

Developing a Lasallian Inspired Practice: Tools for Faculty Development

Acknowledgement

The authors of this project would like to thank Saint Mary's University of Minnesota for the SMU Faculty Research Grant that made this project possible.

Grant Project Goals and Products

The project considered discussion points from two years of a Lasallian Pedagogy study group (2010-2012), the writings of The Christian Brothers, SMU faculty research conducted in the San Miguel Schools, and from the educational research literature underpinning the National Board of Teaching's Best Practices Standards. The goal was to create two practical tools for reflection on practice, wedding core Lasallian values and practices with current educational research on best teaching practices. As a result of the project, a Faculty Planning and Reflection Guide was created that any new or existing faculty could use. It is designed to help the faculty member consider important questions in how they are meeting the needs of learners using Lasallian inspired pedagogy embedded in a best practices teaching framework. In addition, a second tool, the Formal Class Observation Guide was created considering the same tenets. The formal observation guide serves colleagues, administrators, or other mentors in focusing their coaching development of the teaching qualities that a faculty member has been intentionally developing in an ongoing faculty development process.

Use Disclaimer

The instrumentation shared on the pages that follow is a **preliminary draft** in an ongoing research and development process. The instruments are not intended for use in high stakes evaluation, but serve as coaching and mentoring tools to facilitate faculty growth and organizational self-awareness in the larger context of faculty and organizational development processes.

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Preface

What makes a Lasallian classroom different from any other classroom? A grant supported by the Faculty Development Committee and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Saint Mary's University allowed us to pursue an answer to this question. This work resulted in the creation of guides and observation tools that integrate Lasallian pedagogy and current best practices in the field of teaching and learning. These tools are intended to serve as practical guides for teachers and administrators in the ongoing processes of faculty and organizational development in Lasallian schools.

These documents include a faculty planning guide, a faculty reflection guide, and a formal class observation guide, and a resource. The documents result from a study of the work Saint John Baptist de La Salle, author of *Conduct of the Schools* and of Leon Lauraire, FSC, the author of *Conduct of Schools: An Overall Plan of Human and Christian Education*. Other resources such as *Touching the Hearts of Students: Characteristics of Lasallian Schools* by George Van Grieken and the *Lasallian Mission of Human and Christian Education: A Shared Mission* published by Brother Superior General John Johnston and the members of the General Council were also referenced.

Once tenants of Lasallian pedagogy were clearly identified from these sources, we bridged them with current best practice research in teaching and learning. This connection led to the questions and ideas for effective instruction identified in these documents. Emphasizing practicality, representative quotations and an abbreviated expression of ideas and approaches were chosen for inclusion. Our intention is to trigger knowledge of major ideas with a few words and to spark deep reflection with a series of specific questions and phrases.

Please notice that each tool has the word *guide* in its title. This word was specifically chosen to communicate that when working toward effective Lasallian teaching, it is the ideas and the results they can produce that are important; not the ability to “complete” every component. Each tool was designed to be used in multiple ways and to meet the needs of the individual person using them. An introduction is included with each guide to further clarify that document's purpose and possible uses.

What makes a Lasallian classroom different from any other classroom?

As De La Salle stated, “Each one had to strive daily to improve his competence to the point that he became excellent” (Lauraire, 2004, p. 10). It is our hope that these documents might contribute to continued work toward excellence in Lasallian teaching and learning.

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Faculty Planning Guide

This document can be used as a daily lesson-planning guide. The content is expressed practically; synthesized from research-supported documents that identify quality teaching indicators from Lasallian pedagogy and best practices in teaching and learning research. The questions are designed to help faculty evaluate personal use of the major tenants of this pedagogy in a flexible and individual way.

The planning guide was created to be used in a variety of ways. For example, faculty may choose to focus on one section or one or two questions within a section to reflect on current teaching practice. For probationary faculty, the chosen focus may align with annual professional development goals as outlined in the Faculty Handbook and used in the review process.

The *Preparing the Lesson* section highlights connections between knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy within an effective learning environment and asks the teacher to think critically about the purpose of the lesson.

