valuable resource, the teacher also employs a wide variety of resources and interventions to help students understand the questions they need to ask and change or deepen their own prior knowledge. The teacher challenges students to uncover facts and concepts in interdisciplinary contexts and build knowledge by observing, hypothesizing, experimenting, and discovering. The teacher prompts students to take risks and explore multiple viewpoints by interacting and collaborating with one another.
Teaching Effectiveness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher is deemed effective if he or she is able to present information in a clear and comprehensive way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher is considered effective if through such activities, the students are able to accomplish their plan of inquiry and consequently, change or deepen their prior knowledge. With this process of collaborative inquiry, self-assessment and reflection, the students lay the foundations for lifelong learning.
Learning Activities and Learning Environment for Students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lecture format is the preferred and most often used method in class. Students appear passive and are hardly encouraged to question the information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For students to succeed, the teacher has to create an atmosphere in the classroom that enhances the students' sense of self-worth, increases their self-confidence and motivation to do their best and affirms their efforts towards self-improvement. The teacher also has to make the students feel that they can discuss or test their ideas and questions freely without fear of being reproached, embarrassed or reprimanded. With the supportive atmosphere, the teacher is able to encourage critical and creative thinking and the expression of a variety viewpoints and approaches to different issues or problems.
Assessment of Learning	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests require student to provide factual information and prescribed procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tests indicate the kind of cognitive growth that has taken place in the students, the changes that have occurred in their conceptual representations, or their ability to solve problems in the field.