

What is Jesuit education?

Santa Clara University's tagline is, "The Jesuit University in Silicon Valley." So, what makes a Jesuit university different from any other university? And what does it mean to be a faculty member at a Jesuit university?

A Quick Overview

Santa Clara University is one of 27 Jesuit colleges and universities located in the U.S. According to the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), "The distinctiveness of a Jesuit education stems from its deep-rooted history and a mission grounded in faith and intellectual rigor. Since its beginnings in 1548, when the first Jesuit institution opened its doors in Messina, Sicily, Jesuit higher education remains committed to academic excellence, service, leadership and caring for the whole person" (AJCU, 2019--learn more about the AJCU [here](#)).

SCU's Jesuit Identity

SCU's Jesuit identity is reflected in the university's mission, vision, and fundamental values:

Mission

The University pursues its vision by creating an academic community that educates the whole person within the Jesuit, Catholic tradition, making student learning our central focus, continuously improving our curriculum and co-curriculum, strengthening our scholarship and creative work, and serving the communities of which we are a part in Silicon Valley and around the world.

Vision

Santa Clara University will educate citizens and leaders of competence, conscience, and compassion and cultivate knowledge and faith to build a more humane, just, and sustainable world.

Fundamental Values

The University is committed to these core values, which guide us in carrying out our mission and realizing our vision:

- Academic Excellence
- Search for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty
- Engaged Learning
- Commitment to Students
- Service to Others
- Community and Diversity
- Jesuit Distinctiveness

Ignatian Pedagogy

At Jesuit universities, our mission to educate the whole person means that we strive to take a holistic approach to teaching and learning. One way to do that is by considering how the Ignatian Pedagogical paradigm might inform our interactions with students. Ignatian Pedagogy is a model for teaching and learning drawn from Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits. It consists of five elements:

Context (who)

The learning process is shaped by students' individuality and the particular backgrounds, experiences, and goals that they bring to the classroom. Socio-economic, political, and cultural contexts also shape the learning process, as well as the institutional environment.

Experience (what)

Experience entails creating opportunities for students to draw upon their prior experiences throughout the learning process, as well as engage in new experiences that will help them to continue to grow in their knowledge and understanding.

Reflection (why/how)

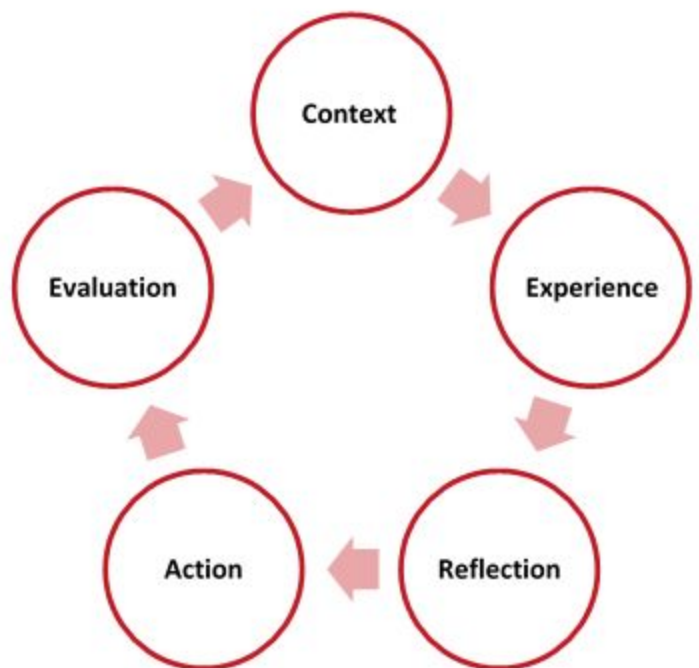
Reflection is key to the pedagogical paradigm and can take place before, during, and after the learning experience. The reflection process includes not only students' personal reactions to the learning experience, but also any future implications students identify from the experience for themselves or the larger society.

Action (what next)

Engaging in the process of reflection should impel students to act on what they have learned. The action might take place within the classroom, such as asking students to complete a project that requires them to apply what they have learned, or the action might occur outside of the classroom. For instance, students might identify topics they would like to explore further or a problem in their community they can now help address as a result of the learning experience.

Evaluation (how well)

Evaluation might include formal and informal assessments to understand what students have learned throughout the process, but it can also go beyond students' academic knowledge. Instructors and students alike can evaluate the ways in which the learning experience has shaped their individual growth and ability to make positive contributions to the world.



Descriptions above have been adapted from the following sources: Loyola University Chicago Faculty Center for Ignatian Pedagogy, Georgetown University Teaching Commons, Ignatian Pedagogy at Canisius College, Reinert Center at Saint Louis University.