The *Implementing the Lesson* section addresses the step-by-step process of carrying out an effective lesson and helps assure that all parts are aligned with the essential question for the day.

The focus of the *Evaluating Student Learning* section is ensuring alignment from the essential question to the summative assessment with multiple opportunities and structures for students to show understanding.

Taking into account the connecting roles of self, others, and the world to promote ethical leadership is the focus of the *Considering Relationship Within the Lesson* section.

This document is not meant to be prescriptive, but is instead designed to promote intentional thinking about the processes of teaching and learning.

Faculty Planning Guide

Preparing the Lesson

Discipline Knowledge

Subject-matter Expertise

1. What are students learning today (content, skills, etc.), and what is the real-world connection to or purpose for that learning?
2. What is the essential question you would want students to be able to answer at the end of today's lesson? What knowledge do you want every student to understand? How does this knowledge logically fit the broader structures of knowledge within this course to insure all content is interconnected and not fragmented?
3. How can you bring today's content to the students' level of understanding? How will you make sure they are prepared to learn at their current level of understanding, not yours? Is there anything you need to review with students to make sure they are prepared to learn?
4. What could students do, say, or show at the end of class to demonstrate they are able to answer the essential question? What evidence will you look for from students to tell you the lesson was effective?

Teaching/Instruction/Learning Expertise

A variety of instructional strategies is beneficial to student learning. Different strategies should be chosen for different types of lessons and for different types of learners. For this day's lesson, choose your instructional strategy after identifying the content demands as listed below.

1. Does your content require **special expertise for delivery of initial content**?
 - a. Consider: interactive lecture, guest speaker, student expert presentation groups, TED talks, video clips with discussion, podcast, simulations
 - b. Where are the opportunities within this strategy that allow all student voices to be heard? Where are there opportunities for dialogue and/or collaboration that would allow students to assist each other in their learning? How might you address misconceptions that emerge during this dialogue?
2. Is this lesson **application of content** already learned from readings, flipped classroom, research, etc.?
 - a. Consider: partner work, small group discussion, problem solving, dialogue/discussion/seminar/debate, perspective taking, technology applications, primary document analysis, case studies, problem-based learning, research, research with mini-presentations, demonstrations
 - b. Where are the opportunities within this strategy that allow all student voices to be heard? Where are there opportunities for dialogue and/or collaboration that would allow students to assist each other in their learning? How might you address misconceptions that emerge during this dialogue?
3. Is this an inquiry/exploratory or other **discovery of content** lesson?
 - a. Consider: lab, problem-based learning, exploratory study (explore/explain/elaborate), intriguing investigation, shared response to readings, guiding questions, inventive problem solving, discussion and reflection
 - b. Where are the opportunities within this strategy that allow all student voices to be heard? Where are there opportunities for dialogue and/or collaboration that would allow students to assist each other in their learning? How might you address misconceptions that emerge during this dialogue?

Faculty Planning Guide

Preparing the Lesson (cont.)

The Environment

1. Have you considered the structures that need to be in place for the instructional strategy that you chose? What pre-planning needs to happen to make sure this lesson runs smoothly?

2. Who are the players in this lesson and what are their roles? What is your role in today's lesson? (facilitator, content deliverer, mediator) What is the students' role in today's lesson? (active listener, producer, presenter, content deliverer)

3. Considering the roles in the classroom, how are you building relationships between teacher and students and students and students to fulfill the requirements of the instructional strategy you chose? Do they know each other's names? Do you know student learning strengths and limitations for partners and groups; do you know the learning capital that each student brings to the day? How will you know, and if they are not prepared, what will you do to prepare them?

4. What specific actions does your strategy call for to make sure there is mutual respect and courtesy? How prepared are your students to demonstrate decorum, to acknowledge varied levels of understanding, and to work for a shared purpose? Is there a sense of inclusivity so that all are valued and no one is left behind? Is the rigor of your lesson intended to further the learning of all students or weed students out?

Faculty Planning Guide **Implementing the Lesson**

Instruction

1. What is the first thing you will say during this class to make the purpose for today's lesson clear to students and to motivate them to be engaged with the content? Are you telling students exactly what you expect them to learn? Does today's content connect to a prior lesson? Is there a real world application that is relevant? Is there a question you could pose to spark student interest?
2. What is the question/scenario/problem/activity you will pose to help students activate existing knowledge structures needed to connect to this content? How will you determine that students have the knowledge and skills needed to learn what you wish them to learn today?
3. List the steps needed to deliver the content of the lesson. As you do this, consider the following:
 - a. If this is a content delivery lesson, where and how are you connecting the content to the essential question so the lesson doesn't become merely a string of facts? What opportunities do students have to dialogue and share their understanding of the new content?
 - b. If this is an application lesson, what questions are you asking encourage students to think critically, when and how do students explain their understanding, and what is your plan for addressing misconceptions when they arise?
 - c. If this is an inquiry lesson, how are you guiding student exploration? How are students sharing their ideas to build on each other's knowledge? When and how does student response align with your goal for this lesson? What are the structures that allow free and creative thinking that lead to a definite end?
4. How will you or your students briefly return to the essential question at the end of the class to leave students with the foundational knowledge you wanted them to master?

Faculty Planning Guide

Evaluating Student Learning

Assessment

1. What are 3-5 questions or formative assessments that could be integrated anywhere in the lesson that allow you to continually monitor student progress? What is your plan to adjust instruction if students are unable to answer these questions or if formative assessments show a gap in understanding? Throughout the lesson, are there several opportunities to know what students now know or do not know?
2. Do the assessment opportunities tie back to the essential question; what you want students to know, understand, or be able to do?
3. Is there more than one way for students to show their understanding? Are you and the students clear about what they know and don't know at the end of this lesson so there is no confusion and students are ready to continue learning?
4. How will you use assessment information from this class to guide your instruction for your next class or classes?
5. Are your instructional and assessment practices aligning with the summative assessment you will use at a later date? (Test the way you teach.) Is the knowledge gained in this lesson solidly connected to the broader structures of knowledge within this course?

Consideration for Relationship Development Within the Lesson

Leadership—the Inner Person

1. Where in this lesson do you share yourself as person; your passion for your disciplines, your interest in life and your students?
2. Does the teaching and learning in this lesson promote students as an integral part of the learning experience?
3. Where in your lesson is there interdependence between teacher and students and between student and student?
4. Where does your lesson allow for mutual assistance in student learning?
5. Are there places in your lesson that allow both teacher and students to move from tolerance of each other to esteem for each other.
6. How does your lesson promote self-efficacy in individual students and encourage them to grow from their current level of understanding?
7. As you plan instruction, are you challenging yourself to innovate and grow in your knowledge of teaching and learning as a model of Lasallian leadership?
8. Is this a lesson that you could connect to spiritual, moral, ethical, or social justice issues that are part of a Lasallian tradition?

Faculty Reflection Guide

Introduction

The *Faculty Self-Assessment Reflection Guide*, is a follow-up to the *Faculty Self-Assessment Planning Guide*, a document based on Lasallian pedagogy and best practices in teaching and learning research. This document can be used for post-teaching reflection and plans for improvement. The content is expressed in question form to promote careful reflection on specific qualities of an effective lesson.

The document includes four sections based on the five standards from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota's CELT *Principles and Standards of Best Teaching Practices*. It can be used in a variety of ways. For example, faculty may choose to reflect on all questions to get a broader vision of the learning experience or focus on one section or one or two questions within a section to reflect on current teaching effectiveness.

Each section includes yes/no questions followed by broader questions that require more thoughtful reflection on the teaching and learning process. Following the reflection process, the section *Personal Goals for the Future* can be used to document individual goals for teaching improvement. For probationary faculty, these goals may align with annual professional development goals as outlined in the Faculty Handbook and used in the review process.

This document is not meant to be prescriptive, but is instead designed to promote intentional reflection on teaching practices. It is understood that lesson content and selected instructional design for any given lesson may align with different questions on this list.

Faculty Reflection Guide

Checklist for *Instruction/Discipline/Subject Matter Knowledge*

- Standards 1 & 2-

Content Knowledge

1. ____ Did I establish the essential question at the beginning of the lesson and connect to the broader learning objectives for the course?
2. ____ Did I make direct connections among prior knowledge, student experiences, student-learning capital and new content?
3. ____ Did I focus on the content critical for understanding the concept?
4. ____ Did I connect the content to relevant real world examples or discipline specific expectations?

Lesson Introduction

5. ____ Did I make clear connections to future uses and real-world applications of this knowledge?
6. ____ Did I start the lesson with an essential question/goal and make the purpose of the lesson clear to students?
7. ____ Did I activate prior knowledge to prepare students for new content?

Direct Instruction

8. ____ Did I ask questions beyond basic knowledge and comprehension?
9. ____ Did I use a variety of kinds of questions such as centering, probing, or redirecting questions?
10. ____ Did I use appropriate wait time for student responses and allow more than one student to respond before moving on?
11. ____ Did I address misconceptions if and when they arose?
12. ____ Did I provide multiple examples to meet learner needs?
13. ____ Did the language and experiences in the lesson match student levels of understanding?
14. ____ Did I give sufficient support to academic language development?
15. ____ Did I scan the classroom looking for evidence of understanding?
16. ____ Did I make purposes and guidelines for discussion clear to student?

Student Learning Opportunities

17. ____ Did students actively participate during the lesson?
18. ____ Did students get a chance to explain their understanding?
19. ____ Did students get to explore conceptual understandings?
20. ____ Did student exploration connect to the essential question?
21. ____ Did students have an opportunity to be creative?
22. ____ Did I structure my lesson so students could provide assistance to students in need?
23. ____ Did I encourage all students to be involved in the discussions?

Faculty Reflection Guide

Checklist for *Instruction/Discipline/Subject Matter Knowledge*

- Standards 1 & 2 - (continued)

Lesson Wrap-Up

24. ____ Did I give students an opportunity to reflect on their own learning at the end of the class?
25. ____ Did the last points tie back to the essential question/goal for the day?
26. ____ Did the students leave knowing the expectations for the next class?
27. ____ Did I make myself available for questions after class?

Presentation Style

28. ____ Did I respond with respect to student suggestions or ideas, even those that were contrary to my own?
29. ____ Did I show enthusiasm in my teaching today? (humor, expression, movement, gestures)
30. ____ Did my presentation style engage students? (not too tied to notes or slides, adding interesting asides)
31. ____ Did the pace of my lesson meet the needs of the learner and the complexity of the content?
32. ____ Did I use visual support and logical organizational structures to clearly convey ideas?
33. ____ Did the strategy I selected for this lesson fit the content?
34. ____ Did I stress important points in the content and repeat difficult ideas?
35. ____ Did I stay on track with the content I intended to teach?

Questions for Thoughtful Reflection:

1. How do I maintain rigor while addressing learner differences?
2. How do I engage the disengaged?
3. How do I stimulate the individual and collective intellect and make learning irresistible?
4. How do I individually continue to move toward excellence as a teacher?

Personal Goals for the future:

Faculty Reflection Guide

Checklist for *Environment* - Standard 3

Teacher/Student and Student/Student Relationships

1. ____ Did I address students by name and did students address one another by name?
2. ____ Did I recognize student strengths and limitations and respond appropriately?
3. ____ Did I encourage respectful contributions from all members of the class?
4. ____ Did I respect the dignity of the person when responding to student questions and misconceptions?
5. ____ Did I address issues of academic integrity such as deficiencies, cheating, and poor attitudes in ways that promote positive growth?

Organization and Use of Time

6. ____ Did student discussion and conversation stay on topic?
7. ____ Did the lesson run smoothly based on the instructional choices I made?
8. ____ Did I and the students fulfill defined roles in today's lesson?
9. ____ Did I begin and end class on time and was I thoroughly prepared?
10. ____ Did I use class time effectively?
11. ____ Did I support a sense of belonging for each student and were students respectful of each other?

Student Engagement

12. ____ Did I notice all students engaging in discussion and activities?
13. ____ Did I notice students actively listening to me and to one another?
14. ____ Did I encourage questions and comments?
15. ____ Did questions and comments reflect the content and focus of the lesson?
16. ____ Did I take time to engage with individual learners before and after class?

Questions for Thoughtful Reflection:

1. How do I orient myself to students physically and intellectually?
2. How do I help students become equal partners in the development of our learning community?
3. How do I use positive collaboration to enhance learning and build relationships in and outside of class?

Personal Goals for the future:

Faculty Reflection Guide

Checklist for *Assessment* - Standard 4

Expectations and Checking for Understanding

1. ____ Did I provide clear expectations or a rubric for formal assessments?
2. ____ Did the assessment opportunities I provided students connect back to the essential question?
3. ____ Did I determine that students were able to answer the essential question for the day?
4. ____ Did I gain enough information to measure individual progress as well as the progress of the class as a whole?
5. ____ Did I see evidence that I need to reteach a concept before moving on?
6. ____ Did I advise students how to prepare for upcoming assignments, tests, or exams?
7. ____ Did I gain enough knowledge about student understanding to prepare for the next lesson?
8. ____ Did my instruction and assessments today move toward the planned summative assessment?

Multiple Opportunities and Varied Assessment Approaches

9. ____ Did I provide enough questions and assessment activities to allow me to check for student understanding throughout the lesson?
10. ____ Did students have the opportunity to think critically during this lesson?
11. ____ Did I hear responses from multiple students before moving on?
12. ____ Did students show conceptual understanding through formative means such as models, drawings, graphs, concrete materials, or manipulatives?
13. ____ Did I adjust instruction and reteach concepts when student understanding was unclear?
14. ____ Did I allow students more than one way to show their understanding?

Questions for Thoughtful Reflection:

1. How do I consistently assess student learning in multiple ways beginning with prior knowledge and continuing through to instruction and final assessments?
2. How do I use assessment information to change my teaching?
3. How do my assessments get students to think critically and tie essential questions to purposeful use of the content?

Personal Goals for the Future:

Faculty Reflection Guide

Checklist for *The Inner Life of the Teacher, Becoming a Lasallian-Learning Leader* - Standard 5

1. ____ Did I share myself, my passion for my disciplines, and my interest in life with my students?
2. ____ Did I engage with students about content and issues beyond the classroom?
3. ____ Did I center my lesson around the students and the gifts they bring?
4. ____ Did I build relationships through interdependence between teacher and students and students with each other?
5. ____ Did my lesson design promote student self-efficacy?
6. ____ Did I give students the opportunity to reflect on their own growth on the content and as a learner?
7. ____ Did I create a learning environment that promoted intellectual rigor, constructive criticism, and challenging of ideas?
8. ____ Did I demonstrate trust in and care for all students, as well as a belief that all students can learn?
9. ____ Did I create a learning environment that allowed students to move from tolerance to esteem for each other's humanity?
10. ____ Did I awaken in students a sense of the meaning of their lives as human beings?
11. ____ Did I always consider the dignity of all people, those present and not present, when expressing my thoughts and ideas?
12. ____ Did I intentionally connect moral, ethical, or social justice issues to this lesson?

Questions for Thoughtful Reflection:

1. How do I fulfill my role in this learning community in ways that deepen my personal commitment to teaching as a vocation?
2. How do I facilitate learning that incorporates my gifts and the gifts of all my learners?
3. How can I consider my course in a broader Lasallian context?

Goals for the Future:

Formal Class Observation Guide

Introduction

The *Formal Class Observation Guide* is a tool created from the *Faculty Planning Guide* and the *Faculty Reflection Guide*, documents based on Lasallian pedagogy and best practices in teaching and learning research. The *Formal Class Observation Guide* may be used for formal formative assessment of faculty by colleagues or administrators. The Guide includes four sections based on the five standards from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota's CELT *Principles and Standards of Best Teaching Practices*.

Use of This Document:

Prior to a scheduled observation, it is recommended that the observer be in conversation with the faculty member being observed to determine specific goals or targets that have been marked for practice and/or improvement. Probationary faculty may provide a one-page summary of these goals and may also use them as part of the review process as outlined in the Faculty Handbook.

This document is not meant to be prescriptive, but is instead designed to provide formative assessment for teacher improvement. It is up to the observer to clearly communicate the purpose of an individual classroom visit to the faculty member being observed.

Notes during a formal observation can be recorded directly on this document or separately in a sequential script form and then later aligned with the categories on this form. Following an observation, it is suggested that this tool either be shared directly with the faculty member observed or used as a prompt for conversation. Use of this observation form could also be a valuable support tool for those required to write a formal letter for the review process.

Formal Class Observation Guide

Instruction/Discipline/Subject Matter Knowledge

(Standards 1 & 2)

Effective instruction is demonstrated by strong subject matter knowledge and knowledge of the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Evidence of content knowledge.

(learning goal connects to broader course content, content builds on prior learning experiences, demonstrates mastery of the content, relevant information presented...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence of lesson structure.

Lesson Introduction *(essential question/goal stated, real-world connection, prior knowledge activation...)*

Direct Instruction *(effective presentation methods, high-level questions, misconceptions addressed, multiple examples, academic language, scan class to make sure students are with you...)*

Student Learning Opportunities *(students actively involved, students explore concepts, students explain understanding, creative activities, students help students,*

Lesson Wrap-Up *(students reflect on learning, tie back to essential question or goal, students know expectations for next class...)*

Presentation Style *(enthusiasm shown, responds to questions, strategies effective for the content, important points stressed, visual support used...)*

Behaviors observed:

DRAFT

Formal Class Observation Guide

The Environment (Standard 3)

A productive learning environment can be demonstrated through positive teacher/student and student/student relationships, effective organization and use of time, and active student engagement.

Evidence of teacher/student and student/student relationships.

(knows students, addresses them by name, recognizes student strengths and limitations, respects all students, makes students feel a respected part of the class, talks to students before/after class...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence of organization and use of time.

(uses good pacing and transitions, uses time effectively and efficiently, stays on task, is thoroughly prepared, uses high-quality materials...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence of active student engagement.

(encourages questions and contributions, involves all students in discussion and activities, student responses evidence attention to lesson goals...)

Behaviors observed:

DRAFT

Formal Class Observation Guide

Assessment (Standard 4)

Effective assessment is demonstrated by clear expectations and measures and multiple opportunities that allow student to show understanding. Assessment guides future instruction.

Evidence of expectations and checking for understanding.

(rubrics, checklists, guidelines, criteria, assignment descriptions, informal questions, task lists...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence of multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding.

(before/during/end of instruction, adequate number of questions, responses from multiple students—not just one...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence of using a variety of assessment approaches.

(models—drawings/graphs—concrete materials—discussion—pair/share...)

Behaviors observed:

Evidence that assessment that guides instruction.

(reteach as necessary, individual and whole group progress measured, know enough to plan for next lesson, daily assignments, activities, and assessments that lead to the final assessment for the unit)

Behaviors observed:

Formal Class Observation Guide
The Inner Life of the Teacher/Becoming a Lasallian
Learning Leader (Standard 5)

An effective teacher does more than deliver content and evaluate learning objectives. Lasallian-learning leaders share their being with their students and help student develop their identities as a whole person.

Evidence of Lasallian Learning Leadership.

(connection to mission/social justice/student identity development, challenging of student ideas, teaching students to esteem each other, awakening in students a sense of meaning in their lives...) Note: These descriptors may be unable to be observed in one lesson but may prompt conversation.

Behaviors observed:

DRAFT

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for

Developing a Lasallian Inspired Practice: Tools for Faculty Development

Note: Concepts and questions developed across the documents for the *Developing Lasallian Inspired Practice: Tools for Faculty Development* processes included in this toolkit were created and/or adapted from the resources identified in this bibliography.

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